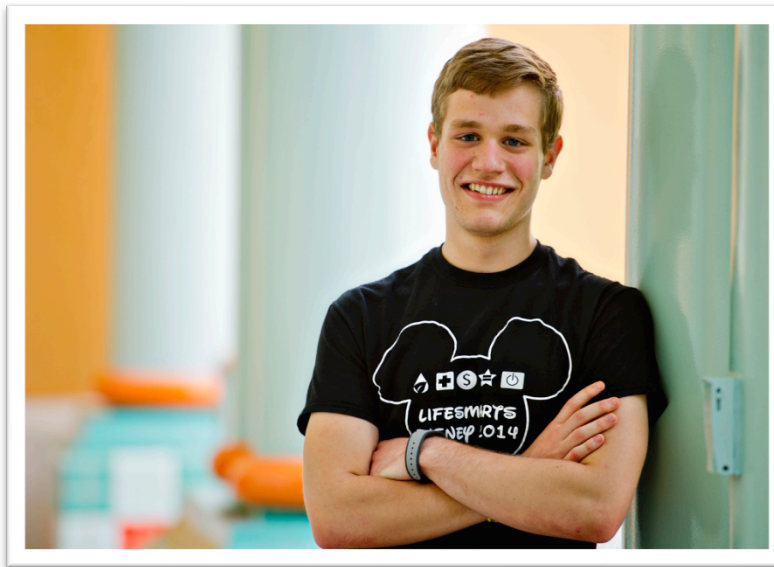




**LifeSmarts**  
*Learn it. Live it.*

## Faces of LifeSmarts | Decklan Cerza

LifeSmarts Student of the Year



### LifeSmarts, not only fun, also practical

How one student saved his house with help from LifeSmarts

A grease fire flared up in Decklan Cerza's kitchen. As his family scrambled, panicking, fearing that the whole house might erupt in flames, Cerza remained calm. He hurried over to the pantry, grabbed some baking soda, and dumped it on the fire, which quickly extinguished the blaze.

"It worked like a charm," said Cerza. "I saved the house."

Cerza had learned this nifty trick for putting out a grease fire during his LifeSmarts training the previous year. LifeSmarts provides students with the practical knowledge needed to succeed in the real world.

"I was immediately attracted to LifeSmarts when I heard about it," said Cerza. "All the information seemed so useful, and every

*Continued*



day I run into things that I have learned about while studying for the competition.”

Cerza is about to enter his senior year at Dallas High School in Pennsylvania. This will be his fourth season participating in the LifeSmarts program, with two trips to nationals. He’s hopeful that, in his final year, his team will return to the national championship for the third season in a row. At the 2013 National LifeSmarts Championship in Atlanta, Cerza and his fellow teammates came close to winning the championship, losing in their semifinal round, finishing in a tie with another team for third place.

“Everyone is so well prepared at the national championship,” said Cerza. “I think when you get that far into the competition, it’s almost about luck of the draw. No matter how much you study, some topic could always pop up that you just aren’t ready for.”

Cerza and the Dallas High School LifeSmarts club students study year-round. Before live, in-state competitions begin, the



*Cerza captains the Pennsylvania state champion team from Dallas, PA. In 2013, the team made it to the semi-finals of the national competition in Atlanta, GA.*

close-knit group of nearly two dozen students must be whittled down to five. Although this process of choosing the best and brightest to represent the high school at state and national competitions can be nerve-racking, the team also has quite a bit of fun along the way.

During a typical study session, Cerza’s coach stands at the front of the room and asks study questions for practice. One particular day, however, Cerza’s teammate, Sam, asked if he could take over the reins for a moment and serve as question master.

“After a few questions to the whole group,” said Cerza, “Sam said he had a question

that only our teammate Sarah could answer. ‘Will you go to prom with me?’ Sam asked in front of the whole club. And of course, she said ‘yes.’”

From earning a chance to compete at nationals, to gaining the skills needed to put out a fire in an emergency (and even to scoring a date to the prom), LifeSmarts has given Cerza and his peers opportunity, knowledge, and fun memories. Good luck, Cerza and teammates! Here’s to a fun and exciting final year.