



St. Michael's Woodshop

"Building from the Inside Out"

Spring 2021



Ahnajjah, summer 2019 . . . and today. ✓



Maya, summer 2018 . . . and today. ✓



Woodshop Seniors On Track to Graduate This Spring!

Despite the fact that our students have spent the past year online instead of in-person in their high schools, our senior Woodshop students were able to stay focused and complete their schoolwork. All of our seniors are on track to graduate in May!

They have been coming in to the Woodshop after school for Life Skills three days a week and attending Zoom Woodshop sessions on the other two days. This daily interaction with director James Smith has helped them to keep their spirits up.

Ahnajjah is scheduled to graduate with high honors, and was accepted for Fall 2021 at both St. John Fisher College and Roberts Wesleyan College. She's chosen Roberts Wesleyan and is excited to become a college student. Ahnajjah also has been working part-time at Wegmans and will

continue over the summer. She is a dedicated Woodshop student and an excellent role model to her peers. We're so proud of you, Ahnajjah!

Maya has been attending the Woodshop for four years, having started as a freshman in high school. She especially is grateful to Deacon David Kepler for helping her to discover her potential. "I learned confidence over the past year," she says. "He motivated me to keep moving forward." Maya is happy that she's been able to have the Woodshop as a big part of her life. "Everybody's life is a struggle. The Woodshop helps me." After multiple interviews with the same company, Maya appears to be closing in on becoming a carpenter's helper after graduation at a prominent Rochester company!

Quinten has also been with us since he was a freshman in high school. "At the Woodshop I learned time management," he says. "Now I plan things out in the morning and do all my work so I don't have to go back and do it in the evening." Once he's graduated, Quinten plans to apply for jobs at Wegmans, Home Depot, and UberEats, and also wants to work on getting his driver's license. "At the Woodshop I've made a lot of friends," he says, "and I hope to see them around."

All three of our seniors have had tremendous success! They know how to work hard, and they're motivated. The Life Skills we've taught them over the years have paid off, and we're confident that they'll be fine.

"Everybody has to live their own life," Maya says. You have to "walk away from situations that will get you into trouble, and learn to say No to things that will harm you. And learn to say Yes to what is good for you."



Quinten, summer 2019 . . . and today.



Around the Woodshop

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Mentor Jack Cargill (bottom right) joins students at a recent Life Skills session.

Financial Literacy Is the Key to Financial Independence

The Woodshop's motto is *Building from the Inside Out*. So why, you may ask, did we decide to focus our Life Skills efforts this schoolyear on Financial Literacy? The answer is that besides mastering a good work ethic, our students need to be smart about money in order to succeed.

"If our students follow in the footsteps of what they see all around them, they won't be able to shake off the negative habits they've been brought up with," says Director James Smith. "I need to show them a better way to handle money." He and the students have discussed more than 20 short "Better Men Project" YouTube videos about money (for example: *Seven Mentalities That Will Keep You Poor*, *Six Common Money Mistakes*, and *Ten Things the Rich Teach Their Kids about Money*). "Poverty is a mindset," says

Smith. "The only way our students can shake it off is to identify it and work hard to rise above it."

By now, all of our students have opened bank accounts. They can tell you how to use a debit card to build credit, why having a good credit rating is so important, why they should make out a personal budget, how to save money, and what investing is.

We've also been working on Job Readiness skills: how to organize a resume, what to wear to an interview, why body language is important, what type of math they'll need for their chosen job path, etc. After a few weeks of job readiness study, Kanye and Myia promptly used their new skills to land part-time, after-school jobs! This meant that they transitioned out of the program, which we applaud. But they'll always remain members of our Woodshop family;

our door is always open to them.

We had been Zooming with our students five days a week since September, and in February we switched to in-person instruction three times a week with Zoom sessions on the other two days. This daily contact has helped students to remain strong and resilient throughout the pandemic.

Creating beautiful wood products has traditionally been our way of boosting our students' self-confidence. But after a year of no actual woodworking, we've realized that self-worth is not contingent on what a person can do or make. It goes much deeper than that. Our students are important to us as people—and this goes a long way in boosting their self-confidence. They know we care about them and that they can count on us.

"Be the bigger person," one student wrote in her Woodshop journal. This kind of self-talk will help our students do the right thing. We teach them how to set priorities and manage their time; how learned negative attitudes will lead them down the wrong path; how to identify these attitudes and other counterproductive cultural practices, and begin to overcome them; how to identify and let go of a dependency mindset; and that violence begets violence. This is heavy stuff, but our students are eating it up—they want to learn the hard reality of the truth.

