



St. Michael's Woodshop

"Building from the Inside Out"

Spring 2018



A Typical Day at the Woodshop

April 30, 2018—The basement of 691 St. Paul Street, our 6,000-square-foot shop, is filled with light. Sixteen of our twenty students, nine adult mentors, our director, James, and his part-time assistant Bill are all busy with different tasks. Mentor Mike Fredericks and students Xavier and Corey are discussing how to organize the glass for framing. Four adult woodturner volunteers are working with students on their lathe projects. Shop-Vacs® are humming, and several of the students are dusting surfaces with wet rags. Robert and Savannah are busy on the computer in the marketing area of the shop, getting our new online store ready to launch.

Mondays are work days at the Woodshop, as opposed to "life skills" days. New product parts are manually measured, cut, sanded and stained for trucks and games. Awaiting finishing

are the sheets of multiple "star coasters" and cutting boards, made from glued-together strips of wood and cut by our new, time-saving CNC (Computer Numeric Control) router. Students rotate through various woodworking and housekeeping tasks, all the while building skills and developing the kind

of can-do attitudes, integrity, and other positive traits that they'll need in their future jobs.

Our recent "life skills days" are helping our teens to make good choices. For example, nutritionist Illuminada Vilca taught students the relative merits of different foods by dividing them into three categories: **Go!** (like 1% plain milk, buttered corn-on-the-cob, apple juice, and salad with grilled chicken); **Slow!** (like English muffin, tortilla chips and 1% chocolate milk); and **Whoa!** (strawberry-flavored whole milk, hot dogs, ice cream, soft drinks, vitamin water, and french fries).

Music therapist Sarah Eaton had each student create a folder/receptacle for positive, uplifting notes that students write for each other. And a recent Woodshop alum, Dayjah, returned to present a three-part series on healthy relationships, self-control, and integrity (see page three). Her first session was very well received by her former fellow students. Dayjah will graduate from high school this spring, and in the meantime is working part-time after school.

Sister Pat Flynn Legacy Project

The generosity of many, many people has resulted in a positive outcome of the Sister Pat Flynn Legacy Project. "This project has opened up a flood of energy that will make the future of the Woodshop possible," agreed Mercy Sisters Jackie Reichart and Nancy Whitley, who dreamed about and started the project. "We are truly hoping AND praying that the new and old energy of all the donors will continue and grow." While the wide variety of donations from small to large provided the seed money of \$100,000 and an additional \$15,023, Sisters Nancy and Jackie are praying that donors will continue to help St. Michael's Woodshop to serve the inner city teens. "Sister Pat would be so pleased."



The People We Meet

Woodshop Students Interact with People from Many Walks of Life

The familiar world of family, school and immediate neighborhood begins to broaden and grow when a high school student joins the Woodshop family. Visitors, mentors, students from other high schools, life skills coaches, and other volunteers interact with our students and open up new possibilities for them.

For example, McQuaid Jesuit seniors spent the spring semester volunteering once or twice a week for three hours as part of their Senior Capstone Project. The project is intended to be the culmination or “capstone” of a senior’s Christian Service and social justice activities at McQuaid Jesuit, essentially placing “an exclamation point” on their Jesuit formation. James Copeland, pictured at right, enjoyed the hands-on nature of Woodshop work, as well as the friendships made with Woodshop students.

Another regular volunteer is Aaron (below), who suffered a stroke eight years ago and now is happy to be a volunteer at the Woodshop. “It brings tears to my eyes,” Aaron says. He helps in any way he can, and says his specialty is framing. “Never give up!” he advises.

A new group of volunteers from the Finger Lakes Woodturners Association has been volunteering at least twice a week for several months, teaching our students how to use the woodturning lathe. “Some of the students here pick up things very quickly, and are even



learning on their own,” said Gary Russell, president of the group. “They seem to have an appetite for learning. We enjoy working with these kids.”

The Woodturners Association members brought and set up four club lathes at the Woodshop, on loan for student use until we can afford to purchase our own equipment. Students are making bowls, vases, spinning tops, ballpoint pen sets, and other products. They love using the lathes. “We’ve had at least ten or twelve try out the process, and there are about four regulars now,” said Terry Lund, the Woodturners Association member who got the group involved with the Woodshop (see the “Mentor Spotlight” article on page 3). We are so grateful to be able to offer this opportunity to students.

