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# Grant to address childcare shortage

**STUART PATE**  
 News Editor

Finding affordable quality childcare has been difficult in Wisconsin. In an August 2020 editorial, Wisconsin Department of Children and Families Secretary Emilie Amundson said, "Finding care, regardless of household income, is made more challenging by a lack of availability." Over half of Wisconsin children live in a "childcare desert." A figure which jumps to 80% in Wisconsin rural areas.

Madison College has a plan to address the childcare shortage and has recently acquired the means to put that plan into action. "We have a serious pipeline problem in Wisconsin in terms of [child-care] workers," said Madison College's Vice President of Administration, Sylvia Ramirez. The plan is designed to infuse long lasting support into Wisconsin's childcare challenge.

In December, Madison College received a grant worth up to \$2.9 million to be used to develop in demand skills training with a large amount going to bolster early childhood education programs. According to a press release from Gov. Tony Evers, the grant program is possible by using resources through the federal American Rescue Plan Act.

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# Training for WorldSkills 2022



KALEIA LAWRENCE/CLARION

Krebs and Wozniak train for competition in Madison College lab.

## Instructor prepares young Team USA member to compete in Shanghai, China

**KALEIA LAWRENCE**  
 Editor in Chief

For the third time in history, the U.S. will be competing on the world stage against elite trade experts of Heavy Vehicle Maintenance at WorldSkills. From Oct. 12-17, Gabe Krebs will be representing the U.S. in Shanghai, China. Tom Wozniak, a full time Diesel Technology instructor at Madison College, is part of the coaching staff that has been training Krebs.

"WorldSkills is basically the Olympics of skilled competition," said Wozniak.

In order to qualify for WorldSkills, Krebs had to qualify with SkillsUSA. SkillsUSA was founded



KALEIA LAWRENCE/CLARION

Gabe Krebs began training with Wozniak in July of 2021.

in 1965 with the goal of ensuring America had a skilled workforce. There's an expansive list of services that are trained including:

barbering, cabinet making, dental assisting, t-shirt design and much more. More than 333,527 students and instructors are

served annually, according to the SkillsUSA website. Membership can be started as soon as 13 years old.

From various SkillsUSA chapters across the country, three have been selected to represent the US this year in different categories. Krebs, a graduate of Dakota County Technical College Graduate, found success at local competitions in Minnesota, then at the national level. This earned him a spot on Team USA where he then beat two other competitors to be chosen to go to China.

"A young student like this coming in and having an opportunity of a lifetime to represent his country and

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PHOTO PROVIDED TO THE CLARION

Ayele Dossavi spoke at the Madison College graduation ceremony on Dec. 16.

# Support and determination bring success

**KELLY FENG**  
 Opinion Editor

Ayele Dossavi wants us to know you can't manifest anything into existence unless you're prepared to work - and work hard.

Last month, the student commencement speaker captivated her audience during the Madison College commencement ceremonies. The Fall 2021 Commencement ceremony, Madison College's first in-person graduation ceremony since 2019, took place on Thursday, Dec. 16, at the Alliant Energy Center. Nearly 1,000 students graduated.

Dossavi was one of 300 students who walked the ceremony in their cap and gown.

Dossavi, who earned an associate degree in nursing, is a mother of two

and works as a community volunteer, hoping one day she'll help new mothers as an obstetrics nurse.

She began the speech by saying she didn't have sufficient words to communicate her gratitude for receiving the opportunity to speak to her peers during the graduation ceremony.

Quoting Colin Powell, the first African-American secretary of state, she said, "A dream doesn't become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work."

The student commencement speaker felt they were connected to Powell's quote, saying that a student's journey is full of challenges and needs determination.

"Today, my peers and I are leaving behind our role as students. Our new vocation will be a central part

of who we are in the community," Dossavi said.

Dossavi said that college students undergo many challenges in their academic journey, including sleep deprivation, lack of support, stress and lack of social interaction.

