

# St. Michael's Woodshop Annual Holiday Sale November 23, 2024



Mark your calendars for the Woodshop's annual Christmas sales! From 11 am to 4 pm on November 23, we'll partner with the Finger Lakes Wood Turners (FLWT), the Rochester Woodworkers Society (RWS), and the Sisters of Mercy on Blossom Road, to present unique hand-crafted items for sale to the public. Our accomplished FLWT and RWS Mentors will contribute their work to the sale, and our students' work will include toys, trivets, cheeseboards, puzzles, gumball machines, woodturned pens, 3D printed Christmas ornaments, bedside cabinets, kitchen items, etc. The location of the sale (see map, bottom right) will be in the Middle School gym at Mercy High School—a large, open space, ideal for the event. "St. Michael's Woodshop is very dear to my heart," says Woodshop Advisory Board member Sister Nancy Whitley. "My close friend and classmate Sister Pat Flynn began this ministry in 1967 to help teenage boys and girls become responsible and learn a marketable skill. Over the years, these young people, through their affiliation with the Woodshop, have kept off the streets, grown in character, graduated from high school, obtained good-paying jobs, and become real assets to each other and to the local community. Sister Pat has gone to the Lord, but James Smith has taken over as Woodshop Director, and he is continuing her mission with great success. I am very familiar with Our Lady of Mercy High School and its administration (Sr. Whitley is a graduate herself, and taught at the school for 13 years). Knowing that this gym, accessible to older and/or handicapped patrons, would enable all to conveniently attend and purchase items at the sale, I asked for the use of it, at no charge to the Woodshop. We are excited to advertise this event to students, parents, neighbors, friends, and the wider public." The photos on these two pages are just a very few of the many professional-quality items made by our RSW and FLWT Mentors that will be available at the sale, in addition to our own student-made work. Please pass the word to your family and friends! For more information about the sale or the Woodshop, call James Smith at 585-267-0210. We look forward to meeting you at this sale or our other three holiday sales (see below).



Gary Russell, FLWT

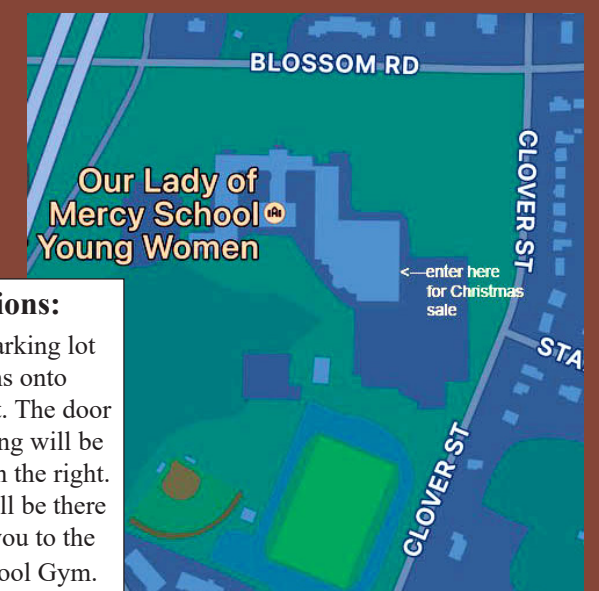
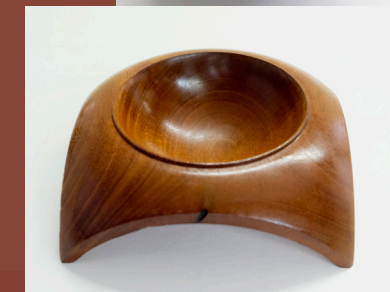


## Other 2024 Woodshop Holiday Sales

- "Glimmers of Love" Christmas sale at Holy Family Parish, 4100 Lyell Rd  
Friday, December 6, from 7 pm to 10 pm
- Christmas Sale at St. Mary's downtown, 15 St. Mary's Place  
Saturday and Sunday, December 7 and 8, after all the Masses
- School of the Holy Childhood Christmas Sale, 100 Groton Parkway, Henrietta  
Saturday December 14 ,11am to 4 pm, and Sunday December 15, 11 am to 3 pm



Alan Redfern, RWS, tabletop cornhole games



## Directions:

Enter the parking lot that opens onto Clover Street. The door to the building will be facing you on the right. A student will be there and direct you to the Middle School Gym.





