

Special Edition

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Special News About Special People

Free of Charge

Gloria's & Erin's Group

Shop

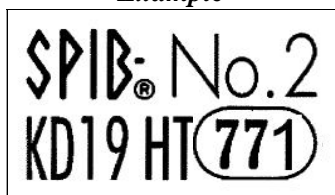
For children in Third and Fourth Grade the possibilities offered by the program expand further. Where before their initial reach might have exceeded their grasp both physically and conceptually, their capabilities and sensibilities are now more in tune. If they face any obstacle at this point in their development as woodworkers, it is often being patient enough to find a project they feel passionate about.

Geography and sustainable forestry may not be the first things that come to mind when thinking of elementary school children engaging in woodworking, but they found their place in your children's Shop curriculum this past month. Revisiting the work we had done when many of these children were in Kindergarten, we established that wood comes from trees, that the majority of wood we use comes from pine trees and what kind of animals and insects live in, on or among pine trees. We talked about why we use pine. Pine is softwood which makes it easy to saw, shape and nail through. Pine grows relatively quickly and is grown primarily by lumber companies who practice sustainable forestry, planting and harvesting trees in methodic cycles. Pine is grown in the United States where government and private organizations regulate and enforce sustainable practices so that ecosystems and animal habitats are not permanently disrupted or destroyed.

We can determine where the pine we buy comes from based on the lumber identification stamps used by these organizations. We can favor buying pine that was grown relatively close to us over lumber grown in distant states to minimize the environmental impact of transporting the wood to our local stores. We can avoid buying unmarked wood as it may have come from regions of the world where the lumber industry is not well regulated and where it may have been harvested solely for profit without regard to the surrounding ecosystem.

We used the shop's supply of lumber and the identification stamps on them to determine where the wood had been grown.

Example



SPIB® This mark told us that the wood was inspected by the Southern Pine Inspection Bureau which inspects a large portion of the lumber cut

and milled in the southern United States. We used a map to locate this region.

771 This mark allowed us to identify the mill where it was cut, dried and graded. Knowing that lumber companies mill their trees as close as possible to the cut site to save transportation costs, we could be reasonably sure that the wood came from trees grown near Troy, Virginia. A look at our map showed the relatively short distance this mill was from our local lumber suppliers as opposed to lumber milled in the northwest states which bore different markings.

We concluded by talking about the opportunity to buy other kinds of goods locally to reduce the environmental costs associated with bringing them to market.

Abby began her year in Shop with the desire to build a bookcase. Since generating a dimensioned drawing and a parts list Abby has been measuring, marking and sawing the project's elements to size. Now in the assembly phase of the project, I note that Abby elected to use a table mounted router with a Roman ogee bit to add a decorative edge to the top and bottom of the piece of furniture and has elected to drive screws with a cordless drill to hold the project together.

A visually perplexing skyhook toy was Anisa's first undertaking this fall. After initially having a thin pine version break during manufacture, Anisa rallied and created a plywood replica in a single period. Anisa is currently working on a Japanese lantern.

Anna-Olivia's work on her toilet paper roll stand gave her good practice in the practical application of division, multiplication and fractions as she determined how long a pole the project would need to hold a particular number of rolls. Anna Olivia has since followed classmate, Abby, into the bookcase building business. With the carcass pieces cut to size, Anna-Olivia has most recently been using a tape measure and try square to mark out the positions for the project's adjustable shelves' bracket holes.

Caroline has noticed the high level of confidence and independence she is bringing to her project work this year and has ridden that potent duo through the making of a pocket fidget, sets of knitting needles and a notepad holder. Caroline is currently replicating the shop's "Mountain Climber" game that I keep available for rainy day dismissals from the shop.

Chris has just put the finishing touches in the form of decorative woodburning on a nice model boat he began building during his first Shop class of the year. Having made sense of the commercial plans, Chris made good use of his accrued woodworking skills to execute the project in fine form.

