

Audrey: That's a great point Preet! You may feel like you need to memorize as many facts and statistics as possible to be able to advocate properly. Even though that's important there's a key element missing from that approach...You!

When I began advocating for SkillsUSA I would rattle out a practiced pitch of the organization and what it's done. I'd list the membership statistics or the number of career pathways the organization counts. That was all well and good, however I would notice how quickly those I was speaking to would lose focus and leave. I never got asked questions and it always felt like I hadn't made an impact. I felt like maybe as a student I couldn't make an impact and left each conversation assuming they wouldn't remember what I said. However, during one of my conversations, someone asked me what my story was, and when I answered I immediately noticed the difference in how they listened. When I started doing that in my conversation afterwards I noticed how much more engaged the people I was talking were. *I made an impact* (pause).

Your experiences are the foundation of your personal story in SkillsUSA. Students are the reason this organization exists and your story is the proof that CTE and SkillsUSA benefit students! When you begin advocating this week remember that they don't want to just hear something they could look up online, they want to hear about you!

Leverage your experiences and share your story with pride!