



# St. Michael's Woodshop

*"Building from the Inside Out"*

*Spring 2019*



spectacular success. Students had been working hard to complete a wide variety of toys, pens, kitchen items, and household novelties for the sales. They were then thrilled to see the surprised and delighted faces of the shoppers.

We are also fortunate to be able to work in our beautiful, 6,000-square-foot shop, thanks to the generosity of one of our long-time supporters. Sister Pat Flynn moved into this space in the early 2000s, and the equipment she brought with her has been constantly updated by other donors and by purchases we've made over the years.

Thank you so much for your support. Although we are currently struggling financially, we are confident that, with the help of our faithful contributors and new friends we meet along the way, maybe even by way of this newsletter, we'll be OK. Please pass on the word!

*(Above left: Mentor Mike Fredericks introduces Raisa to the band saw.)*

## Counting Our Blessings

St. Michael's Woodshop is extremely blessed. We strive to convey this fact to students every day throughout the year, both in our casual conversations and in our formal "life skills" sessions.

Our first and most obvious blessing is our students. They work hard on their projects and make the Woodshop a real "home" for themselves and each other. They bring a joy to the Woodshop that is infectious to everyone who visits.

Our mentors are probably the most important blessing we have because they are the glue that keeps everything together and the oil that makes the shop run so smoothly. We are grateful to all of them, including the Finger Lakes Woodturners Association for teaching our students how to use the four woodturning lathes that they have loaned to the Woodshop. They are a positive and consistent presence for our students,

who have come to love woodturning.

We held more product sales than ever last holiday season, and they were a



*Gary Russell of the Finger Lakes Woodturners instructs Miya, a Woodshop student.*



## The People We Meet

### Commissioning Students to Make One-of-a-Kind Products

One day when Mike Murphy was shopping at Home Depot, he mentioned to one of the sales associates that his 88-year-old father was looking for a place to donate his woodworking tools. The sales person knew about St. Michael's Woodshop and told Mike about the program.

Mike came down to St. Paul Street, met Director James Smith (both shown at right), and a whole new world opened up for him. Mike works in the Materials Handling department at Rochester General Hospital, after having majored in business at college. He was intrigued with the fact that Woodshop students get to see the whole project management process, from concept to production and quality control, to marketing or on-time delivery. Mike wanted to participate, too.

In 2017, Mike commissioned the Woodshop to make something to give as gifts to his relatives for the holidays. "I'm a big fan of chocolate," he said. "I had seen a 'truffle tree'—a Christmas tree made out of wood with notches that could hold wrapped chocolate truffles—but I couldn't find any of those trees to purchase."

So our students made the truffle-holding trees and Mike presented them to his relatives, who loved them. He left the finishing to each family member, to either stain or paint the tree. They loved that project, too.

The truffle tree was such a success that Mike returned to the Woodshop this past Fall to get going on a gift for



2018. "Even though I've already lost my hair," he said, "I hope I haven't lost my brains and creativity!"

For this past holiday, Mike wanted some kind of Christmas sleigh to hold chocolates as his gifts. He came in to the Woodshop with a prototype sleigh that he had built, and sat down with one of our Woodshop students to see if they could make it all work.

Jonathan (shown at left) used a laptop that interfaces with our CNC router to translate Mike's prototype design into something that the router would understand. Being proficient at programming the CNC router is a fabulous new skill that our students can learn.

The laptops are a recent addition to the Woodshop. After one of our mentors gave a slide presentation about the Woodshop to the Pittsford Rotary, the club members wanted to help out. They decided to give the Woodshop a grant for some laptops, since at the time, only one student at a time could design for the router.

Now both Mike and the Pittsford Rotary Club have joined the Woodshop family. We are fortunate to be able to make such good friends in our community.





# Around the Woodshop

St. Michael's Woodshop, Inc.

Spring 2019

## Director's Corner

Greetings Friends,

As we welcome the spring of 2019, we feel blessed to be here in this ministry, offering urban teenagers the chance to see beyond their immediate circumstances and to absorb the kinds of life skills that aren't necessarily taught in regular schools. Yes, we are blessed.

And yet, the fact is that we're still not financially robust. The Sister Pat Flynn Legacy Fund is a wonderful backup fund to help us weather difficult times, but it's not meant to be used to meet the ongoing needs of our regular operating budget. These day-to-day expenses are meant to be paid by donations and grants. Currently, we have the funding to continue the program for six more months.

This is a great program that truly can change the lives of inner city high schoolers. We're following in the footsteps of Sister Pat by training our young men and women to be responsible and compassionate, and to understand the challenges they will face as they grow into adulthood. And like Sister Pat used to do, we humbly ask that you support our ministry. We need your help. Thank you and may God bless you and your family.

Thank you all,  
James Smith,  
Executive Director



Students Xavier (left) and Asa (far right) learn basic life skills from Director Smith.



## A Student's Point of View

"Before coming to the Woodshop, I was afraid to try new things, but now I have found that new things are actually exciting," says Myia (right), one of our younger students. She enjoys the challenges of the woodturning lathe, and has already trained six of her fellow students to "turn" ballpoint pens, a popular product at our holiday sales. Myia also led the recent effort to paint doll furniture in colorful patterns. She is an eager worker, and an inspiration to others to move out of their comfort zones and try new things.

## Mentor Spotlight

Earl Knab, retired from a career in telecommunications, is now happy to be at the Woodshop working in the tool crib. Earl organizes all the tools, helps students to find what they need, and donates any surplus tools to the Tool Thrift Shop in Fairport, which supports local seniors. He also arranged for our students to mentor Cub Scouts who were making models of pine wood derby cars. Thank you, Earl, for your caring presence at the Woodshop!



**Call us if you have any wood or finishing products to donate to our Woodshop program.**



St. Michael's Woodshop, Inc.  
691 St. Paul Street  
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### ***"Building from the Inside Out"***

Advisory Board Members:

- Jack Cargill
- Patrick Clancy
- Andrew Hislop
- Sr. Janet Korn, RSM
- Gerald B. Korn
- Joseph Mack
- Ben Pearson
- Sr. Jacquelyn Reichart, RSM
- James Smith, Exec. Director**
- Rev. Robert Werth

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.

Working side by side with mentors can teach our students what life is all about. Casual conversations might bring out issues that have been troubling students, or they can simply be a way to build friendships. Here, Woodshop volunteer Artis (left) is tracing out a piece of wood for one of our new products, a doll furniture set—small tables and chairs, some painted and others stained. The doll furniture is a favorite of visitors to the Woodshop. With him is Asa, a high school senior who is hand sanding a part for another toy. Working together like this enables the adult to informally share his or her life story with the student, fostering a sense of belonging for both of them. Going back to the days when Sister Pat Flynn was with us, toys have traditionally been one of the main categories of products at St. Michael's Woodshop. Recently, we've brought back some of her favorites—pull toys, trucks, tops, and puzzles—and they sold like hot cakes at our holiday sales.

***Thank you for your much-needed support!***