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## **SkillsUSA Selects Connecticut Plumbing Apprentice for 2026 WorldSkills Competition, Backed by Industry-Wide Support**

***PHCC Educational Foundation, UA, IAPMO teaming up to train Charles Goede for the prestigious international event in Shanghai***

**LEESBURG, VA – September 10, 2025** - SkillsUSA has selected Charles Goede of Watertown, Conn., as the official U.S. competitor for Plumbing and Heating for the 2026 WorldSkills Competition. This prestigious international skills competition, often referred to as the “Olympics of skilled trades,” will be held Sept. 22 -27, 2026, in Shanghai, China.

WorldSkills brings together young people, industry, education, and government leaders from around the world to advance career and technical education and training. Competitors vie for international honors in skill competitions, showcasing dozens of trade skills.

Goede, the first competitor to be named to the WorldSkills USA delegation, is a plumbing apprentice and graduate from Ella T. Grasso Technical High School in Groton, Conn. As the SkillsUSA Connecticut high school state champion in 2024, he went on to place second in the nation in the plumbing competition at that year’s SkillsUSA Championships during the National Leadership & Skills Conference held annually in Atlanta.



“I am honored to be representing the United States for plumbing and heating,” Goede said of the opportunity to compete internationally. “I will be able to show not only the dedication I have for my career but the pride I have in my craftsmanship of the trade.”

To prepare him for WorldSkills, Goede will receive comprehensive support and training from a coalition of industry leaders, including the UA Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 777 JATC, the Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors Association (PHCC), and the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO). Providing him technical expertise will be Robert Hahn, a plumbing and heating instructor at Eastwick College, HoHokus School of Trades, and Larry Shoemaker, owner of Deluxe Plumbing & Heating LLC and a member of the PHCC Educational Foundation Board of Directors. Additionally, the PHCC Educational Foundation is playing a critical role in Goede's preparation, providing both financial and logistical support to ensure he is ready to compete on the international stage.

"My experience being a plumber so far is amazing," Goede said. "Every day you learn something new. I chose this career because I like working with my hands, job security, and being able to see all these different projects come together flawlessly."

"We are incredibly proud to support Charles as he represents the U.S. at WorldSkills," said Dan Quinonez, Executive Director of the PHCC Educational Foundation and Chief Operating Officer of the National Association. "His exceptional skill, hard work and dedication are a testament to the future of the plumbing trade. Investing in talented young professionals like Charles is not just a point of pride for us, it's a crucial commitment to ensuring our industry's continued growth and success."

"At the United Association, our gold-standard registered apprenticeship program means our members are the best trained and most highly skilled craftspeople in the industry," said Mark McManus, General President of the United Association (UA). "Charles represents the very best of the UA, and we could not be prouder to support him as he represents the United States at WorldSkills in Shanghai next fall. His dedication, hard work and commitment to his craft will be on full display, showcasing more than 135 years of UA training and education."

Recognizing the value of international skills competitions in elevating the trades, IAPMO CEO Dave Viola voiced strong support for Goede's journey to WorldSkills.

"IAPMO is honored to support Charles as he represents the United States on the world stage," Viola said. "WorldSkills celebrates the highest level of craftsmanship, and Charles' achievement is a powerful reminder of the talent and dedication that will carry our industry into the future. By investing in young professionals, we are strengthening the plumbing trade not only here at home but across the globe."

The 48th WorldSkills Competition will welcome about 1,500 competitors from over 80 countries and regions to take part in more than 60 skill competitions, showcasing dozens of trade skills from construction and building technology, creative arts and fashion, information and communication technology, manufacturing and engineering, social and personal services, and transportation and logistics.

SkillsUSA will announce the official WorldSkills USA team sponsors and other team members and their experts over the next few months.

### **About WorldSkills USA**

WorldSkills USA is the official U.S. representative to WorldSkills International, which is a global organization dedicated to raising the profile and recognition of skilled professionals. Since 1973, WorldSkills USA has been managed and represented by SkillsUSA.

### **About SkillsUSA**

SkillsUSA is the #1 workforce development organization for students, empowering them to become skilled professionals, career-ready leaders and responsible community members. SkillsUSA represents more than 444,000 career and technical education students and teachers in middle schools, high schools and college/postsecondary institutions nationwide. Those members represent 130 in-demand occupational areas, from 3-D animation to welding. A vital solution to the skills gap, SkillsUSA has served over 15 million members since its founding in 1965. Learn more at [skillsusa.org](https://skillsusa.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

### **About WorldSkills**

Since 1950, WorldSkills has come to symbolize the pinnacle of excellence in vocational training. It provides a unique means of exchange and comparison of world-class competency standards in the industrial trades and service sectors of the global economy. The continued growth of WorldSkills attests to the fact that traditional trade and craft skills, along with newer technology's multi-skilled occupations, make an essential contribution to the economic and social well-being of people everywhere. For more information, go to: [www.worldskills.org](https://www.worldskills.org).

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