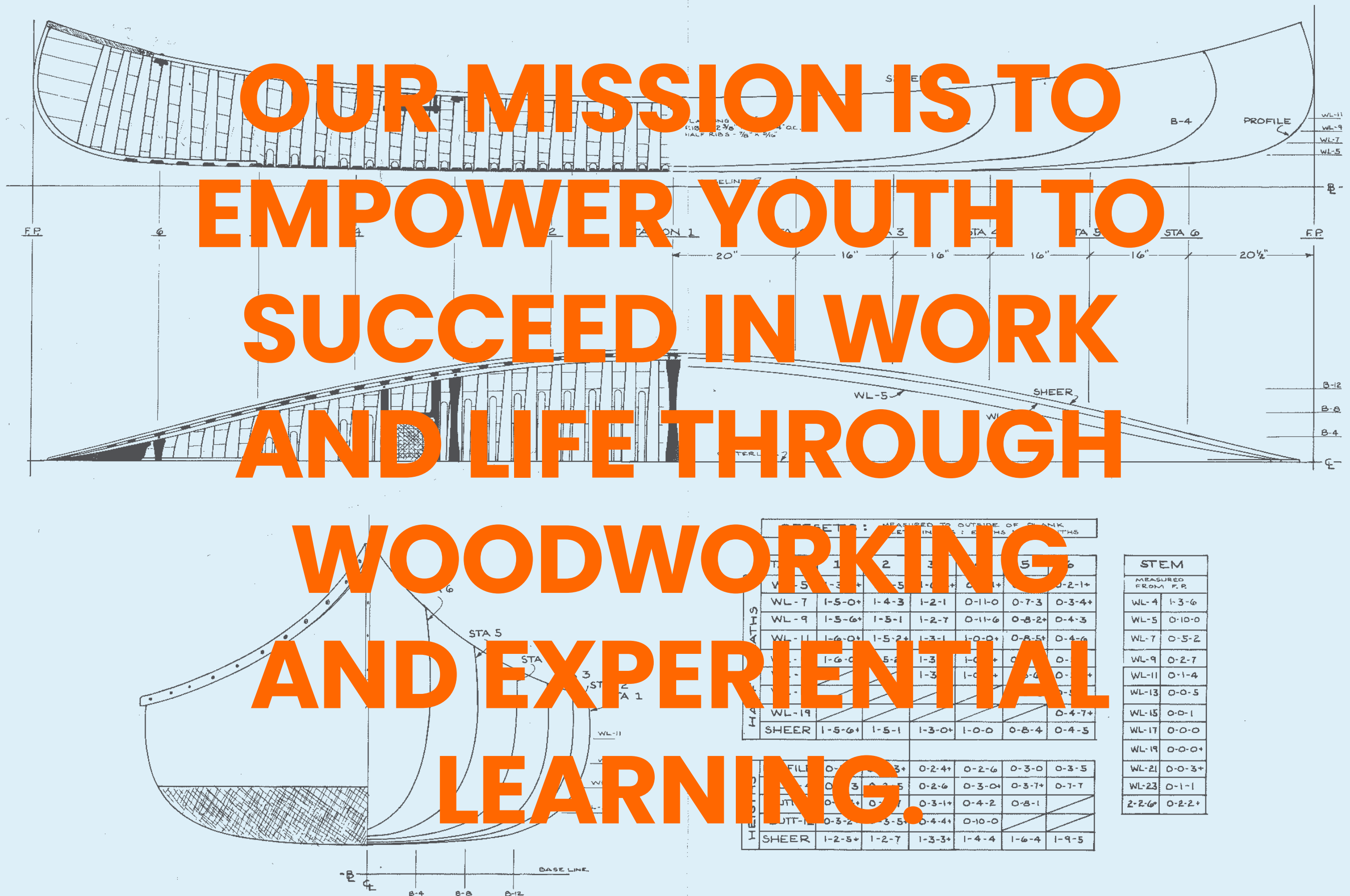


Learn More.
urbanboatbuilders.org



OUR MISSION IS TO
EMPOWER YOUTH TO
SUCCEED IN WORK
AND LIFE THROUGH
WOODWORKING
AND EXPERIENTIAL
LEARNING.