Dossavi's road may have begun smooth, but eventually, her path became rockier.

Dossavi is originally from Togo, a French speaking country in western Africa. The community volunteer talked about embracing health-care after graduating from high school. She was a midwife in Togo before moving to the U.S. to join her then-husband in 2011.

But from 2011 to the present, she encountered many detours such as

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# SKILLS

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compete against the best of the best in the world, what an honor," said Wozniak.

While Wozniak is involved with SkillsUSA as a state director of the postsecondary side of things, he has been coaching Krebs for many months. Before coaching Krebs, Wozniak coached and travelled with a student to Russia, returning with a bronze medal.

WorldSkills was founded in 1946. The U.S. didn't join until 1973 when President Nixon recognized SkillsUSA as the official representing organization.

The competition is held every two years in different parts of the world, in similar fashion to the Olympics. As far as age constraints go, competitors must be 22 years old or younger during the year of competition. Only four categories have a differing age limit of 25 years old.

Over the four days of competition, Krebs will be repairing various machines with a time limit. He'll have to figure out what is wrong with the machine and get it back in working order. Each station is three hours long with a total of seven stations with one half day to rest.

During this training time at Madison College, Krebs has gone through some mock competitions.

"You got to keep [your] mind straight and if you make a little mess up, I mean, the



KALEIA LAWRENCE/CLARION

This will be the third time Team USA has competes in the Heavy Vehicle Maintenance category.

biggest thing is being able to shake it off and continue on at the next station," said Krebs. "Maybe one you sink on a little bit, but the next one doesn't mean you can't rock it and bring home more points."

In other parts of the world, the competition will be streamed on TV and is a highly publicized event. For those watching from the U.S.,

it can be watched from the WorldSkills website. There are many differences in how the U.S. approaches WorldSkills compared to other countries. Wozniak believes that there should be changes to how the U.S. approaches the competition, from an individual level all the way to the federal level.

"When we were in Russia,

we had TV crews all over the place filming different things, but it was not seen here," said Wozniak. "But as far as support and stuff is concerned, the U.S. government doesn't support us. You know again, all these other countries that are part of WorldSkills, over 90% of them are supported 100% by their government. We are 100% funded by industries, you

know, by Corporate America... and we need help."

Another change that Wozniak sees necessary to make is how trades are seen by the general public.

"The downside with our country is that we put so much emphasis on our athletes... We put those people on a very high pedestal. Why aren't we doing that to these individuals here who are in the skilled trades? Because it's just as important, right?" said Wozniak. "It may not be as sexy, but it's still as important. As Americans, we should be just as excited."

Wozniak also noted the difference in training for skilled trades. In other countries, training for WorldSkills can begin as soon as eight years old, which isn't the case in the U.S.

"We're trying to really make the United States aware that hey, this is something and it's very important. Especially now when we have such a huge skills gap, why wouldn't you be excited about this?" said Wozniak.

Just by qualifying for the competition, Krebs will be showcasing the importance of the trades and the diesel industry to the U.S. Being the third to represent the U.S. in this category is already an accomplishment in and of itself, but Krebs has high expectations.

"All hopes are to bring home another medal and make sure it's not a fluke for the U.S. to be on a podium again, and be able to keep that rhythm going for years to come," said Krebs.