**St. Michael's Woodshop**  
691 St. Paul Street  
Rochester, NY 14605

**Advisory Board:**

Andrew Hislop, Jack Cargill, Patrick Clancy, Gerald B. Korn, Elizabeth Pearson, Robert Weiner, Rev. Robert Werth, Sr. Nancy Whitley, RSM, James H. Smith, Executive Director



**Director Shares Story with Students, Newsletter Readers**

James Smith, Executive Director of St. Michael's Woodshop, is familiar with struggle, courage, and redemption. He's familiar with caring for those in need, and especially with faith and love.

James grew up in Providence RI, one of eight children. His mother washed and folded aprons and towels for a local butcher, in return for the meat he couldn't sell. "We'd get big bags of chicken necks, backs and wings," Smith says. "In those days, the chicken wings were just thrown away!" His mother taught her children how to survive despite their poverty. But as they grew older, the pressures of the streets closed in on them. "We

joined gangs," Smith said, "just to survive. We all suffered as a result."

Smith was incarcerated three times. He doesn't hesitate to share this with Woodshop students, because many of them live with the same pressures. Smith feels that a person who has been through what he's been through is better suited to relate to students, to help prevent them from making the same mistakes he made. "My message is totally relatable to these kids," he says. "They live around and see people like my former self every day."

Smith talks about how to avoid fights, what the food is like in prison, how child support payments will overpower a monthly budget (all of our students draw up personal budgets), etc.

It's hard to grow up with what Smith calls a "poverty mindset." He teaches students how mindset affects one's whole life, and how to rise above one's own difficult circumstances.

Smith's turnaround

story gives our students hope. One of his favorite teaching tools is the book *Winners and Losers* by Sydney J. Harris. "Some of the kids hate Life Skills when they're with me," Smith laughs, "but then years later, they come back and tell current students: 'Listen to James! I wish I had listened! He's telling you the truth!'"—exactly what Chassidy (below left) told them when she visited the shop.

**Thank you to our Sponsors**

We rely on and are deeply grateful to our financial and Life Skills partners who help keep our program afloat.

- The John F. Wegman Fund
- The Stella Matutina Foundation
- The ESL Federal Credit Union
- The Sisters of Mercy
- The Sisters of St. Joseph
- The Taylor Family Foundation
- The Foundation for the Future
- Anonymous entities
- Individuals
- Religious organizations
- Chase Bank
- Canandaigua National Bank
- The Red Cross
- The Rochester Police Department



Former student Chassidy (right), is currently studying to be an LPN.



# St. Michael's Woodshop

**"Building from the Inside Out"**

**Fall 2024**



**A Record Summer Program**

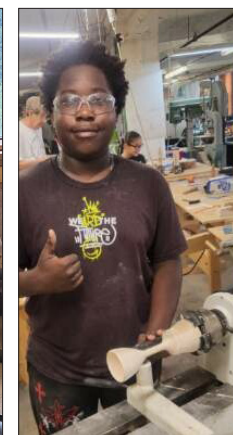
Twenty-four Woodshop students (the most we've ever had) spent the summer measuring, sawing, fitting, gluing, sanding, painting, and learning new vocabulary words. They made birdhouses, Christmas ornaments (for the "Gifts of Love" project at St. Louis Church), worked on the woodturning lathes (below right), and a few got very creative on the 3D printer (above left).

Director James Smith cooked or otherwise provided each day's noon meal, and our faithful Mentors guided and worked alongside our students every day. Thank you, Mentors!

"During the summer we really get to know our students," Smith said, "because we have a full hour of Life Skills every day. This lets me address not only their personal problems, but also their overall mental health, using the very



engaging materials that have been developed by our Board member and counselor, Liz Pearson."



**Mentors Share Their Life & Work Advice**

Retired Rochester Fire Department Captain Clay Andreas (left) is one of our new Mentors who comes in once a week to help students with flat work projects. He and volunteer Mrs. Christine Robinson teamed up recently, along with Christine's son, Robert, to give our students a "Career Day." Christine, married for 36 years and the mother of four, worked in day care for 30 years and was a school bus driver. She helps deliver "Life Skills," and is working towards becoming a mother figure for our students. Robert (right), is



also a Rochester Fire Fighter. "Being a city fireman is amazing," he said, "but even if you're not, even if you don't reach your initial goal, it doesn't mean you've failed. Don't let a bad attitude rob you of greater opportunities." He loved what was going on at the Woodshop, and wants to come back.



**Four Opportunities for You to Attend our 2024 Holiday Sales see →**