HISTORY

In 1995, a small group of community leaders saw a lack of opportunities for youth to learn new skills through hands-on activities. Many of these leaders had woodworking skills and an interest in boats. They thought, "Why not teach youth to build boats together?" and Urban Boatbuilders (UBB) was launched.

What started as an effort to provide youth with a chance to work with their hands has expanded to address youth unemployment and a persistent graduation gap between white youth and youth of color. Youth who join Urban Boatbuilders not only gain technical and social-emotional skills, but they also build career readiness skills that prepare them to pursue their academic and career goals.

Since its' inception, Urban Boatbuilders has stayed true to its mission to empower youth to succeed in work and life through woodworking and experiential learning.

"I only had the haziest view of what Urban Boatbuilders would become. All I really wanted to do was to build boats with young folk. It's been impressive to see the amount of supporters who have rallied around this organization. Today, Urban Boatbuilders is providing jobs and training for underserved youth, igniting the love of learning for kids in schools, and is a positive contributor to our greater community. I'm proud to say that I'm a part of the Urban Boatbuilders family, and I hope you are too."

– Seitu Jones, Co-Founder



*You do good. I've talked to those
funny, smart, interesting kids. Boats, nature, all good.*



PROGRAMS

EMPOWERMENT
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The **apprenticeship program** provides paid employment training to underserved youth facing barriers to employment. Three days each week, apprentices work as part of a team toward a common goal - building a boat. Through the process, youth learn and develop social and emotional skills such as communication, self-management, and critical problem-solving. Apprentices also engage in weekly workshops ranging from workplace etiquette to financial literacy. Field trips to local businesses, colleges, and training programs expand their exposure and understanding of the possibilities for their future. They develop the skills, agency, and confidence they need to pursue their goals and achieve success.

OUR VALUES
COLLABORATION
EQUITY

The **partnership program** delivers academically-enhanced woodworking to students through hands-on, experiential learning. Partnering with schools and community organizations, Urban Boatbuilders delivers a research-based curriculum that creates an engaging, active educational experience with students. In collaboration with our partners, Urban Boatbuilders meets the individual needs of students by tailoring programming to develop academic, social and emotional, and career readiness skills. Through the program, youth achieve success, increase their academic engagement, and ignite their love of learning.

I believe in your work
to transform the lives of young people

The Apprenticeship Program provides paid job training to underserved youth, helping them build the skills to succeed in work, school, and life.



Youth, especially youth of color and low-income youth, lack both the academic and workforce training opportunities needed to achieve success in their futures. These barriers continue the cycle of generational poverty and inhibit upward mobility. When youth have access to expanded learning opportunities at school, in the community, and at home, they are more likely to gain the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to lead and succeed.

We hire youth 16–21 years old who are facing one or more barriers to employment. We prioritize these young people because they may not have access to opportunities like this. Using referrals from the community, Urban Boatbuilders hires and trains approximately 50 youth through the apprenticeship program each year.

In addition to an hourly wage, the apprenticeship program also offers growth in job responsibilities. Starting as a junior apprentice, youth have the opportunity to become senior apprentices and even youth instructors.

Barriers to employment may include disabilities, chemical dependency, parenting responsibilities, juvenile offenses, and enrollment in diversion programs. Urban Boatbuilders considers additional challenges for youth such as immigration status, gender identity, and sexual identity.

Wilderness trips are a great way to celebrate their skills and reflect on their journey as an Urban Boatbuilder apprentice. Spending a week in the Boundary Waters is a challenging and transformative experience that promotes a life-long relationship with the wilderness. Seeing the Northern Lights, portaging a canoe built by their own hands, and eating around a fire with friends they have made during the apprentice program offers experiences they will take with them through life.



I like the changes Urban Boat Builders is making in young peoples' lives and future prospects.