Now that our Mentors are getting vaccinated and some are coming back into the shop, we've resumed some woodworking one day a week, much to the delight of the students.

We need Mentors! Would you be willing to share some time with our students?



Spring Product Sale

Spring Sale: 25% Off Both Our Student Products and FLWT Assoc. Items!

Thirteen of our dedicated friends in the Finger Lakes Woodturners (aka the FLWTs), in order to help us meet our budget requirements, stepped up last December to donate beautiful hand-crafted wood products for us to sell. These were made available on our website before the holiday, and several sales were made. These lovely and in some cases intricate wood items are perfect for gifts.

The QC code below will take you to our combined, 14-page product catalog of both student and FLWT

offerings. Or, go to our website at <https://www.stmichaelswoodshop.org>. "These prices are much lower than what they would be at a high-end craft sale," said one of our woodturner Mentors, Terry Lund.

For a spring 2021 product sale, we're offering all of our 2020 catalog items at 25% off. You can make an appointment to come in to see and feel these and other hand-crafted wood items in person. Or, use the order form to the right. Rochester area deliveries will be free!



Combined Product Catalog



Adirondack Chairs — hand crafted by Mentors with student help.
Child picnic tables also available.

Adult Chair: 33" x 38" x 37" \$200.
Child Chair: 24" x 12.5" x 15.5" \$70.



Winged Bowl
by Clifford Weatherall
mahogany

7" x 7"
2 1/2" tall

\$45.



Napkin holder

5.25" x 6"
x 4.25"

\$20.

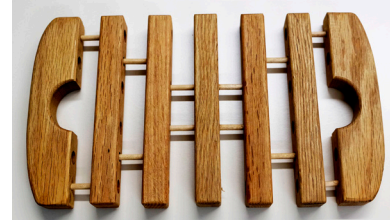


Expandable Trivets

various finishes & hardwoods

closed: 7"
open: 11.25"

\$40.



Bowl
by Paul Wilkins

spalted beech

diameter 4 3/4"
height: 2"

\$30.

Order Form

Name _____

Address _____

Phone number: _____

Item Description: _____

Catalog Price: \$ _____

Quantity: _____

Minus 25% Discount: - \$ _____

Total enclosed (check): \$ _____

Shipping: Each of our items is unique. For an accurate shipping quote, please call the Woodshop. Or call us, drive to the Woodshop, and we'll bring your order out to you.



Woodshop video



Thank You, Finger Lakes Woodturners!

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Finger Lakes Woodturner Mike Hachey helps Emony on the lathe, April 14, 2021, the first time that students worked with wood in the shop since last March. Both our students and the FLWT Mentors were thrilled!

"Building from the Inside Out"

Advisory Board:

Jack Cargill
Patrick Clancy
Andrew Hislop
Deacon David Kepler
Sr. Janet Korn, RSM
Gerald B. Korn
Benjamin Pearson
Sr. Jacquelyn Reichart, RSM
James H. Smith
Rev. Robert Werth

Our Mission Statement:

St. Michael's Woodshop is a ministry that offers life skills to urban youth through the art of woodworking. Tutors and Mentors are committed to accompanying young men and women as they learn a trade, enhance their sense of self-worth, master a good work ethic, and demonstrate mutual care for one another.

Our Finger Lakes Woodturners Mentors (and one of our regular Mentors) have been helping out in the shop since last Fall: adding more lighting, installing environmental barriers to separate shop areas, tweaking the layout of the shop to make it safer for students and volunteers, cleaning, setting up more lathe stations, fixing cracks in the floor, and otherwise preparing for the return of our students. They also helped to diagnose and repair our CNC router. But their real desire was to work with students again on woodturning. Now they're doing just that, one day a week, and soon we'll return to our full Summer Program. Because of turnover due to student successes, we're looking for more students!

Director's Corner

Greetings Friends,

What a year we've had! We hope that you've remained safe and healthy.

Our students have shown great resilience and have maintained their focus for schoolwork and our daily Life Skills sessions. My goal is to help these young people change their mindset, from what I call a "poverty mindset" to a more open and positive mindset, one that allows them to see the truth and to grow (see page 2). I encourage and help them to reject the dependency mindset they see in

the culture all around them. We want to help them to be independent so that they can become productive members of society.

We are so grateful for our Mission statement (left). Our Advisory Board realized long ago that offering life skills to students would be our most important task. How right they were!

And we're especially grateful to all of you who have continued to support us during this most unusual time. Thank you for keeping us in your heart.

Fondly,
James H. Smith,
Executive Director

O God, grant us peace in our hearts and love for each other. Teach us your ways and keep us close to You.

Thank you for your much-needed support!