



2017 Crystal Owl Gala Student of the Year

Pictured: Myles Cramer, Chris Cable and Alyssa Martyak.

The Challenge Program, Inc. (TCP) held the 2017 Crystal Owl Gala on April 27th at the Carnegie Music Hall in Pittsburgh.

Good music, good food, wonderful auction and another awesome Student of the Year presentation were enjoyed by our many guests, friends, board members and staff.

Student of the Year finalists:

- Chris Cable, senior - Beaver County CTC supported by Questeq.
- Myles Cramer, junior - Greene County CTC supported by Noble Energy.
- Alyssa Martyak, junior - Cambria Heights High School supported by Highmark and C-B-W Schools Federal Credit Union.

All three students received a \$1,000 check made possible by TCP board member Tony Bucci.

Congratulations to all who entered, to our finalists, and especially to Chris Cable, 2017 Student of the Year.

A special note of appreciation goes to our co-chairs, John Weinstein and Robert Fragasso, our dedicated board members and the Young Professionals Group in Pittsburgh for their work and support of the Crystal Owl Gala.



www.tcpinc.org/gallery

“ I have changed my ‘don’t care’ and negative attitudes to one of possibilities and achievement. ”

Chris Cable, 2017 Student of the Year - Beaver County CTC

[Read about Chris, Myles and Alyssa](#)

Workforce Connections

For the third year running, TCP is working to facilitate meaningful connections between business partners supporting high schools and the students and educators to raise awareness about the opportunities in communities and elevate student career-readiness.

This year, 68% of TCP partnerships have engaged or begun discussions to collaborate on activities during the 2016-2017 school year. Those partnerships unable to connect this year are looking forward to doing so in the 2017-2018 school year.

A giant step forward was the creation of four summer internships with TCP's Major Corporate Partner, **Corle Building Systems**, in Bedford County. The first four graduated students from high schools throughout Bedford County will begin their internships on June 26 for 8 weeks. →

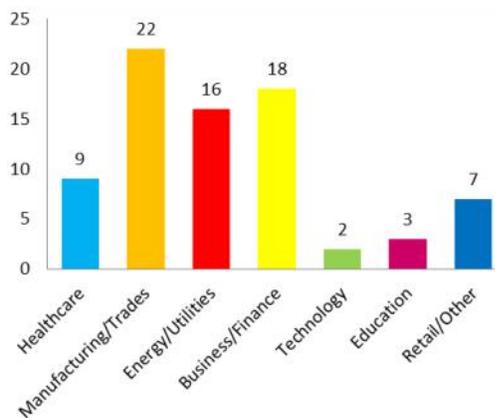
Available to Major Corporate Partners, if they choose this option, is the opportunity to create a recruiting pipeline in the areas where their business operates. Establishing major corporate sponsorship allows a business to access graduating senior award finalists from *participating TCP schools* who can apply to various internship opportunities within the organization. *For information, call Barbara Grandinetti, Executive Director, at 814-533-9401 or email grandinettib@tcpinc.org.*

The Challenge Program, Inc. makes every effort to facilitate a connection between all business partners and the school(s) of their choice throughout Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia.

These activities have included career fairs, facility tours, mock-interviews, job-shadowing, learning based projects, classroom presentations and more. Your TCP Program Manager will be happy to discuss and work with you and your school.



Workforce Connections by Industry



“By focusing on high-growth industries, we are connecting students with careers in their communities; with viable employment for their future careers.”

Barbara Grandinetti, Executive Director, The Challenge Program, Inc.

Corle Building Systems.....

became a Major Corporate Partner in the winter of 2017, during their second year of partnership with The Challenge Program, Inc.

Their three-year commitment includes four, 8-week summer internships for each of the three years.

Students who are Challenge Program award finalists in any participating high school in Bedford County, may apply for intern openings with Corle.

Corle Building Systems also partners specifically with Bedford High School, Bedford CTC and Chestnut-Ridge High School.



Workforce Development Meet Myra Bernhart

Meet TCP's Workforce Development Manager, Myra Bernhart. Bernhart coordinates workforce development initiatives between businesses and career and technology education centers for The Challenge Program, Inc. The responsibilities of workforce management include implementing a client-centered service approach to workforce development among high school students. Bernhart is responsible for ensuring meaningful connections between these schools and businesses as well as new business support for TCP.

Bernhart will focus on high-growth industries where skill-gaps exist in Allegheny, Beaver, Butler and Washington counties.



Bernhart has a long career history with job training and development having designed and implemented a variety of workforce related projects and programs including youth summer placement. Bernhart is pictured above with TCP founder, Dan Perkins.

www.tcpinc.org/staff/



...of surveyed businesses participating on our three Business/Education Advisory Councils agree that The Challenge Program, Inc.'s award categories contribute to career readiness and are helpful habits to be successful in their organizations.