"Hello, my name is Mehkaio. I am a Youth Instructor, someone that apprentices can reach out for help and guidance, and lead each day in the shop. As a Youth Instructor, I have learned how to plan out how to inform others about what will happen during the day, what they are going to learn, and how they are going to do it. The youth instructor role has a lot of responsibility.

When I am older, I would like to be wealthy, and be happy, and have a positive life. I have learned how to teach others to do their work and how to answer their questions. I have learned to have more confidence in myself in everything that I do. I thought being a youth instructor would be much harder than just being an apprentice, but I realized that I had the confidence I needed to do it well.

I have one more cohort where I will be a youth instructor. The more you stay at Urban Boatbuilders, the more challenging the roles become. But you can learn a lot from your mistakes and it's okay to make lots of them. The more people can be confident in themselves, the more success they will have. And Urban Boatbuilders helped me to have the confidence I need to succeed."

1 - Toolbox created by J. Animals, waves, and pumpkin created with marker and woodburning.

2 - Ryder's paddle, toolbox, canoe seat, and spokeshave.

"Hello, I'm Ryder. I'm a senior apprentice at Urban Boatbuilders. I use he/him and they/them pronouns. I joined UBB last spring after hearing about it from my counselor Mr. Flanders at Roosevelt high school.

My favorite thing at UBB is that I've got to meet all kinds of people from different parts of the cities. It really feels like a community. I also learn how to be more responsible and manage my money better. I enjoy learning how to use different kinds of hand tools at my job. My favorite is the spokeshave!

So far, I've made a boat paddle and a toolbox. I'm currently working on the Wilderness Traveler canoe with my cohort. I wove the canoe seats using nylon string. After that, we varnished them! Using the skills I learned at UBB, I've almost finished a paddle I've been working on at home. I want to apply the skills I learned at UBB to use at my next job. I want to do something in the construction trade."

3 - Art on a thank you card by J and Lily. Find more of Lily's art on Instagram @LilyStaffa_.





"Hello! My name is Janiah and I am a Youth Instructor at Urban Boatbuilders.

I've been working at Urban Boatbuilders since January starting as a regular apprentice. When I first started this job, I was absolutely terrified because I heard that many workplaces do not value the employee or think about their mental health needs. I came in with the idea that I was not going to be supported and left to figure things out by myself.

In reality, it was the exact opposite.

I came into an environment where I was being pushed to do new things that I told myself I could never accomplish. But regardless of how many times I put myself down, I was encouraged by the community here to keep trying and eventually achieved something I didn't expect would happen walking in.

For example, when I first came to Urban Boatbuilders I struggled with my mental health. I thought, well you're going to have to suck it up because you're here working and nobody cares. In reality, everybody cared and that's something that helped push me to keep working and try my hardest and not give up even at my hardest points. The minute I walked in I walked into the most loving and caring environment I have been in a very long time and that's something that shifted my entire mindset for my work. The culture here allowed me to take the initiative to prioritize my own mental health, set healthy boundaries, and not be constrained by the stigma that revolves around mental health in workplaces.

After being an apprentice, I earned a promotion to the position of senior apprentice. As a senior apprentice I continued to build my skills while I worked on canoes, paddles, and toolboxes with my crew.

I earned another promotion to the position I hold now - a youth instructor. As a youth instructor, my role is to work with the staff instructor to set plans and goals for my crew. As a youth instructor I am not afraid to provide feedback and instruction to my peers when they need it. When I first came into this role, I felt a lot of anxiety because I went from getting help from other instructors to becoming the instructor myself. It was definitely a shift but I felt empowered by the feedback and support from the community at urban boatbuilders, and felt like I was given the patience to grow into a youth instructor.

I've learned how to assert and have honest and open conversations with the people around me. I have been able to grow and be a different person in the best way possible and I never thought walking in that I was going to be able to work in an environment that would help me grow and not tear me down more. Honestly, I can never thank everyone enough for the things that they have done for me while I've worked at Urban Boatbuilders.

