

Shannon Catanzaro

2023 HOSA Future Health Professionals Scholarship

I have been a member of HOSA since my freshman year of 2019. Over the course of my high school career, I have attended two State Leadership Conferences. I competed in CPR/First Aid in both 2022 and 2023. In 2022, my partner and I placed in the top 5. However, this year, my partner and I placed 3rd. HOSA has given me the opportunity to expand my interest in healthcare and grow as an individual. Some qualities I have gained through this journey include professionalism, communication, and teamwork.

HOSA taught me the importance of professionalism. After having to wear a blue suit and khakis, I realized it exemplifies self respect. The sight of my blue suited peers impacted me greatly. I realized that it is important to look your best if you want to succeed. In college, I plan to look professional when meeting with professors or advisors.

I have expanded my communication skills as well. The conferences allow you an opportunity to speak to companies and college representatives. These booths offered me the opportunity to further my active listening skills and how to ask relevant questions. In college, I plan to be an active student in my classes. I will participate in class discussions and advocate for my academics if I am struggling.

Most importantly, HOSA grew my teamwork skills. My event was CPR/First Aid, a two person event. This means that I had to practice with my partner outside of school. Therefore, I had to take responsibility for the material when we could not meet. In college, I know I will be assigned group projects. I will accept the challenge eagerly and take responsibility for my workload.

Despite COVID inhibiting my participation in HOSA for all four years of high school, I know the value of my experience. As I pursue a college education, I plan to continue my HOSA experience and participate in chapter meetings and postsecondary competitive events.



My HOSA Journey

Merisa Celebic

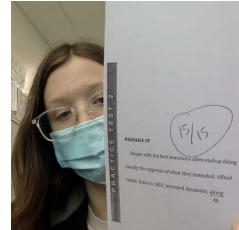


A stethoscope from Toys R'Us is one of the only toys I remember having. I would run around the house asking to check everyone's heartbeat. I have always imagined myself as a doctor. I wanted nothing more than a white coat that symbolized my care and dedication to humanity. As I grew, this dream lived on and led me to join HOSA at my local chapter during my freshman year of high school.

My HOSA journey starts in my advisor's classroom in August 2019. I was surrounded by peers who had the same goals as me and it motivated me. Through networking with HOSA members, I realized that becoming a doctor was not the only option in healthcare that would fulfill me. My journey in HOSA allowed me to explore health professions. However, this was not limited to peer interaction; attending state and international conferences allowed me to network with professionals who shared their experiences, which comforted me as an indecisive individual. Outside of HOSA, I was never taught about the significance of networking. My HOSA journey has allowed me to feel comfortable with interactions surrounding my goals. I cannot wait to use this when furthering my education and, eventually, in healthcare.

During my membership at my local chapter, I took on the public relations leadership role. Not only did this position help improve my advertising skills, but it challenged me to think more innovatively. As a chapter, attending Missouri's Fall Leadership Conference (FLC), we realized that there was a lack of communication between the current and future executive teams. Quickly, this turned into a challenge that we needed to tackle. My advisor team and I discussed a mentorship program that we hope to implement at our chapter. The mentorship would be beneficial for the future team as they would learn from the current position holders. Now that my HOSA journey is coming to an end, I encouraged my team to revisit this idea. I am hopeful that I will be able to share my experiences as an executive member with the future team. Through this experience, and attending FLC overall, HOSA taught me to think outside of the box. I believe this is a crucial quality of a future healthcare leader as medicine continues to evolve. Therefore, I am eager to take the innovative ways HOSA has taught me to think into medicine.

Out of all of the valuable lessons HOSA has taught me, persistence is the most significant one. During my freshman year, I leaped and joined competition HOSA at my local chapter. Since that year, I have competed in Health Education with the same goal as my competition: taking a gold medal home. Although my wall was filled with bronze, I never earned that gold until my senior year; which showed me how important persistence is. My group and I have learned so much throughout our years competing. Every year we used our past experiences to improve our lessons, portfolios, and speeches in hopes of improving. The thing that kept me going was my passion for healthcare. HOSA was the only organization that truly made me feel as if I was already working towards making a difference. I cannot wait to take my HOSA experiences into healthcare. Thanks to HOSA I am confident that as a future pediatric nurse practitioner, I will take healthcare beyond all limits.



Madelyn Hinckley

In 1951, my grandmother sailed into Ellis Island as the daughter of Polish and Russian refugees from the internment camps of WWII. Without sufficient means to buy even the basic necessities when she started menstruating, she used her brother's old t-shirts in place of proper hygiene products. Since then, advances have been made in the accessibility of basic sanitation and the awareness of women's health, but my state only recently passed a bill requiring feminine hygiene products in every high school bathroom.

"Period poverty" is the absence of proper hygiene products and taboo nature of education, discussion, and availability of information regarding women's health in many cultures throughout the world. With 23% of girls in Indonesia dropping out of school following their first period, it is not only a social issue but an issue of economic disparity. I was introduced to Days for Girls (DFG) as a child at a church service project packing feminine hygiene kits. DFG is a nonprofit organization that empowers women by ending period poverty. At the time I did not fully understand this issue, but as a teenager, their purpose became my passion. Imagining people suffering the same way my grandmother did half a century ago touched my heart. Over the past year I have studied period poverty and the DFG organization extensively and completed a research project at the Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS). I have also participated in 30+ hours of DFG service by sewing the feminine hygiene products found in DFG kits.

As an extension of my studies in women's health, I was introduced to functional medicine - preventative care focusing on optimizing physical and mental wellbeing. The ability to help people avoid chronic illness through proper diet and lifestyle was fascinating. In both my 10th and 11th years, I placed 1st in nutrition for my state's HOSA-Future Health Professionals' competition. Understanding nutrition also benefits me in my favorite hobby: swimming. To perform well as a 4-year varsity athlete and team captain, I train year-round and eat a nutrient dense diet.

However, physical fitness is only half the battle. For mental health, I relied on music and dance. While playing the piano and cello, I achieved 15 superiors for the National Federation of Music Clubs, and performed at Temple Square in Salt Lake City, at the opening night of a Star Wars film, and as 1st cello for a theatrical production of "The Scarlet Pimpernel". As the VP of my school's K-pop club, I also taught choreography once a week to a diverse group of teens.

Despite a demanding schedule, I devote many hours to studying my foremost love: medicine. Taking college level biology classes by my 10th year, I competed in Biomed sciences and won the state title at HOSA in my 11th year and placed top 25 internationally. In my 12th year, I joined the medicine class in the CAPS program and am now head of the research and development of a patent pending foot pressure sensor device for lower extremity injury recovery. Although I enjoy working on technical projects, my love for direct care led me to explore additional opportunities. Recently, I was chosen for a local hospital internship and now spend every other morning shadowing health care workers in a range of professions. I also volunteer at a physical therapy office once a week after school where I perform massages and electric current therapy. These real-world experiences have increased my ability to communicate and understand patients and coworkers.

In all of the aforementioned areas, I have come in as a neophyte and developed myself to a point where I was able to excel. These measurable achievements can quantify academic and extracurricular activities, but I believe that what most qualifies me as an applicant is who I am and opportunities afforded me through associations like HOSA. I am driven to put my skills, knowledge, and abilities to use in a way that can serve and benefit those in need, and I want my higher education to assist me as I go.