Polytechnic Career Awareness Events

Somerset & Washington Counties - 2017

First introduced in 2016 in Cambria County, TCP presented two more of our unique forums in Somerset and Washington Counties. The events displayed highly-skilled occupations available in this region, where the future workforce is graduating. These positions offer family-sustaining wages, provide stimulating work environments and often require 18-24 months of post-secondary training and/or education.

TCP collaborated with businesses in these counties along with education and community partners. Together, we delivered information about current opportunities and the paths to employment and training *without* having to leave the region.

Surveyed Students reveal the career tracks they are most interested in pursuing



What do Students, Educators & Business Partners have to say?



Twice a year, The Challenge Program surveys, Award Finalists, Educators, and Business Partners, to keep in touch with how the Program messaging, activities and communications are working. We begin in the fall and survey all the underclassmen from the previous year who are eligible to win an award. Then we survey the educators and business partners to see if our presentation assembly was effective. In the spring, we survey senior award finalists and then conduct an end-of-year survey with educators and businesses to assure the Program met their expectations. These surveys provide TCP with vital feedback to improve and keep in step with the needs and trends of schools and businesses regarding career-readiness.

- ⇒ **91% of surveyed SENIORS agreed:** they personally benefitted from actively competing for an award.
- ⇒ **74% of surveyed SENIORS agreed:** the workforce activities with businesses were helpful regarding future career pursuits.
- ⇒ **83% of surveyed EDUCATORS agreed:** they noticed a difference in attendance, grades and overall school engagement due to The Challenge Program, Inc.
- ⇒ **93% of surveyed BUSINESSES agreed:** TCP effectively introduces career-readiness and employment opportunities through presentations and workforce connections.

[View the latest Impact Statistics](#)



Interns and Social Media

Sydney Petro is a senior marketing major with a minor in accounting from Saint Francis University* scheduled to graduate spring 2018. She plans to return to SFU for her master's degree in business administration following graduation. Sydney is a member of the Shields School of Business Student Advisory Board and the Class of 2018 proxy Representative of the Senate Committee and is a third year Resident Assistant. Sydney is a church cantor and a professional wedding singer. Her future goal is to become an event planner. As for her time here with The Challenge Program, Sydney has this to say, "Receiving the internship is truly amazing. The experience and knowledge that I am gaining will forever help me in my future. I am so honored to be given the opportunity to work for this company."



A senior this fall at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, Melanie will graduate this December with a Bachelor of Arts in communications and a minor in writing. She is already a graduate of Penn Highlands Community College and the Disney College. Melanie was hired as both a summer and fall intern with TCP and has this to say regarding her experience so far, "I feel as though I have finally gained a purpose greater than just looking good or spending all my time trying to get the boss to remember my name. From press releases to social media to 8 hour staff meetings, none of it is painful. The program alone is rewarding in itself when you know the impact it has had on students." Melanie's strength lies with her writing and she developed TCP's new blog, "An Inside Look at The Challenge Program, Inc." Melanie will be managing the blog and posting regularly.



The Challenge Program, Inc. is active across many social media platforms, thanks to our interns, including a new blog. **New Social Media!** Follow us at: <http://thechallengeprograminc.blogspot.com>.



*Saint Francis University is a TCP Business Partner supporting Seton-LaSalle High School.



Visit: www.tcpinc.org

2017 SENIOR AWARDS

Thank you to all the educators and business partners for their time, support and commitment to student success.

Brandon N. – Laurel Highlands High School

Academic Improvement Award

GPA Increase: +1.7

Dropped out in 2015-2016 school year and came back for 2016-2017 school year as a senior graduate



Javon D. – Pittsburgh CAPA High School

Academic Improvement Award

GPA Increase: +.9.

Javon overcame many personal issues and still increased his GPA

Emily W. – Conemaugh Township High School

Academic Improvement Award

Increased Class Rank by 31 places

Erin R. – Yough High School

Academic Improvement Award

Increased Class Rank by 12 places

Cheyenne B. – Albert Gallatin High School

Academic Improvement Award

GPA Increase: +1.3

Richard Y. – Hundred High School

Community Service Award

1,412 Service Hours



Charles M. – Hundred High School

Academic Improvement Award

GPA Increase: +1.75

Abigail B. – Canon-McMillian High School

Community Service Award

685 Service Hours, 350 hours donated to research at Hillman Cancer Center

Urvi G. – Seneca Valley High School

Academic Excellence Award

Attending Case Western Reserve University

Pre-Professional Program for Medicine.

Christopher M. – Penns Manor High School

STEM Award

Enrolled in four STEM courses, averaging 99% in all

Marlena Z. – Somerset County Technology Center

Academic Improvement Award

GPA Increase: +30%