Walking in everyday, I want to make others feel the way I've felt during my time here. I honestly always came into work never wanting to do anything but make other people's day feel a little bit better and I really hope that that attitude helped the environment because honestly, the people that I work with have slowly become my family. I really hope that my presence helped them through hard days because I know that their presence helped me through some of the hardest days that I've had.

And I just want to finish off this speech by saying that I am beyond appreciative of the people that I've worked with and the people that have helped keep each other accountable for the community we have now. We have built this positive, loving, nurturing, fun, and safe space together and I want to recognize the effort of my peers, past, present, and future. I am and forever will be thankful for the experiences I've gained here because I've seen what a healthy workplace feels like and will want to find that in my future jobs."



We paddle on...
Lake Nokomis **Boundary Waters**
St. Croix River **Mississippi River**
Lake Pepin **Como Lake**
...and more!



The **Partnership Program** brings boatbuilding to the classroom to engage students who thrive through creative, hands-on education.

"Urban Boatbuilders' hands-on curriculum allows my students to experience success in a tactile way - they see the product of their own work. In the classroom, students are successful, but they don't necessarily understand that just by looking at the results of a math quiz. They have to feel it, and when they put their hands on the work, that allows them to interact with an understanding in their own growth."

Kent Miller, Parkway
Montessori Middle
School teacher

Urban Boatbuilders tailors each program to meet the needs of students and staff. Our instructors meet partners in their classrooms with all the tools and materials needed to complete a project. In anywhere from two weeks to an entire semester, students are exposed to hands-on, experiential learning in a new way. We value hands-on learning because it allows students to actively immerse themselves in a subject as opposed to traditional passive learning.

You are helping youth develop skills that can serve them throughout life and gain confidence - what could be more important?



*your great work w/ youth,
teaching new skills which increased confidence
and brings them outdoors, which heals*

Benefits of Our Programs

Increased self-confidence

Academic engagement

New relationships with peers

Key Partners

Focus Beyond Transition Services

Saint Paul Public Schools

Minneapolis Public Schools

Jennings Community School

Duluth Folk School

South Saint Paul Community Center

Transition Plus Services

Stillwater Alternative Learning Center

Northeast Metro 916 Intermediate School District

Promise Neighborhood of Central Minnesota

GEMS/GISE STEM Academy





VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers move our mission forward. They come from all over the Twin Cities with various backgrounds such as teachers, woodworkers, parents, and outdoor enthusiasts. They transform raw lumber into detailed boat parts, ensure our space is youth-friendly, and work to make our organization more effective. Volunteers represent Urban Boatbuilders to the public and advocate for our mission.

BOARD

Board members shape strategy, provide vision, and oversee our collective work. They apply their professional and personal experiences to ensure our mission is being lived out in our programs. Our board members have experience in the nonprofit sector, education, law, finances, and local leadership.



Michael
He/Him

"One of the most impactful experiences was when I had the opportunity to bring youth into the Boundary Waters in 2016. After spending all summer building and learning in the workshop, the trip was much anticipated and did not disappoint. It was one of those quintessential wilderness experiences filled with moose sightings, perfect weather, and plenty of delicious camp food. It was amazing to see how adaptable our group became throughout the week. At first, folks were apprehensive about the "bathrooms" and bear scares, but by the end, youth took control of camp cooking, navigation, and campsite set-up. It was just a blast!" – Michael



EB
She/Her

Andrew
He/Him & They/Them



Anaïs
They/Them



Alphonso
He/Him



Liam
They/Them



Dennis
He/Him



Janelle
She/Her



Elise
She/Her



Marc
He/Him

STAFF

IMPACT

We have served over 8,000 youth and partnered with more than 100 community organizations.

Apprentice Alumni

100% of alumni believe the jobs they have found are helpful in their career trajectory.

100% of alumni have either completed high school, earned their GED, or feel that they are on-track to graduate from high school on time.

96% of youth say Urban Boatbuilders has helped feel more confident in their future.

94% of youth say Urban Boatbuilders has helped them:

- Explore careers that they did not know about.
- Identify careers that they are interested in.
- Connect to people who support their goals.

