



Case Study

Camp Deeny Riback, JCC Metrowest



"Maplewoodshop was one of our most popular activities."

-Dana Gottfried, Art Director,
Camp Deeny Riback, JCC Metrowest

► Camp Vitals

Camp: Deeny Riback, JCC Metrowest is a day camp. Campers have an opportunity to participate in 25+ activities during the summer including fine arts, sports, adventure activities, and instructional swim in one of the two daily swim periods. Deeny Riback proudly celebrates 50 years in 2020

Campers: 400 campers throughout the summer

Location: Flanders, NJ (about 40 miles from JCC Metrowest)

Ages using the Maplewoodshop program: 3½ - 15

Counselors trained: One counselor each season (for 2 seasons). Neither was ever previously trained in woodworking

Use: All campers went to woodworking once a week for a 30-minute period. Some campers chose to make it their week's project and worked in the woodshop 1 hour each day.

► Why Maplewoodshop

Deeny Riback wanted to build out a new area of their 40-acre camp and Maplewoodshop was the perfect anchor for the new space.

Campers have an opportunity to work in crafts and fine art projects at Deeny Riback, but woodworking was a completely different medium never used by the camp before. Directors and staff wanted to expose campers to woodworking because of its novelty - kids are not woodworking at school or home, and because of its tactile qualities.

Woodworking fits in with the Deeny Riback mission of teaching kids the "Super 5" skills: critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, communication and collaboration, flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction.

Using Maplewoodshop's Jewish Values lesson plans, the staff taught the woodworking curriculum through the lens of Jewish values. The projects like the keepsake box teach "help each other and expect to be helped," and other tenets that tie directly to Jewish heritage.

"Campers really enjoyed woodworking. Campers who chose it as their week-long project were in the woodshed for an hour a day, for four to five days each week, and they made amazing projects."

-Dana Gottfried, Director, Camp Deeny Riback, JCC Metrowest

► Funding for The Maplewoodshop Program

Funding was done through a combination of camp and JCC funds. The Program is shared agency-wide; during the camp offseason, it is used in the JCC in afterschool programs or early childhood programs.

► Educating With Maplewoodshop

Project created: Tool tote, keepsake box, footstool, string art, car, jigsaw puzzle

Concepts reinforced: Math, Following directions

Life Skills Learned/Reinforced: Critical thinking and problem-solving, Creativity and innovation, Communication and collaboration, Flexibility and adaptability, Initiative and self-direction, Teamwork, Pride in work

"It was different and it was new and we really saw campers be creative even when we were doing pre-prescribed projects. A lot of times alongside it, they would just be creating their own [project] with the wood scraps - just having fun. It was really an outlet for them that we didn't expect it to be. We're really happy that it became so."

-Dana Gottfried, Director, Camp Deeny Riback, JCC Metrowest

► What's Next?

The camp is going to extend the periods from 30 to 35-or-40-minutes, allowing the campers more time to complete their projects. This means more campers happy with their finished work. The increased time means they will be doing more woodworking this summer, so they will be going through wood faster. To that end, Camp Directors and staff are working on getting more accurate budgets for each project in advance. Maplewoodshop is giving Deeny Riback some pointers on planning ahead. Tips like buying in bulk and getting it delivered, for example, will save time and money for the staff.

Building confidence, creativity, and community in students through woodworking.