

We are blessed with many adult Volunteers/Mentors, and there is a joyful camaraderie among them that is easily apparent to any visitor to the Woodshop. They are mostly retired engineers, executives, schoolteachers, and electricians, although some of our younger Mentors come in after work. We often say that the Woodshop is a home-away-from-home for our students, a safe place for them to be after school, but it's also a home-away-from-home for our Mentors!

For example, Larry Lobel (right), a member of the Finger Lakes Woodworking Society, spent most days last summer keeping students busy working on the 3D printer and other equipment in the shop. "I love this place," he said. "I love the kids!" Larry also helped students to work on the CNC router, to make the Christmas ornaments that are sold by St. Louis Parish volunteers for the benefit of a hospital in Haiti. "Larry was the glue this summer, who kept everything together," said Director James Smith. "I don't know what kind of summer we would have had without him."

Steve MacIntyre (far right) also remains a mainstay of the Woodshop, a huge help to



Newest Board Member Teaches Mental Health Strategies

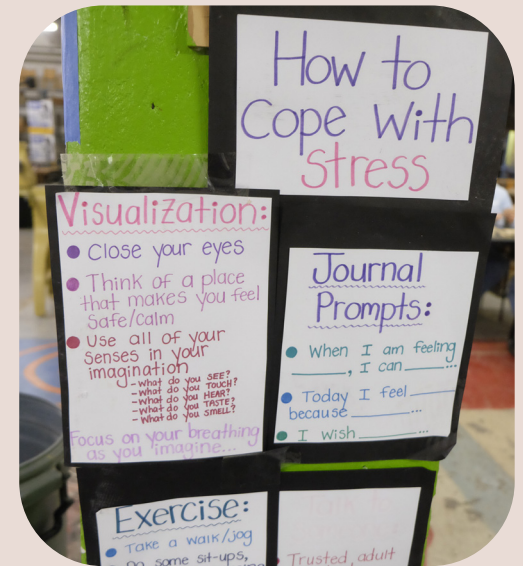
Liz Pearson, on the left above, joined our Advisory Board. She has also been volunteering at the Woodshop, working with the students and giving mental health presentations to our students. Liz worked as a school counselor in the Churchville/Chili School District, and has a feel for the kinds of problems our teens are going through.

When Liz initially met them in January 2023, she appreciated their big personalities and vivacious spirits. "They are so open with how they see

things, and they bring a lot of humor to life, despite the difficult circumstances many of them live with," she said. She works with the students directly as well as providing support behind the scenes (ideas for mental health activities and boxes of hygiene products for students). Liz focuses on teaching stress reduction techniques. She understands the pressures of growing up, and is very upbeat with our kids. Perhaps as a result, the Woodshop seems to have even more of a happy, positive vibe. "These kids are incredible people who persevere, and I'm sure that I have much to learn from them," Liz said.



things, and they bring a lot of humor to life, despite the difficult circumstances many of them live with," she said. She works with the students directly as well as providing support behind the scenes (ideas for



We Appreciate Our Volunteers

We Couldn't Offer This Program Without Them!



Larry Lobel (second from left) with the students he trained to set up, program, operate, troubleshoot & maintain the 3D printer: (from left) Alex, Zuri, Jaylan, and Carlos.

our program. He teaches students to program the router, troubleshoot problems, and repair it, often coming in on weekends to make sure that we're ready for the upcoming week. We also have many other faithful Mentors who work on projects with students, keep our shop organized, bring us school supplies for our teens, etc.

To enable us to meet the power needs of our equipment this past summer, Terry Lund re-engineered our electric supply, saving us the money we would have had to spend on an electrician. Although he is scheduled to come in once a week, Terry also works at home and on vacation to support our mission.

We support our Mentors, too. We arranged for John Strazzabosco (below), the author of *Ninety Feet Under*, to give Mentors a presentation about differences in "social registry," and how people can better understand each other when they know each others' cultures. About 20 Mentors attended his talk.



We're also grateful for the former Woodshop students who come back to visit, see what's going on, help us meet deadlines, work alongside our current students, and tell them what it's like out there in the "real world" of work. And when former students need to talk over a personal problem, very often the Woodshop is the place they choose to go for advice. Many former students came by this summer, some to help us, others to tell students about their own work stories, including Nick (see page 4), Tajjier and Jonathan (see the photos to the right →).

Mentor Steve MacIntyre allowed Carly to watch closely and help him to change the motherboard of our CNC router because of a major problem we had over the summer, right in the middle of an important production job that had a deadline. It was a very beneficial learning experience for her. Our Mentors don't plan out simple projects for students, but let them in on the real-world issues that come up when equipment malfunctions. Treating them like adults helps our students grow into competent adults.



And we're grateful for the quick wits of our director, James Smith! When we were approached to quickly build a set for a play at East High School, James saw it as an opportunity. We all worked together, and turned the job around in five working days!



Tajjier shows a new student where we keep the paint, and Jonathan tells students about his job.