

Spotlight on DECA

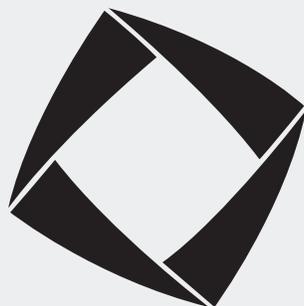
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Alumni Edition

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Articles and letters welcome for publication

The policy of the Michigan Association of DECA is that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, age, gender, marital status, weight, sexual orientation, sex or disability be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination, during any program, activity or in employment.

Alumni DECA 2.0

By Michael Parr, Lincoln Park High School, Class of 2008

Everyone joins the Michigan Alumni DECA Division for their own reasons. Former State Officers join to continue their involvement and stay close to an organization they spent a considerable amount of time with. ICDC finalists and scholarship recipients join to show their appreciation for the opportunities they received. Other members join to continue their involvement in an organization that they truly love and enjoy. No matter your reason, Alumni DECA is an amazing organization that allows you to not only give back to this organization but to stay connected with so many of your friends.

Michigan Alumni DECA is extremely proud to be one of the largest Alumni divisions in all of DECA. However, even though we have a large membership base for an Alumni Division, we have seen the number of active members decline over the past several years even though membership continues to increase. There are a number of reasons for this decline from members starting families, to new job opportunities, to moving along with changing interests. Michigan Alumni DECA wants to reverse our trends and encourage more members to get and stay involved.

To support our goal of increasing not only membership and involvement, your 2017 – 2018, Michigan Alumni DECA Board of Directors has begun working on initiatives to take a good look at where we are as a division and where we want to go. While much of what will be done is undecided, what we know for sure is that the Alumni Division will be rebranding to reflect opportunities to evolve into a more professional networking association. Our goal is to make the division more valuable to our members.

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The Road Less Traveled

By **Stephanie Cardaris**, Chippewa Valley High School, Class of 2011

Let me start by posing a question to you: did you see yourself in your current position or place in life maybe five years ago? I know I didn't.

If you told me I would be living and working in the City of Detroit for a mortgage company, I undoubtedly would have hooted in your face. Fast forward five years, and I am living my dream, one I did not even know I had. Once more, looking back five years ago, most of us could agree we did not think the City of Detroit would be where it is today, yet now it is booming with only the potential to keep growing!

What has brought my dream and the City back to life? A sense of community, the feeling of fellowship with others as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests and goals.

The Quicken Loans community brought me in, gave me a purpose, and placed me on a track in life where I can continue to break glass ceilings. They did the same for the City of Detroit, though they were not and continue to still not be alone in the fight.

A business can impact a city, a community and the lives amongst it for the better or for the worse. As a part of a business, you have the choice to help them make the community they are a part of a better place or worst place. I chose for the better. Often I find volunteer opportunities I can join in on with my fellow co-workers, which helps bring Detroit back one more step at a time, whether it's removing blight, cleaning up Belle Isle, passing out food at local shelters, or much of the other needed areas. Each step the company takes to help make this place well, so do I.

I bring this up because I want you to ask yourself are you doing more for your community? I understand we are all busy with our actual occupation, but is it just a place we go for the nine-to-five or can we make a bit more out of it? The more I do, the more fulfillment I get out of my position. I love giving back to a community that is giving me so much!

My challenge to all of you is to find something or someone in your community you can impact outside of your daily tasks. Get out of your comfort zone and push the boundaries. Only good things await!



Alumni Member Spotlight: Courtney Ford

By **Rosalind Dixon**, Woodhaven High School, Class of 2009

High School:

Woodhaven High School

University/Major:

University of Michigan-Dearborn

Welcome to the spotlight on our Michigan DECA Alumni Member Courtney Ford. In an interview with Courtney I asked her to touch on some brief topics that would be beneficial to all DECA members.

Courtney always knew that she wanted to go into business and marketing after high school, and credits her chosen major on being apart of Michigan DECA. Courtney also credits her being in DECA to Lisa Meyer who is the chapter advisor at Woodhaven High School. DECA has awarded the opportunity to travel and network for the last 6 year of Courtney's life.



