

LOCAL

Jackie Walker earns SkillsUSA Honorary Life Member Award



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Key Points AI-assisted summary ⓘ

Jackie Walker, executive director of SkillsUSA Ohio, received the Honorary Life Member Award.

Walker's goal is to promote awareness of SkillsUSA and its benefits for students in career and technical education.

Since Walker took over in 2018, SkillsUSA Ohio has seen a significant increase in membership and partnerships.

There's a reason her [bio states that "our words are powerful."](#)

Those four words sum up everything Jackie Walker believes in. As executive director of [SkillsUSA](#) in Ohio, a workforce development organization, she has dedicated her career to setting students up for success in the workforce.

And her dedication shows through the development of SkillsUSA since taking the role in 2018.

Walker was given the Honorary Life Member Award during the organization's Leadership & Skills Conference in June. She was commended for her efforts to connect skilled-trade employers directly with students.

"I still have (a) ways to go in my career, so this was just a great opportunity because what we do for students is really special," Walker said. "When I took over, it was kind of my No. 1 goal to make people aware of us and what we can do for students in career and technical education."

And her goal comes from her past. The Norwalk native was first a student in the organization, which led her to become an emergency trauma nurse for 15 years.

"'Vocational school' was a dirty word when I was in high school, and adults would tell you that you would never make anything of yourself if you went down the path," Walker said. "My big vision was making sure that no other student had to go through that."

Through making awareness and student success her top priorities, some of Walker's accomplishments include increasing local membership by 10,000 and quadrupling the number of partners the Ohio chapter of the organization has.

"I wanted a way that I could be in touch with students and know that we would see very quickly their return on investments," Walker said. "These students are looking for someone to make them feel like they're a part of something bigger than themselves."

Trending features reporter Amani Bayo can be reached at abayo@dispatch.com.