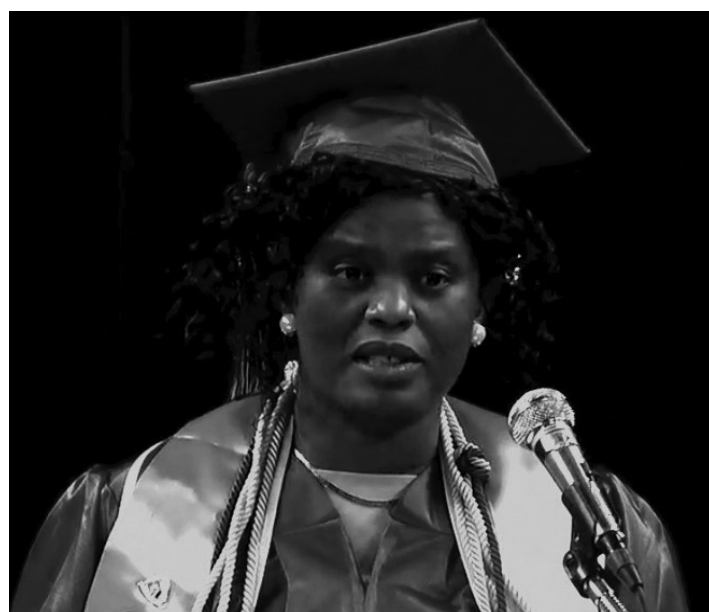


PHOTO PROVIDED TO THE CLARION

Ayele Dossavi graduated with an associates of nursing.

# SUPPORT

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learning English, being a parent living in a homeless shelter, going through a divorce, losing her father in 2012, being a single mom with two kids in a foreign country and more.

"The good news is that those challenges — instead of knocking me down — strengthened me a lot," Dossavi said.

While she has been a certified nursing assistant since 2014, her dream was to become a nurse saying, "I love to provide emotional and physical support for people."

As a first-generation student going to college in her family, Dossavi feels a strong connection to other immigrants and had a special message for any immigrants among them. "Never think that the dream is bigger than their ability to achieve them. Seek support as much as you can," she said.

Dossavi was grateful for the support she received from the Retention Initiatives and Student Engagement (RISE) program, Madison College Foundation, the Academic Honor Society Phi Theta Kappa, her instructors and her peers to achieve this goal.

The community support was the foundation of Dossavi receiving her degree and becoming a nurse. She thanked the president and deans of the Madison College with a special nod to the faculty.

The instructors' extra effort to educate their students during the pandemic wasn't lost on Dossavi.

She thanked them for their determination in teaching the students theory and practice, believing the faculty was an inspiration to the entire student body.

"I want to encourage my peer graduates to continue to raise their head with the same determination and hard work to achieve future goals."

# GRANT

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"Access to high-quality childcare and family-sustaining wages are critical to eliminating barrier to accessing higher education and supporting the success of all in our diverse communities," said Madison College President Jack Daniels.

According to Ramirez, the plan is multifaceted including a childcare roadmap, a student scholarship program as well as improving the quality ratings of local childcare centers.

The childcare roadmap includes plans to offer child-

care at every Madison College campus. Currently childcare is only offered at the Truax campus. Also, part of the plan is to expand early childhood degrees and certificate programming to regional campuses. The nature of the programs will be contingent on the needs of the communities.

"Some communities might be interested in a bilingual certificate program while others may be focused on the two-year degree program," said Ramirez.

The student scholarship aspect of the plan is yet in the planning stage.

"Childcare tends not to be a high-paying field," said Ramirez. By offering scholar-

ships Ramirez hopes to make the Early Childhood education programs more affordable.

The plan is to offer scholarships to 25 students as early as the fall of 2022. How students will qualify and apply for the scholarship is yet to be determined. The scholarships are intended to get Early Childhood students out into the field and provide access to childcare that will sustain over time.

"We're hoping we'll train a lot more early childhood educators than we'll utilize ourselves," Ramirez said. "A lot of them will go out into the community and provide excellent care to children throughout the region."



# NOW HIRING



Do you like to write, take photos or design? If so, check out the Clarion! The Clarion is Madison College's student newspaper. Issues come out every two weeks. Students who work on The Clarion receive small scholarships. To join, email [dkirchberg@madisoncollege.edu](mailto:dkirchberg@madisoncollege.edu) or [clarioned@madisoncollege.edu](mailto:clarioned@madisoncollege.edu).

We look forward to working with you!