When asked what advice she could give to students interested in joining Alumni DECA Courtney says “just do it! Don't be afraid to step outside of your comfort zone” also “stay true to yourself and don't stop working hard, make sure you believe in yourself and you will go far”. Courtney currently assists in the Woodhaven Chapter as a role play coach as well as a chaperone to all Michigan DECA activities

State Leadership Conference 2017

By **Ramsey A'Ve**, Advanced Technology Academy, Class of 2008

Excitement continues across the Mitten as we prepare to head back to Grand Rapids for this year's State Leadership Conference. It's most exciting as this is the first opportunity annually to network and collaborate with other members. The conference will be held at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids on November 8-9, 2017. Not only is GR a great place to reconnect with former DECA competitors, the city plays host to great entertainment and dining experiences. Competitive workshops, universities, and speakers are lined up to truly encourage our members to live **Limitless**.

We can use your help to prepare our members for competition by serving as an evaluator at the State Leadership Conference on November 8, 2017 from 4:00 to 7:00pm at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel. Because of your unique experience as a past member of DECA, I feel that you will be well suited to assist our members to be more prepared for the District, State and International Conferences.

Evaluators will serve as a judge of a practice role play event. Then after each member, complete the evaluation form and providing feedback to each participant.

Please email dwait@emich.edu if you are able to assist, we will send more information as we get closer to the conference. We will cover the cost of your parking. The specific details of the event you will be judging will be explained to you at the orientation, which is held just prior to the Mock competition.

Alumni, this is not only an opportunity to reengage with MI DECA, support conference activities and reconnect with friends. This is an opportunity to be reminded that you are Limitless. We hope to see you there.

Benefits of Joining Michigan Alumni DECA

By **Stephen J. Hershfield**, Midland Dow High School, Class of 2008

You joined Michigan DECA, check one. You competed at the District, State and maybe International level, check two. You just graduated high school and completed your time as an eligible DECA member, check three. Yes, you guessed it, there is a check four. But what is check four and how does it benefit you?

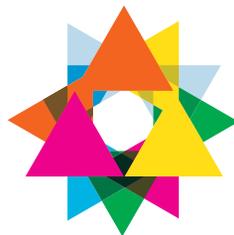
Well first things first, check four is joining Michigan Alumni DECA. By joining our Alumni Division you get the opportunity to give back to your former high school members (and any of your choosing) in preparing for competitions. I have had the opportunity to assist my former high school, Midland Dow, for nearly a decade. Every year I link up with the members and advisors to reminisce and provide assistance where I can. It's truly amazing to see the transformation and advancement of the members throughout their high school years competing.

Alumni have the great opportunity to judge at competitions. Judging allows you to see the other side of competition and provide necessary feedback to the competitors. Your advice and feedback is truly important to the development and future success of these young entrepreneurs.

There are a number of great events throughout the year that Alumni get to assist with ranging from state officer screening, to the annual picnic, and leadership conferences. This is yet another opportunity to assist in the development of Michigan DECA and network within the Alumni division further described below.

One of the nicest benefits is that Michigan Alumni DECA is one of the largest Alumni Divisions in the world. This deeply rooted group of current Michigan Alumni DECA members across the state and country provides a great opportunity to make new friends and network with professionals across many industries. We work closely together to assist in career development and seeking internships/jobs.

I encourage you to look at the Michigan DECA website to review other benefits of joining our association anyways you can assist in our efforts to make Michigan DECA the best it can be.



LIMITLESS

How DECA Helped Me, Part # 1

By Kyle Studebaker, Jenison High School, Class of 2008

Active Learning. It's a term I've learned at Steelcase which describes a new way of learning in the classroom where the traditional style of learning – facilitating from the front of the room – is challenged to create a more engaging learning environment for students. I've now been employed at Steelcase for nearly 8 years: two and a half years as a marketing intern, four and a half years as a strategic account manager and one year as a product manager. It's amazing to look back at what I learned in DECA and how I could apply those learnings to my career. High School DECA, Collegiate DECA and DECA Alumni all offered active and engaging learning environments where I took what I learned in the classroom and applied it in real time to business scenarios. That was truly the ultimate active learning experience.

When I started high school in 2005 the only thing I was “sure” of was I knew I wanted to run my own business someday. However, at the time I was shy and a pretty linear thinker. I had difficulty translating thoughts quickly into statements to build compelling and persuasive dialogues. It was challenging for me to understand ideas which didn't fall in line with my way of thinking. But I knew I wanted to run a business so I signed up for Business Management as a freshman to work on these skills and through that class I began competing in DECA.