Daniel and classmate, Jake, have both been building model castles since their return to the worktables. While it is unclear whether the pair plan to lay claim to their classroom's block area or prime real estate in their respective neighborhoods, the work has found them both capable of independently creating their conceived plywood citadels with unflagging dedication.

Elena cranked out a project book inspired paper pad holder in a single period to start her year in Shop and followed this effort up with a pocket fidget, a woodburned decoration for one of her sisters and two pairs of knitting needles. A capable woodworker, Elena's current work on a small cherry wood box has pointed out that some projects do not lend themselves to a "Close enough is close enough" approach.

Emma has just finished a cherry wood project of her own, a flower press. While mismeasurement of hole locations for the project's pressure creating bolts and wingnuts sent Emma back to the drill press more than once, classmate, Kate, helped her rally her dwindling enthusiasm for the project long enough to see it through to successful completion.

Ethan has been learning about basic DC electrical circuits as he now solders together the momentary switch, LED's and battery case that comprise the nonmechanical elements of a small model robot. The parallel circuit, when activated, will make the wooden automaton's LED eyes light up.

Garrett put in some work making a replacement stretcher for a chair brought to the shop for repair before being inspired to follow project book plans to build a functional water wheel. "What pieces do you have and what pieces do you still need?" was the sum of my support to Garrett midway through the project as he was creating the constituent pieces of the mechanism before going on to assemble them independently.

Like many of his classmates, Hugh began the year making a pocket fidget. When I allowed as the sanding on the diminutive project could be carried out beyond the confines of the shop, Hugh started thinking about his next undertaking. The idea of a wooden volcano with a lined vent for vinegar and baking soda erupted in his mind and Hugh has since been working with a utility saw and drawknife to prepare a length of 6"x6" cedar for turning on the lathe.

While the lack of magnets has kept Isaac from realizing his vision for a miniature maglev train, it hasn't kept him from doing a stellar sanding job on the hardwood train body he created for it during his first Shop class of the year. Unsure as to when he can procure the magnets he needs for the proposed project, Isaac has turned his attentions to turning a laminated hardwood bowl on the lathe.

Isa is midway through the turning of a sizable pine salad bowl on the lathe. Isa's work preceding the use of woodturning gouges found her using a compass and the bandsaw to mark out and cut the project's layered pieces to size before gluing and clamping them together.

Julia's work towards making a small cherry jewelry box, much like classmate, Elena's, revealed the lack of forgiveness the sides of boxes have for mismeasurement or hasty hewing. A few trips back to her plans followed by trips back to the manual

miter saw find Julia now closing in on completing a slightly smaller receptacle than initially planned.

Kate made a pine pocket fidget to commemorate her return to the worktables then, after helping new classmate, Marissa, learn the layout of the woodshop and routines of Shop classes, woodburned a nice sign to adorn her father's door at work. Having helped Emma work through her frustration with setbacks on the latter's flower press, Kate has just joined Emma in brainstorming a joint project in support of an ongoing creative writing effort the two have been pursuing this year.

Having done a nice job finishing off the Mayan pyramid he began working on in Summer Camp this year, Kyle drew up plans for a chicken coop and started laying out the pieces on plywood. Whether his parents or the municipal zoning board put the kibosh on the project is unclear but the following week Kyle started brainstorming ways to make a recirculating pump for a small fish pond. Kyle's current approach is to gear down an AC motor to create an aerating paddlewheel.

Lia began her year in Shop completing the sturdy birdhouse she began building last March. Sporting a pivoting sidewall to allow cleanout, I have yet to hear if the avian domicile has any tenants. Since reprising last year's tchotchke transport on a slightly smaller scale, Lia has been working from project book plans on a tabletop book stand. Work on the wrist saver introduced Lia to the real world application of measuring angles in degrees.

Marissa elected to make a box as her inaugural Shop project. As classmates Elena and Julia discovered, boxes demand accuracy from the planning stage through assembly. Marissa has learned to use tape measure and try square to lay out her cuts, crosscut and coping saws to cut offline (oops!) and the manual miter saw and band saw to square up her box's plywood pieces. I have been pleased with how easily Marissa has taken her setbacks in stride and integrated lessons learned as she moves forward on the project.