Other regular visitors include our life skills coaches: nutritionist Illuminada Vilca of the Cornell Cooperative Extension, music therapist Sarah Eaton, and various Sisters of Mercy who offer periodic life skills sessions and sometimes stop in to talk with students.





Around the Woodshop

St. Michael's Woodshop, Inc.

Spring 2018

Director's Corner

Greetings Friends,

As we embark on a new digital era in the Woodshop's history, we intend to give the students we serve a fighting chance to compete in today's job market. This new direction will be an expensive project that will require financial help from generous donors like you. Our students will learn CNC technology, how to turn wood on the lathe, and how to contribute to our new extensive marketing program for our wood products. This training will be in addition to the ongoing life skills that enable this mission to have so much success.

Since last year, the Sisters of Mercy have raised \$115,023 for the Woodshop in the Sister Pat Flynn Fund. This is just the tip of the iceberg in comparison to what will be needed in the Woodshop's future to continue to build character in those we serve. We humbly ask that you continue to support the Sister Pat Flynn Fund and the St. Michael's Woodshop operating account, which at the moment is dangerously low. Volunteers and Mentors are needed as well.

Again, thank you for your generous support of our mission. May God bless you and your family.

Thank you all,

James Smith,
Executive Director



Dayjah, one of our recent alums, led a student workshop on "healthy relationships."



A Student's Point of View

The Woodshop is a great program because you get to learn new things. Here we have a family that will be there when we need them.

We play around here and there, but when it's time to work, we get busy. I myself used to be a painter here, but I practiced my woodworking skills, and now I am a woodturner, working with the lathe. Currently with the lathe I am making spinning tops for the Woodshop and it is so fun.

I enjoy working here and I want to see more people join in. —Cha Cha (also pictured on page 1 using a lathe)

Mentor Spotlight

Terry Lund was first introduced to the Woodshop when he attended a craft sale at Casa Larga about three years ago. When he came for a visit this past January, and realized that the Woodshop didn't have woodturning, he arranged for a demonstration for the students. "James was at least as excited as the kids," Terry said. Now several woodturners volunteer and enjoy working with our students. Thank you, Terry! (See also the article on page 2.)



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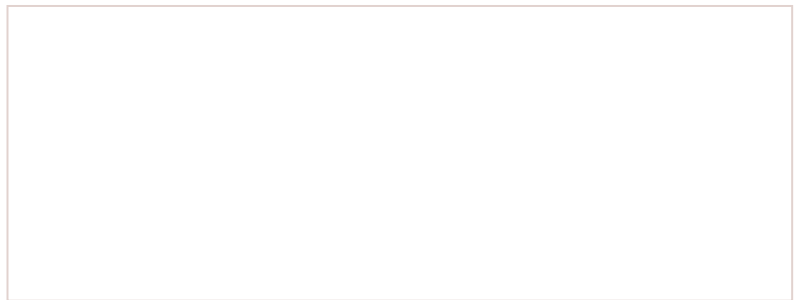
St. Michael's Woodshop, Inc.
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"Building from the Inside Out"

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- James Smith, Exec. Director**
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To:



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



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.

John Zachman was one of the Woodshop's first and most faithful mentor/volunteers when the ministry reopened in 2014. When his beloved wife Kay died in 2016, he worked through his grief by building modular dollhouses and donating them to worthy causes. He gave one to the Woodshop as a model for students to copy, hoping that they would find a day care center in need of toys. Students made several modular dollhouses, painting some and staining others. On February 21, 2018, during the school break week, those students who had worked on the project, John Zachman, and board members Jack Cargill and Sister Janet Korn, gathered at the Monroe County Family Court Children's Center, a free, short-term drop-off facility that serves as a safe haven for children accompanying their parents to Family Court. During the lunch hour, students presented a dollhouse and other toys to Eileen Whitney (right), who oversees the operation of the center, which serves 4,600–5,000 children a year, relying heavily on volunteers to care for them. John, in the center of the photo above, holds a plaque that Director James Smith (back row) made on our CNC router. The plaque is now up at the center.