

Career and Technical Education Highlights for March 2025

CTE Celebration

Shout Out!

A huge congratulations to Jill Burrer, Career Experience Specialist from Falls Church Academy! Jill was awarded with the Best Newsletter for Alternative/Academy School at the FCPS School Communicators Conference. Schools were judged on their family newsletters sent through FCPS' News You Choose platform. They were judged for consistency, engagement, creativity, writing, accessibility, and other best practices. "Falls Church Academy has great, simple, consistent branding. The academy's mission is front and center of each newsletter. They have done an excellent job with cross-promotion by sharing the Top Ten best things about Falls Church Academy in their newsletter. The photos they feature are always fantastic and engaging, highlighting their exciting programs."

Robotics Club Teams!

Congratulations to the Hughes MS Panther Robotics Club Teams!! The Nerdy Narwhals Team 14052 won the Judges Choice Award! The Technosaurus Rex Team 6633 won the 2nd Place Design Award! Technosaurus Rex also made it all the way to the FIRST FTC Playoff Rounds and placed eighth among thirty-five teams, thirty-two of which were high school teams! Most impressive is that these robotees clearly created these robots on their own, and thus learned so much through many iterations of the engineering design process! Way to go to both teams! We are so proud of you!

NASA!

Congratulations to the Liberty MS Lunar Lions for doing a fantastic job in NASA's 2025 App Development Challenge (ADC) middle school level! Students are praised for developing an exceptional Artemis II project. Middle school teams had to create an app which: 1. Displayed the path of Artemis II by processing and visualizing all provided position for the mission; and 2. Utilized color to represent the different phases of the mission (e.g., orbiting Earth, traveling to the Moon and back to Earth) and number of available antennas. 3. Utilized the Scan antenna date to display a prioritized list of antennas having line-of-sight access to Artemis II. For this real-life Artemis II challenge, the Lunar Lions Team used Unity and C# to make the Artemis II visualization app, while incorporating HTML, CSS, and JavaScript to deploy the team's webpage. Super impressive!

Family and Consumer Science

Southern Cuisine

Marshall Academy Culinary Arts students hosted the Fairfax County School Board for dinner. They served a delicious southern cuisine dinner.

Necktie!

Irving MS students attend a 37-minute “Enrichment” period every Friday, and one of the many course options for enrichment is offered by one of the FCS teachers: Life Skills 101. During this time, the students are *given instruction and taught the value* of life skills such as tying a necktie, making proper introductions, gift wrapping a package, writing in cursive, addressing an envelope, tackling a very messy room, simple food crafts, and more. These tasks enhance personal and professional growth: these skills have been met with tremendous success. Students who are not enrolled in FACS classes benefit, as well.

FNS

The Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Food Show successfully helped create new student-inspired menu options that debuted this year. The event hosts students in grades 4-11 who will have the opportunity to sample new menu concepts to evaluate and select potential items for School Year 2025-2026 menus. During this event, the students gain insights into the capacities and complexities of the Food Service in FCPS, collaborate on the recipe development process at FCPS through their partnership with local and national food manufacturers, sample potential new recipes and most importantly provide valued feedback on the acceptability and viability of these menu items.

Health and Medical Science

Emergency Medical Technician

EMT students from Falls Church Academy visited the McConnell Public Safety and Transportation Operations Center (PSTOC) to learn about public safety and emergency management. PSTOC representatives provided a training simulation for the students at which they were placed in Community Groups with roles in emergency situations. Students needed to negotiate for needed resources to support the "disastrous situation their community was facing" and work together as a team.

Medical Assistant Students

Falls Church Academy Medical Assistant students had the chance to experience their senses a little deeper during an in-class stations activity. PERRLA (Pupil, Equal, Round, Reactive, Light, Accommodation) is what the students learn, as they see their pupil's reaction to light sources.

Technology and Engineering Education

Dangerous Animal!

TEE students at Cooper MS were presented with a problem of making a zoo enclosure for a “dangerous” animal. Students had to consider building materials and different perspectives from the zookeeper to the zookeeper to the animal themselves. Students designed enclosures in inventor and then presented them to a senior curator at the Smithsonian National Zoo. Students presented their enclosures to the curator and discussed why they designed it the way they did and got feedback on all their designs. Students then created models of their designs based on the feedback received.

STEM Club!

The women in STEM Club at Madison HS hosted Michelle Blanchet, a professional engineer, as a guest speaker. Michelle Blanchet, with FM Global, has extensive and very impressive experience in the engineering field. She shared her career journey with club members, provided valuable insights on how to become an engineer, and offered advice on what it takes to be a successful woman in the engineering world. The students were highly engaged and inspired by Mrs. Blanchet’s presentation. What an amazing way to encourage our students to pursue careers in STEM!

Oral Cancer!

We are in awe of a group of students from Oakton HS who used their engineering skills to develop an app that detects oral cancer! The team is seeking approval from the US Food and Drug Administration and the Apple Store for the application to be marketed as a wellness tool.

Global STEM!

10th grade students in the Edison HS Global STEM Challenges program are doing amazing things! Students are creating devices to support citizen science. They have created and programmed a turbidimeter for water clarity testing. As the new year begins, they are investigating how scientists use the information trapped in glacier ice to model changes in our climate and environment.