85% of youth believe their experience at Urban Boatbuilders has helped them deal with challenges at school.

77% have been hired in at least one position after completing the apprenticeship program.

Partnership

100% of partners indicated that the program was successful in meeting their goals.

100% of partners indicated that the project helped their students:

- Experience tangible success.
- Build new or stronger relationships with peers.
- Redefine the types of relationships that are possible with adults.

86% found this program to be a "very good fit" for students that struggle in a traditional classroom setting.

"We started with the general idea of wanting the lamp to incorporate the materials and process we use to build our boats. After brainstorming multiple different designs, we found inspiration in the unique ways we use various materials differently. The end result embodies a boat aesthetic with more of an artistic, yet practical approach."
- Freya and Subashri, Youth Instructors

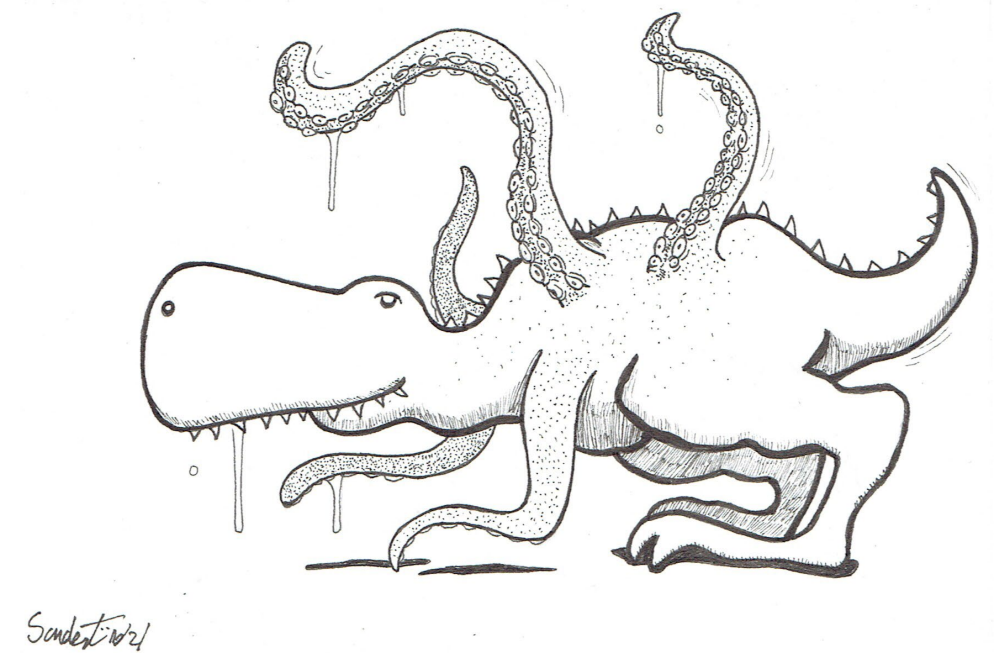
**Commissioned project by
Springboard for the Arts**



"Hi, I'm Isaiah Sandquist and my pronouns are he/him/his. I am an alumnus of Urban Boatbuilders UBB. I originally came to UBB in 2018 and stayed until my graduation in 2020. While working at UBB, I enjoyed using tools for crafting, especially the Japanese saw. In addition to this, one of the most important parts of UBB was how each cohort felt like a community where I knew that I could rely on every member.

Currently, I am attending a transition program whose mission is to provide learning in postsecondary education, employment, and independent living. In addition to the transition program, I also enjoy using my skill in viewing things from a different perspective to make music playlists based on a single theme and drawing adorable little creatures that I call Scribble Beasts.

Each of my Scribble Beasts starts as a quick random mess of lines. Then I look at the scribble, finding shapes and patterns that look like some sort of monster or animal and turn it into one. My current career goal for my future is to sell my illustrations under my pen name of @sandertoons on Instagram."



1. Final Installation
2. Practice Model
3. Digital Mock Up
4. CNC Carving

URBAN BOATBUILDERS

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Council™

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STANDARDS**

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