



Press Release

\$1 MILLION 2020 HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS PRIZE FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARDED TO 18 PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL SKILLED TRADES TEACHERS

Grand Prizes Awarded to Teachers, High Schools in 12 States

For Immediate Release:
Thursday, Oct. 15, 2020

Contact: Massie Ritsch
202-365-8225
massie@engage5e.com

CALABASAS, Calif.—Three public high school skilled trades teachers—an automotive technology teacher from Colorado, an engineering teacher from Colorado, and an industrial technology teacher from California—are the Grand Prize winners of the 2020 Harbor Freight Tools for Schools Prize for Teaching Excellence. They and their schools, along with 15 Prize winners and their schools, will receive more than \$1 million in prizes.

The Grand Prize winners are Brian Manley, an automotive technology teacher at Cherry Creek Innovation Campus in Centennial, Colorado; Mike Shallenberger, an engineering teacher at STEM School Highlands Ranch in Highlands Ranch, Colorado; and Kathryn Worley, an industrial technology teacher at West Hills High School in Santee, California. They and their schools will receive \$100,000—including \$70,000 for the high school skilled trades program and \$30,000 to the teacher. Fifteen Prize winners across the country will each receive \$50,000—with \$35,000 going to the winning skilled trades program and \$15,000 to the teacher. Because of school, district and/or state policy regarding individual cash awards, the schools of two of the winners will receive the entire prize winnings.

“This year has been one of the toughest on record for skilled trades teachers as they switch between in-person, remote or blended learning—all while trying to do their life’s work of preparing the next generation of tradespeople,” said Danny Corwin, executive director of Harbor Freight Tools for Schools. “At a time when tradespeople are more essential than ever, so is trades education. We are honored and grateful to have the chance to shine a spotlight on these teachers’ amazing work.”

The Harbor Freight Tools for Schools Prize for Teaching Excellence was started in 2017 by Eric Smidt, the founder of national tool retailer Harbor Freight Tools, to recognize outstanding instruction in the skilled trades in U.S. public high schools and the teachers who inspire students to learn skills to prepare for life after graduation. As recent [research](#) from JFF (formerly known as Jobs for the Future) and funded by Harbor Freight Tools for Schools found, students who “concentrate” (or take multiple trades courses as part of a program) are more likely to graduate than their peers. Upon graduation, students are prepared for either further education or work in fields that routinely rank among the hardest jobs to fill and that have come to be widely recognized as “essential” during the COVID-19 pandemic.

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS
26541 Agoura Road
Calabasas, California 91302

“Trades teachers are educating and developing the tradespeople of the future,” Smidt said. “Many of the students in their classes today will become—as soon as next spring—the workers who keep our critical care infrastructure, our communication networks, our homes and cars up and running. The prize is our way of saying thank you to their teachers.”

The Grand Prize winners are:



Brian Manley teaches automotive technology at Cherry Creek Innovation Campus in Centennial, Colorado. Manley’s love for all things automotive guided him toward career and technical education classes when he was a high school student. This fall, he will begin his 26th year of teaching. His program was one of the first two certified through Automotive Youth Educational Systems in 1998, and ever since, he has facilitated ongoing apprenticeships with local industry partners. Prior to accepting his current position, Manley had a career as a master automobile technician, an experience that fostered his passion for continued learning. He is currently in the final year of a doctoral program focused on leadership for education equity.



Mike Shallenberger is an engineering teacher at STEM School Highlands Ranch in Highlands Ranch, Colorado. Shallenberger, a 21-year veteran teacher, discovered a passion for repairing and creating while working as property staff at a youth camp after his high school graduation. Today, Shallenberger fosters connectivity between his students and industry with Career Discovery, a program he designed in partnership with local industry experts to keep his curriculum current, offer tours and facilitate paid internship opportunities. His students have the chance to earn their associate’s degree, tuition-free, while still in high school. Students also leave prepared to earn industry certifications in robotics, programming, mechatronics and mechanical design.



