



WALL SPACE

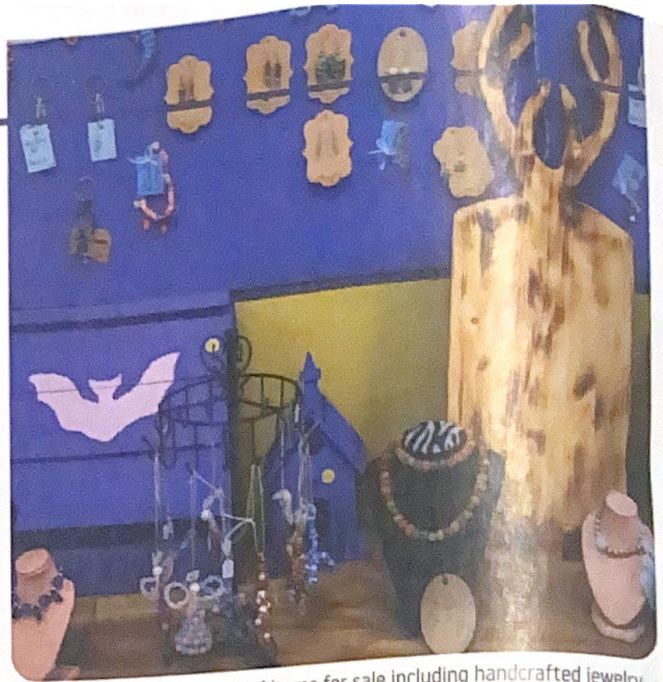
▲ Occupational instructors Thomas Kelly, Sophie Pynn, and Pino Migliazza hold a sign that reflects the three core mission values at St. Joseph's Care Group (SJCG). Supervisor Doug Dowhos explains that Team Werks is about creating opportunities and ownership for people dealing with chronic mental illnesses or addictions. Hours are flexible, spaces are fully accessible, and there is one-to-one job coaching. There is approximately 7,000 square feet of indoor space in Victoriaville Centre dedicated to the different Team Werks business units.

Productive and Empowering Spaces

Team Werks

Story by Tiffany Jarva, Photos by Kay Lee

▼ In addition to building beautiful bare wood furniture, members and clients can choose from a wide range of jobs including washing cars, yard maintenance, collecting paper, and providing shredding services to local organizations. Staff say the confidence gained—and for some, the opportunity to have an ownership stake—have played significant roles in supporting recovery.



▲ Craft Werks has a variety of items for sale including handcrafted jewelry, dish cloths and towels, paintings, drawings, woodworking, and more.

It's busy at Team Werks. Spaces hum in different ways, sometimes a little louder, sometimes very quiet, yet still productive. Saws zip through 2x4s, cafeteria dishes clatter, rags are cut and sorted, documents are shredded, and seeds are planted and harvested. And so much more.

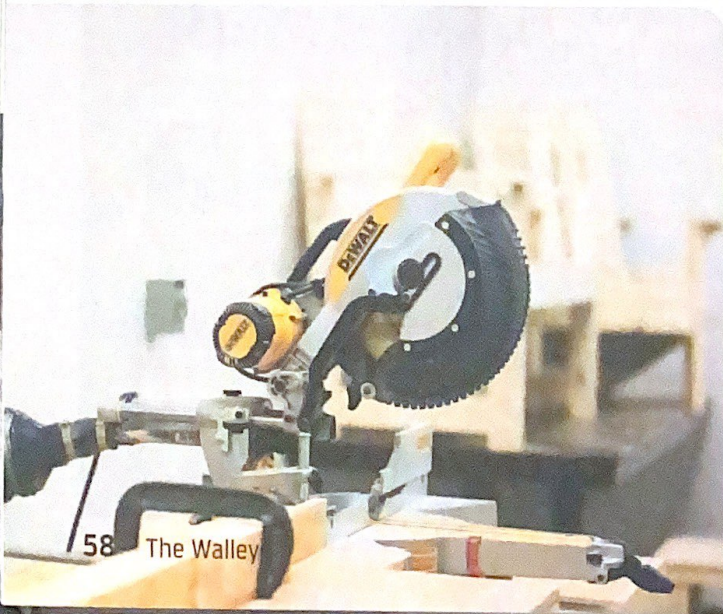
For over 20 years, the locally developed, award-winning program has been all about empowering people recovering from mental health and addictions challenges. "We're making products; we're providing opportunities for employment and ownership," says Doug Dowhos, recovery supports supervisor at St. Joseph's Care Group. Team

Werks is a worker-owned co-operative and consists of different business units, including Wood Werks, Green Werks Café, Shred Werks, Rag Werks, Piece Werks, Craft Werks, Labour Werks, and Green Werks Garden. It is one of the largest worker co-ops in Ontario, with 25 members with shares and an additional 25 clients in training placements.

"The spaces are client-centered, supporting unmet needs in the community, including employment, training, and peer support in recovery," Dowhos says.

To find out more about Team Werks products or services, check out teamwerks.ca.

▼ A co-op member works on finishing the base of a clock. Whether building wood products or providing needed labour services to the community at large, Team Werks is about running a range of businesses, creating confidence, and empowering people, says Dowhos.





▲ The smell of freshly cut wood permeates the Wood Werks shop, where products like raised planter boxes, benches, Muskoka chairs, bird houses, and cat houses are being built. "We are in a partnership to build products and organically help each other out," says Dowhos. Occupational instructor Migliozza agrees. "There is a real sense of family. Clients are constantly telling us this is great therapy." The program has been recognized as a positive model throughout Ontario and Canada.

▼ Wood products are being sanded by members to be sold, with profits going back into the Team Werks initiative. "The peer-to-peer training and relationships are a big part of reintegration into the community," says Dowhos.



▲ Supervisor Dowhos and a co-op member stand in front of tools of the trade in the program's woodworking shop.

► Many of the business units overlap. For example, Wood Werks builds raised planters and boxes for the Green Werks Garden, located in a dedicated outdoor space at the Sister Margaret Smith Centre on Lillie Street. In return, the garden provides food for the café, local markets, and the Regional Food Distribution Association (RFDA). A "Path to Wellness" has also been created at the garden site, which leads to a medicine wheel healing circle. "Last year we grew over 2,000 pounds of produce," says Dowhos.



▼ Gorgeous, hand-crafted charcuterie boards are the newest products being produced by Wood Werks.

