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SkillsUSA California Students “Get on Board” With a New World Record

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Celebrating after the Guinness record was achieved. Photo courtesy of Adolfo Camarillo High School.

Peter Wachtel is a teacher and SkillsUSA advisor at Adolfo Camarillo High School in Camarillo, Calif. As the head of the school’s Architecture & Product Innovation & Design program, Wachtel — an innovator and toy-maker himself — loves challenging his students to create interesting products in his program. While attending a “Let’s Build It!” retreat with Harbor Freight Tools for Schools, Wachtel got the idea to have his students build a huge charcuterie board.

What’s a charcuterie board? If you’ve ever been served appetizers during an event or gathering, chances are you’ve seen one; it’s the board those appetizers are often served *on*. The word “charcuterie” is a French word that means “cooked meat,” but these popular boards typically feature an array of cheeses, crackers, breads, fruits and nuts, too.

The idea may have come from Wachtel, but his students turned it into reality. In fact, they quickly took the school project to a whole new level by attempting to build the *longest* charcuterie board in the world — and inviting the Guinness Book of Records to certify the accomplishment. Students ended up with a rallying community of support, dozens of media articles and even a story on TV’s “Inside Edition.”

"The goal was to set a world record, but what we really focused on was what we as a community could accomplish when we all worked together," Wachtel explained. "As students, as the city of Camarillo, and as the county of Ventura, we focused on what we could do collectively as we work to build greater awareness for skilled trades."



Students spent over 100 hours building the board from repurposed wood from the gym. Photo courtesy of Adolfo Camarillo High School.

The students used repurposed wood from the school's 65-year-old basketball gym bleachers to build the charcuterie board. The process of planning and organizing the project took three months, and 50 students worked as a team for more than 100 hours to create the board. While the material was free, a daunting challenge was raising the funds for other aspects of the project. In addition, students, their parents, school alumni, community members and the school staff all actively sought donations from local restaurants and grocery stores to assemble the 500 pounds of food they'd need to top the board! Together, the team raised a whopping \$17,185 to cover food, supplies, banners, other materials and the Guinness adjudicator fees.

Once completed, the board stretched to an impressive length of 204 feet. That's longer than two blue whales or taller than a 13-story building! "The biggest challenge of this project was all of the event logistics," Wachtel says. Organizing the event, sourcing support, supplies and food for the board involved the students every step of the way and kept them highly motivated to succeed.

Once the board was completed, the school held an event at its football stadium, where 175 students brought out the finished product to be presented to and judged by a Guinness official. The determined team needed 45 minutes just to carry the board from the shop to the football field, where tents and tables were already set up. Adolfo Camarillo students collaborated with culinary students from nearby Pacifica High School in Oxnard. They joined the effort to carefully place the hundreds of pounds of food on the board, including five kinds of meats and a variety of fruits, nuts and cheeses. All of the food was then distributed immediately after the

attempt was confirmed as successful. Following guidelines from the California Health Department, culinary students quickly packaged all the food in to-go containers and handed them out for spectators to take home so there was no waste.

The Adolfo Camarillo students said they were amazed and excited to take part in a project they couldn't have even dreamed of at the start of their school year. "The most exciting part is when it was all finished, seeing that it really came true," says William Enos, one of the seniors who participated in the project. "Being in the world record book is definitely really cool. Getting our school on the map is really cool as well."

When it was all said and done, Wachtel says it was like winning the Super Bowl. "A big project like this is something that gives you a purpose — something you can work toward each day in addition to the regular school stuff," he says. "It's bigger than yourself, bigger than the school, it engages the students. It's about the whole community. It's memorable when you can look back and know your school made this happen. The students will never forget this."

See a video about the event:



Students proudly carried the board to the field and set it up for the event.



Culinary students helped set up the food (and then packed it up for spectators following the event).



Showtime for the world's longest charcuterie!



Peter Wachtel and the Adolfo Camarillo staff and students focus on work ethic and developing character to support knowledge and skills.

Images courtesy of Adolfo Camarillo High School. [Click to view full size.](#)



Far left: Guinness records official who certified the record.



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/6QNO7hIEP2Y>