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## Zenith Community Arts Foundation to Build Mobile Wood Shop

### Receives Grant from DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities

Washington, DC - November 26, 2019 [The Zenith Community Arts Foundation](#) (ZCAF) is pleased to announce it has been awarded a \$50,000 grant from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. The 1:1 Matching Grant is to support the building of a Wood Shop and a Mobile Wood Shop (MWS) to teach woodworking to DC residents. The Wood Shop, to be located at 1429 Iris St NW, Washington, DC, will serve as the headquarters for larger equipment, project storage, and raw wood storage. The Wood Shop will be available to Ward 4 residents, serving ZCAF's immediate neighbors.

The Mobile Wood Shop has been a dream of Margery Goldberg for years. Goldberg, the Executive Director of ZCAF, is also a wood sculptor and furniture designer. "Our goal is to teach skills to a new generation, specifically woodworking and finished carpentry," said Margery Goldberg. This grant provides initial capital for ZCAF to start construction on both wood shops. "We are working on securing additional funds from regional companies and organizations, including those in the building trades," said Ron Nessen, Board President of ZCAF. "There is incredible demand for carpenters today and this project presents an opportunity to expand residents' exposure to wood working and career opportunities, especially for those interested in the trades."

As member of the Ward 4 Cultural Committee and active in other community groups, Zenith staff frequently hear about local desire for additional neighborhood arts and education programming. According to Brandon Todd, Ward 4 Councilmember, "The Mobile Wood Shop is an exciting project for this neighborhood and the city overall. It is an incredibly innovative approach to skill training. The Mobile Wood Shop will allow ZCAF to travel to different wards throughout the District, improving their capacity to teach and expanding the District's workforce of skilled craftsmen. By teaching in community centers – places that already offer public programs – neighbors will meet neighbors and build connections."

Skills in wood working can lead to a profitable career, and the industry is aging out even though demand is rising. Access to a woodworking education is getting harder and harder to find, as wood shops are removed from schools. Trades apprenticeships focus on construction skills, which is far different from finished carpentry and cabinetry.

Despite the abundance of plastics, metals, and other materials, wood products continue to be an important part of our daily lives. The industries that typically hire woodworkers include furniture manufacturing, cabinet makers, musical instrument manufacturing, mobile home production, set design, and construction. “Through these facilities, ZCAF will be able to offer a professional education in wood working through our Pre-Apprenticeship Training (PAT) program to a wide demographic,” said Goldberg. Individuals who complete the PAT program, will be eligible to pursue apprenticeships with one of ZCAF’s trades academy partners, or advanced job training elsewhere.

## **Background / Mission Statement**

Zenith Community Arts Foundation (ZCAF) is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization committed to arts advocacy, arts education, and public art, as well as using art and creativity to enrich the Greater Washington DC area, with an emphasis on our local community. Based in the Shepherd Park neighborhood of Ward 4, ZCAF achieves our goals by fostering alliances between area artists, businesses, other non-profits, and government agencies.

## **Mobile Woodshop**

Our goal is to teach skills to a new generation, specifically woodworking and finished carpentry. As wood shops vanish from schools, it is more and more difficult to learn wood working at any life stage.

Our target demographics include DCPS high school students, community college students, veterans, and seniors. By learning to use their hands, participants will build confidence, strength of character, and problem-solving capabilities, as well as transferable skills that can be applied to well-paid careers filled with a great sense of accomplishment and pride. Remodeling a home that has been in the family for years, is affordable, sustainable, and extends pride of ownership across generations. As housing prices soar in DC, renovating a home is an affordable means of maintaining legacy home ownership.

By bringing the tools out of the classroom and into communities in need, our cohorts can practice their skills, learn with experienced woodworkers and artists, improve their communities by helping with neighbors’ homes or larger neighborhood projects, develop entrepreneurial skills, and foster a sense of accomplishment and pride.

In addition, the Mobile Wood Shop can be used for art projects throughout the city and in the parks. We will encourage other non-profits to utilize our mobile woodworking facilities and offer them to city festivals, community projects, and disaster relief. The uses for a mobile wood shop are vast.

