

## History and Benefits of NTHS

So, what is National Technical Honor Society all about? NTHS is an honor society dedicated to recognizing excellence in career and technical education.

The NTHS **Mission** is: To honor student achievement and leadership in career and technical education, promote educational excellence, award scholarships, and enhance career opportunities for the NTHS membership.

The NTHS **Vision** is: To be the international leader in providing recognition for excellence in career and technical education.

Our organization serves over 4,000 schools, including high schools, career tech centers, community colleges and private institutions. In our home state of North Carolina, we have over 350 chapters. Our national headquarters is located in Flat Rock, across the street from the campus of Blue Ridge Community College. NTHS has chapters in all 50 states, Guam, American Samoa, Puerto Rico and the Bahamas.

If you have contacts at other schools in your area which would benefit from NTHS, please share those with us! We are always looking to extend our reach.

So, how and why did NTHS get started? Here's a brief history of the organization.

The story of NTHS began 32 years ago in Inman, South Carolina, at the H.B. Swofford Career Center. Center Director Allen Powell and guidance counselor Jon Poteat saw a critical need to bring recognition to skilled students, and to overturn the negative image of vocational and technical education. Fueled by a compelling desire to recognize their deserving students and build a stronger, more positive image for their programs and school, National Vocational-Technical Honor Society was founded in December of 1984. Chapter 0001 is H.B. Swofford Career Center.

Mr. Powell and Mr. Poteat continued to promote NV-THS, build a Board of Directors, and enlist schools and sponsors. Gradually, career-tech centers, high schools and colleges joined forces with the Society. They too wanted to recognize their high-achieving students and build a better image for their students and schools.

In 1999, NV-THS relocated to the campus of Blue Ridge Community College. In 2003, the National Board of Directors unanimously agreed to change the name of the organization from the National Vocational-Technical Honor Society to the National Technical Honor Society to reflect the views of business and industry toward students in skilled trades.

Our current headquarters on Airport Road in Flat Rock was built in 2007 on land we purchased from the BRCC Foundation, just across the street from the college. We have a staff of 10, led by our Executive Director, Allen Powell. Mr. Poteat passed away in 2000, and we have the Jon H. Poteat Scholarship in his name and memory.

Our scholarship history is pretty amazing. In 1997, NTHS Board Member Steve Greene gave the first \$1000 needed to start a scholarship account with the Spartanburg County Foundation. For the next eight years, the growth of the fund depended entirely on donations from board, friends and fundraising efforts.

In 2005, NTHS awarded the first scholarships. That year, only four \$500 scholarships were awarded, but we were on our way.

Just 2 short years later, in 2007, a total of \$25,000 in scholarship monies went to NTHS members.

To date, NTHS has awarded over \$1.2 million dollars in scholarships, between our own Jon H. Poteat scholarship, our partnered Career-Tech student organizations, and through our Alumni Association.

So, how do students become NTHS members and take advantage of scholarships and other benefits?

Schools must establish, or charter a chapter at their campuses. There is no cost for a school to charter, nor are there any yearly fees to the chapter. The charter application is available online and only takes a few minutes to complete. Once submitted, the school will be assigned a chapter number and the person or persons designated as advisors will be given log in credentials and information on getting started with their chapter. Everything advisors need is available online, including the NTHS promo video, PowerPoint, forms and an advisor training video.

Membership dues are \$30 per student, a one-time fee. Students must meet the national criteria of having an overall, unweighted GPA of 3.0 or higher, and must be currently enrolled in a career/technical education program or major. There are over 100 occupations recognized as CTE, including everything from agriculture to website development. Schools may also require student members to participate in a career/tech student organization such as SkillsUSA or HOSA, they may require community service hours, they may allow only a certain number of absences and et cetera. Student member candidates should also embody the 7 attributes of NTHS – Leadership, Scholarship, Skills, Honesty, Citizenship, Service and Responsibility.

Member benefits include a newly designed custom portfolio, which has an ID card, custom certificate, white tassel with NTHS drop, lapel pin, window decal and a seal to be affixed to their certificate or diploma at graduation. We also offer graduation regalia for purchase including satin stoles, honor cords and medallions.

Members can log in and apply for our scholarships, as well as request letters of recommendation and use our online career center. In 2016, our board approved scholarships totaling over a quarter-million dollars.

We recently partnered with Express Pro Staffing and offer our members a series of free videos to assist them with finding job opportunities, resume writing and interviewing skills.

Letters of recommendation are a very powerful benefit. Members can download and print a general letter of recommendation for their portfolio, as well as request custom letters to be used when applying for a job, a scholarship or to a college. Letters are signed by our executive director and sent to whom the member specifies. It's powerful when they go in for an interview, and the interviewer already has a letter of recommendation from a national organization!

We have heard from members and advisors that NTHS members have been chosen over other job applicants because of those letters of recommendation.

To recap what NTHS is about...

NTHS helps schools to:

- **Offer** additional scholarship opportunities to CTE students.
- **Communicate** a strong, positive image in the local community.
- **Attract and recruit** qualified, diverse students into CTE programs.
- **Build** active partnerships with and promote students to local industry.
- **Recognize** outstanding leaders and educators through the NTHS Hall of Fame.
- **Encourage** parental, family, and industry involvement in the educational process.
- **Foster** self-esteem, pride, responsibility, and community involvement in students.

NTHS helps members to:

- **Seek** postsecondary education by awarding over a quarter of a million dollars in scholarships annually.
- **Position** themselves ahead of competition in today's highly competitive workforce.
- **Build** career portfolios with professional letters of recommendation.
- **Connect** to global career and technical education networks.
- **Discover** opportunities with leading business and industry.
- **Serve** in leadership roles in communities and industries.

***And most importantly . . .***

NTHS helps members be recognized for their achievement in career and technical education.

Our members range from high school students, to college level students, to older students who have gone back to school to pursue a different career path. It is truly gratifying to see children watch their parents get inducted into NTHS. And it's really wonderful when parents and children are both NTHS members at the same campus!

Several years ago, one of our NTHS/HOSA scholarship winners was an older lady who had gone back to school to pursue a degree in phlebotomy. Part of her training was going on an ambulance ride-along and she was so excited after that, she changed her major to pursue a career as an EMT. Our scholarship helped her to realize that goal. It is always wonderful to hear the "personal" side of NTHS membership.

Please be sure to visit our website at [www.nths.org](http://www.nths.org) – we are launching a whole new design in fall of 2016.

For any questions about NTHS, or to request further information, please call the national office at 800-801-7090.