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UCS high school stores earn national recognition, DECA certification

All four Utica Community Schools high school stores have earned national recognition for promoting entrepreneurship and excellence in business education.

The school stores received national certification for outstanding achievement for their School Based Enterprises through DECA.

DECA, an organization that prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs for careers and education in marketing, finance, hospitality and management in high schools and colleges around the globe, selected just over 300 school stores for Gold-level Certification or Gold Re-certification from a nationwide competing field of hundreds of schools.

Henry Ford II, Stevenson and Utica high schools all received Gold Re-certification. Eisenhower High School participated for the first time and received Gold Certification for their entry.

To become DECA-Certified, SBEs complete a written project detailing how their business adheres to

select model business standards. After the documentation is submitted, a review committee evaluates the documentation to determine which level of certification has been achieved. Recognition is provided for outstanding achievement at three levels: bronze, silver and gold.

For the fifth year in a row, the Chief Connection store earned National Re-certification status. The achievement was based on

a 25-page project written by Utica High School students Olivia Windorf, Tyler Newton, and Bridget Foehl. This year DECA project deadlines were a month earlier, and Marketing Teacher Dana Boice, Chief Connection director and DECA adviser at Utica High School, announced that the Utica High students were among the first 200 schools nationwide to receive Gold Re-certification and secure an invitation to the national com-

petition.

Boice said her students are very excited to compete nationally and maintain Utica's top ten standing.

"I feel very confident," said Tyler Newton, a 17-year-old junior at Utica High School and first year DECA team member. "We've put a lot of hard work into this project, and hopefully it'll pay off at nationals."

This is the third straight year for the Henry Ford II

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store, the Ford Dealers, to receive Gold-Re-certification. Student DECA members Jarrett Ciesluk, Andrew Palomba, and Sean Russell wrote Henry Ford II's winning project submission.

"We are very proud of these students, as well as the entire school store staff, on operating a successful school store," said Jennifer DeClerck, marketing teacher and DECA adviser at Henry Ford II. "They exceeded all expectations on each of the areas: market planning, product/service management, and selling."

Stevenson High School students Kyle Cook, Brandon Salha, and Zharia Woodards secured a Gold Re-certification for the second year for the Mount Olympus Titan Shoppe, also making them eligible to compete at the national conference.

"It was pretty cool that we received Gold Re-certification again," Cook said. "I had fun working on the

project."

Cook said he is looking forward to competing in Nashville.

Eisenhower High School seniors Allison Chriss, Jacob Oyster, and Anthony (AJ) Warner, with the assistance of their marketing teacher and DECA adviser Louise LaFaive, submitted their school's first DECA project and earned a Gold Certification for their school store, the Eagles Nest.

"We are all very excited to be given this award," LaFaive said of her DECA team. "We worked very hard to make sure it was our best work."

Eisenhower, Henry Ford II, Stevenson, and Utica high schools will all send student representatives to participate in the Enterprise Academy, only open to invited Gold Certified and Gold Re-certified school stores. The academy is held annually during DECA's International Career Development Conference. The conference will be April 23-26 at Music City Center in Nashville.

Source: Utica Community Schools