Kathryn Worley teaches industrial technology at West Hills High School in Santee, California. A 31-year teaching veteran, Worley was a 2018 San Diego County Teacher of the Year and a finalist for California Teacher of the Year. Students in her program learn design principles and applications, then a variety of building and fabrication techniques, including computer numerical control (CNC) manufacturing, milling, laser and additive manufacturing, welding and robotics. With deep relationships to industry, Worley’s students make connections to employers like Taylor Guitars, LifeProof, the carpenters union and drone manufacturers. Her students compete in “Shark Tank”-inspired design competitions, where they design, manufacture and market unique products to industry and community professionals. Worley was a finalist for the 2019 Prize for Teaching Excellence.

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS

26541 Agoura Road
Calabasas, California 91302

The Prize winners are:

Alfia Anderson

Electrical
High School for Energy and Technology
Bronx, New York

Thomas Aubin

Welding
Clinton-Essex-Warren-Washington BOCES
Plattsburgh, New York

Shawn Burns

Mechatronics and Robotics
Burton Center for Arts and Technology
Salem, Virginia

Robert Caylor

Automotive Technology
Gulfport High School
Gulfport, Mississippi

David Gibson

Machining
Caprock High School
Amarillo, Texas
*School receives entire prize winnings

Gary Mishica

Industrial Arts
Hancock High School
Hancock, Michigan

Chris Mollkoy

Industrial Arts
Dos Pueblos High School
Goleta, California

Michael Shephard

Automotive Technology
Union County Career and Technical Institute
Scotch Plains, New Jersey

Chad Sutton

Construction Trades
Garrett High School

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS

26541 Agoura Road
Calabasas, California 91302

Garret, Indiana

*School receives entire prize winnings

Nicole Taylor

Construction

Warren Technical School

Chamblee, Georgia

Kyle Thompson

Construction

Middleton High School

Tampa, Florida

Brent Tuttle

Welding

La Mirada High School

La Mirada, California

Wayne Violet

Automotive Technology

Washington County Technical High School

Hagerstown, Maryland

Demetrius Wilson

Engineering, Robotics and Mechatronics

Oakland Schools Technical Campus Northeast

Pontiac, Michigan

Travis Wyrick

Agriculture

Visalia Technical Early College High School

Visalia, California

Cash awards given to schools will support winning teachers' skilled trades programs. Individual winnings can be used however the winner wishes.

The 2020 prize drew more than 600 applications from 48 states and included three rounds of judging, each by an independent panel of experts from industry, education, trades, philanthropy and civic leadership. The application process, which included responses to questions and a series of learning modules, was designed to solicit each teacher's experience, insights and creative ideas about their approach to teaching and success in helping their students achieve excellence in the skilled trades. All learning modules are available [here](#).

In July, the field was narrowed to 50 finalists. The 32 finalists who were not named winners today, listed [here](#), will receive \$1,000 gift cards from Harbor Freight Tools. Additionally, given the challenges teachers are facing due to COVID-19, teachers who applied for the prize but did

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS

26541 Agoura Road
Calabasas, California 91302

not advance to become finalists were eligible to receive \$100 gift cards from Harbor Freight Tools.

About Harbor Freight Tools for Schools

Harbor Freight Tools for Schools is a program of The Smidt Foundation, established by Harbor Freight Tools Founder Eric Smidt, to advance excellent skilled trades education in public high schools across America. With a deep respect for the dignity of these fields and for the intelligence and creativity of people who work with their hands, Harbor Freight Tools for Schools aims to drive a greater understanding of and investment in skilled trades education, believing that access to quality skilled trades education gives high school students pathways to graduation, opportunity, good jobs and a workforce our country needs. Harbor Freight Tools is a major supporter of the Harbor Freight Tools for Schools program. For more information, visit us at harborfreighttoolsforschools.org/ and on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

#####

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS

26541 Agoura Road
Calabasas, California 91302