My four years of competition in High School DECA set the stage for many more learning opportunities. I served as an officer for my high school chapter, as State Officer for Michigan DECA and got involved in Collegiate DECA and DECA Alumni because of my experience in high school. Through all these experiences I had many times where I needed to speak in front of teams, or try to articulate an idea, or develop a compelling argument to try and win my event. These experiences helped refine my communication, leadership, critical and strategic thinking skills which helped me greatly in my career today.

My older brother gave me good advice when I was considering my first job out of college with Steelcase as a Strategic Account Manager in Atlanta, Georgia. Even with all my experience in DECA I still was concerned about taking a job in sales when my background was more heavily focused towards marketing. And it was a bit daunting to move to a new city where I had very few contacts. But even as a finance professional in the business world, my brother said “No matter what you do, you're always selling something. So, you might as well learn that skill as early as possible.” And he was right.

Selling is the process of persuading someone to agree to a perceived value in order to facilitate an exchange. A couple very key elements in sales are: 1. Identifying the other party's need(s), and 2. Effectively communicating the offered value. Coming up with a sales presentation without listening and identifying a customer's needs first is a great way to not get the sale. My competition experience in DECA taught me how to be flexible with my sales approach and to develop a plan based on the customer needs...not solely on the value I can provide. I also learned through serving in a variety of positions in high school and through competition how to quickly think and articulate thought processes to communicate effectively. Being able to quickly articulate thoughts in real time based on your strategy and tactical plan is a very key skill in being able to sell well.

Moving to Atlanta was a major challenge. I didn't know anyone in that city and I had never worked in a sales job before. But having my experience in DECA where I learned to have confidence talking with new people helped me be a better communicator; not just professionally as a salesperson for Steelcase but also personally as I was challenged with getting connected in a new city. High School DECA certainly helped me become more confident and a more creative thinker. These two elements also helped me leverage my experience in Collegiate DECA and Alumni DECA to continue to grow personally and professionally which I'll elaborate on in the next couple of articles.

District Conference Time!

It's never too late to start thinking about district conferences, because they're coming up fast. Do you remember your District Conference? Everyone competes, some even competing for their very first time. You became so nervous but, somehow, it all ran so smoothly.

This is a great time for alumni members to come back and volunteer, either behind the scenes or becoming a judge for a particular event. The district conferences begin on December 16, and run through January 9. This would also be a wonderful opportunity to help build your resume, as you can use these volunteer hours when interviewing for different jobs.

District 1 – Tuesday, December 19 at Saginaw Valley State University

District 2 – Wednesday, January 3 at Ferris State University

District 3 – Friday, January 19 at Kalamazoo Valley Community College

District 4 – Thursday, January 11 at Eastern Michigan University

District 5 – Friday, January 12 at Eastern Michigan University

District 6 – Saturday, January 13 at Lakeland High School, Milford

District 7 – Saturday, January 13 at Lake Orion High School

District 8 – Wednesday, December 20 at Baker College of Allen Park

State Career Development Conference – March 9-11, Detroit, Michigan

International Career Development Conference – April 20-25, Atlanta, Georgia

Sign up to be a judge: <http://www.mideca.org/support/be-a-judge>

There is only one requirement if you choose to judge an event - you have to have been out of high school for at least three years. If this isn't the case then have no fear there are many different ways to volunteer at these conferences.



Membership Form

Life Membership: \$100.00

Michigan Alumni DECA members have the option to invest in a Life Membership. A Life Membership means just that - you're a member of Michigan Alumni DECA for life. No more membership dues. No more annual checks. Nothing to worry about. Life Members also have their State Conference registration fee waived - currently a savings of \$40 a year!

Life Membership Installment: \$25.00

With the installment plan, you can work toward your Life Membership over the course of five years. One payment of \$25.00 is due each year for five years. At the end of that time, you get all the benefits of a Life Membership.

Annual Membership: \$20.00

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Former Chapter: _____

Graduation Year: _____

Scholarship Donation (Optional)

Yes! I'd like to contribute to Alumni DECA's fund that provides travel scholarships to DECA members that qualify to compete at the International level.

Amount: \$ _____

Michigan DECA is a 501(c)(3) educational association affiliated with Eastern Michigan University. Donations are tax-deductible.

Payment Options:

Check enclosed - Make checks payable to "Michigan Alumni DECA"

Please bill my Visa/MasterCard/Discover/American Express

Card Number: _____ Expiration: _____

Signature: _____ Card Verification Number: _____
(three digit code from back of card)

Mail to: Michigan Alumni DECA
Eastern Michigan University
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Or Fax to: 734.487.4329

Questions? Call 734.487.DECA