Music for Life

A cohort of STEM Engineering Honors students from Centreville HS and Chantilly Academy participated in the "Music for Life" program. This unique program provided students with the exciting opportunity to build fully functional electric guitars from scratch. This hands-on experience not only fostered a deeper understanding of engineering principles but also instilled a passion for music and creativity.

Business and Information Technology

Edison Academy’s Cyber Program is building an arcade with the grant money they have received from Educate Fairfax, Edison PTA, and Foundation for Applied Technical Education, Inc. (FATE). A group of

students went to George Mason University to see Corner Pocket, their game room and arcade, for inspiration and guidance.

Trade and Industrial Education

School-Based Enterprise Project

The Construction Technology class at Bryant HS engaged in a school-based enterprise project this winter. The class-built picture frames, shop stools, planters, and coat racks from mostly recycled wood that they deconstructed. The students also built holiday themed items such as Christmas trees, Hanukkah menorahs, and Kwanzaa kinaras. They offered these items at a holiday celebration at school for suggested donations. Students learned about building, pricing, marketing, selling and cost-profit ratios for products of their own making.

Criminal Justice

A DEA Agent and 2022 Marshall Academy Alum, who is interning with the agency, were guest speakers for the Marshall Academy Criminal Justice Program. They shared the DEA's role in protecting our country, career pathways within the agency, the hiring process and internship opportunities for college students.

Work- Based Learning

Instruction 2 Industry (i2i)

Despite the chilly temperatures, hundreds of FCPS students were fired up about their futures at the fifth annual Instruction 2 Industry (i2i) Future Ready Conference. Held at the Inova Center for Personalized Health, the event brought together over seven hundred students and two hundred industry professionals, offering hands-on career exploration, networking opportunities, and insights into in-demand fields like healthcare, technology, and public service. With mock interviews, workplace communication sessions, and direct connections to local employers, i2i continues to be a powerful launchpad for students' post-graduation success. i2i is one of the work-based learning events coordinated by the CTE office. This event has grown every year and is an amazing opportunity for our students! A huge shoutout to the FCPS schools who attended the event:

- Annandale HS
- Centreville HS
- Falls Church HS
- Hayfield SS
- Herndon HS
- Lewis HS
- Madison HS

- Marshall Academy
- Oakton HS
- South County HS
- South Lakes HS
- TJHSST
- West Springfield HS
- Westfield HS

Work-Based Learning Journey

Student Work-Based Learning Spotlight

An ambitious FCPS student participated in the Thompson Hospitality Work-Based Learning (WBL) program, gaining real-world experience beyond the classroom. Through her internship, she developed valuable professional skills, stepped out of her comfort zone, and discovered the impact of hands-on learning. Her journey highlights how work-based learning empowers students to take initiative, build confidence, and explore their career interests in a meaningful way. Her story is an inspiring example of how experiential learning prepares students for success in both academics and the workforce.

Career and Technical Student Organization:

CTSO stands for Career and Technical Student Organization. They help students extend their learning by offering competitive events in CTE program areas. FCPS participates in the following CTSOs:

- DECA (Marketing)
- FBLA (Business and Information Technology)
- FCCLA (Family and Consumer Sciences)
- FFA (Veterinary Science/Agriculture)
- Educators Rising (Teachers for Tomorrow and Early Childhood)
- HOSA (Health and Medical Sciences)
- SkillsUSA (Trade and Industrial)
- TSA (Technology and Engineering)

DECA

The DECA State Leadership Conference was held this month in Virginia Beach. We had an amazing representation from across the district. More information about the results of the competition events will be included in our April newsletter!

FBLA

A shoutout to the Liberty MS FBLA who collected more than three hundred food & health, and seventy-five clothing items for its Annual Food & Clothing Drive! This drive supports the school's Family Resource Center. Amazing job!

Robinson SS FBLA held a Valentine's Day fundraiser. Students were given the opportunity to order a rose with a note for their someone special and the roses were waiting for the student in their first block class on Valentine's Day. The chapter also sold roses on Valentine's Day in the cafeteria during breakfast and lunch. It was a great fundraiser to help support the twenty-five students qualified to attend the State Leadership Conference in April!

In January, the Northern Virginia Region of FBLA held their Regional Leadership Conference at Edison HS. Over 725 students competed in seventy-four events ranging from Accounting and Business Ethics to Digital Animation and Networking Infrastructures. Students took objective tests, skills tests, gave presentations and created programs to compete in the wide variety of events. That evening, over 200 FCPS students took the stage and were awarded first, second or third place medals in recognition of their hard work and achievements. More than 150 have now qualified to compete in the FBLA State Leadership Conference which will be held in Reston on April 4 and 5. In addition to the competitions, the FBLA Regional Officer Elections were also held during the conference. FBLA members from Centreville High School, Robinson Secondary School, and Thomas Jefferson High School were elected and installed to lead the Northern Virginia Region of FBLA for the 2025 – 2026 school year. Please contact Stephanie Holt (seholt@fcps.edu) for any additional information about FBLA.

FCCLA

Herndon HS FCCLA made clay-baked heart necklaces to recognize how FCCLA works to support others.

TSA

The TSA Northern Region Spring Fair was held this month. More information about the results of the competition events will be included in our April newsletter!