Sarah started her year at the drill press working with a hole saw and me to cut out two cherry disks with which to make a yo-yo. A little hand sanding, a dowel to join the halves and an official Duncan yo-yo string and Sarah had her plaything completed. Sarah has since been spending a fair amount of time back at the drill press creating hazard holes for her current project, a knockoff of the "Mountain Climber" game I keep on display in the shop.

Skye completed his plywood shield to start his year in Shop, using a chisel and a heavy duty stitching awl to add leather straps to the defensive item. When Skye's subsequent interest in supporting classmate, Ethan's, work wiring his robot devolved into distracting his classmate, Skye took my suggestion to separate for both of their sakes and was soon building a tabletop marble game of his own design. Skye has since gone on to return to the electric scroll saw to expertly create a challenging interlocking puzzle from a piece of 3/4" pine.

Sports

Children at SRV are given room to explore and build upon their natural abilities, to play in a structure in which all levels of development are valued and supported. They learn that inability is a starting point for growth, and ability an opportunity to teach one another.

The Sports program and organized recess games include a rich mixture of group-building activities, competitive and cooperative games, classic and newly emerging "neighborhood" games, and physically challenging free play activities.

The program is defined by the individual groups. The younger groups and I take turns choosing activities every other week, while the Oldest Group builds their own unique curriculum from the ground up. The democratic process through which the children arrive at their decisions is as integral to the program as the athletics.

Here's the program that your children and I have crafted thus far this year:

Sharks and Minnows – Tag game. A single "shark" calls all "minnows" to try to run past him/her to safety at opposite end of playing area. Tagged "minnows" become "sharks" in next round. Rounds continue until all "minnows" are caught.

It has been great to see how regularly a large number of children initiate this opportunity for extended open field running during their break times.

Capture the Flag – Defend your flag, free teammates being held prisoner and/or enact the name of the game. Lots of open field running and opportunities for developing timing and strategy.

Kick the Jug – *Hide and Seek* in which the "it" stays close to a centrally located plastic jug. The "it" tries to catch hiders by seeing them and calling out their names as hiders try to run in and kick the jug to free previously caught hiders.

Tag (Blob, Hug, Tunnel) – In the first, tagged players hold hands to form an ever growing "it." In the second, players avoid being tagged by holding another player. In the third, tagged players stand with feet apart and are "unfrozen" by another player crawling under them.

The Logical Journey of the SRVinis – A real life version of *The Logical Journey of the Zoombinis*, a computer program designed to develop inductive reasoning skills. Players generate and test hypotheses as they try to determine how they have been divided into two groups based on specific traits, i.e. wearing or not wearing sneakers, having or not having siblings, etc.

Wall Climbing – Traverse climbing on the gym's 8'x30' climbing wall.

Run the Bases – A *Baseball* style game played on the baseball diamond or in the gym. Tennis or foam ball is thrown rather than batted into play. Outs are made by catching ball in air or throwing and hitting backstop with ball when runners are between bases. No force-outs, unlimited base runners, and runners choose when to run. In variations, runners can choose to put tennis ball, soccer ball, Foxtail ball or Frisbee into play.

Jail Tag – *Team Dodgeball* style game. Reprieves regularly granted.

Indoor Obstacle Course – Propel self on scooter, perform shuttle run, demonstrate control on balance disk, climb to top of climbing wall, make three consecutive jumps with jump rope, make initial and secondary hit to wrap tetherball around pole, toss beanbag into ring, propel puck into goal with hockey stick, perform successful skip with skip-ball, clear high jump bar.

Team Dodgeball – Two teams throwing, catching and dodging balls. I do not recommend Ben Stiller's depiction of the sport.

Ships and Sharks – Small groups of shipmates work cooperatively to try to "sail" their hula hoop "ships" from one port to another while keeping one another safe during "shark attacks."

Until next time,

Mike