



Case Study

Handwork Studio



“Parents always ask, ‘Do the kids really craft for the full 30-hours per week?’ And I can honestly say there are days when I have to go over and say, ‘Put down the saw, you have to eat lunch.’”

- Julia Yosen, Executive Director, Handwork Studio

► Camp Vitals

Camp: The Handwork Studio is a network of “mobile” camp summer programs that teach handicrafts. The camp programming is taught up and down the east coast and includes sewing, knitting, fashion design, and fibers, based on the Waldorf philosophy. The Handwork Studio not only teaches practical art skills, but provides role models for campers as they learn about patience, achievement, and problem-solving. The Handwork Studio is proud of being a creative and educational outlet for campers.

Number of Campers: 300 campers throughout the summer

Headquarters: Philadelphia, PA

Ages using the Maplewoodshop Program: 8-14

Counselors trained: 4 counselors each season (for 2 seasons). None were previously trained in woodworking

Use: Campers arrive weekly and choose their activity, which they will work on exclusively for the entire week, devoting approximately 30 hours to their chosen craft

► Why Maplewoodshop

Handwork Studio teaches campers life skills through crafting. Their mission and the Maplewoodshop mission are almost identical; both teach problem-solving, patience, and achievement.

Camp enrollment for boys has historically been low and the administration hoped that offering a woodworking program would pique interest in boys. It did. In their first year with woodworking, the administration saw boys who did a week of woodworking return the next week for sewing or another craft.

“We saw our retention over the summer [increase. Kids that would usually stay for one week for machine sewing class, they would take a second week of woodworking. Or the other way around. Woodworking] absolutely opened up the doors for us”

-Julia Yosen, Director, Handwork Studio

► Educating With Maplewoodshop

Projects created: Jigsaw puzzle, tool tote, kitchen stool, puppet theater

Concepts reinforced: Following directions, Tool safety, Project planning

Life Skills learned/reinforced: Critical thinking and problem-solving, Creativity, Initiative and self-direction, Pride in work

With 30-hours a week of single-activity programming, campers begin with the basics of safety and learning how to be responsible for the tools. They quickly move on to the Maplewoodshop program projects like the jigsaw and tool tote which help them master the use of the tools. Soon, kids use their creativity to make projects from their imagination, like a puppet theater. They problem-solve and collaborate to make their visions come to life, such as creating wood pieces that could be characters in the puppet theater and crafting a story.

“The Maplewoodshop Program was a really amazing jumping-off point for kids to use a variety of different skills and figure out how to make it their own. So it is exciting for them.”

-Julia Yosen, Executive Director, Handwork Studio

What’s Next?

Handwork Studio is adding two new locations this summer and they expect to work with over 300 kids in woodworking. Registrations are coming in incredibly strong and they are seeing return campers.

“It was a blockbuster program for us, so I think you’ll see how this will be able to relate to really anybody in any type of programming setting.” -Julia Yosen, Director, Handwork Studio



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