



BENCHMARKS

NORTH BENNET STREET SCHOOL 2020-2021

“The actions we take today are not just responses to the global pandemic, to economic uncertainty, and to racial justice in America. They are points signaling the future.”

SIGNALING THE FUTURE

BY SARAH TURNER, PRESIDENT

We thought deeply about what to share in this issue of *Benchmarks*. True to its name, the magazine reflects both a point in time, and a threshold below which one doesn't fall. The world needs us to think in terms of both "where are we?" and "where do we want to go?" Holding on to old ways needs to be reconsidered; this is a time of great change.

You'll see within this publication the many actions our community undertook to meet the challenges of our times head-on, in brave and creative ways. We share how our faculty and students continued to learn and train at home in a novel fashion, how our middle school programming moved online to entertain and educate homebound kids, how the tools of our trades have shifted to include the digital, and how our Annual Celebration of Craft exhibition pivoted to tell the stories of innovative artisans.

Embedded within are also hints at the ways we as a community are supporting one another, through fundraising, or even just a kind word. Both are meaningful, and powerful, as we know.

But a benchmark isn't just a snapshot of the current moment. It's a foundation upon which one builds; something aspirational, a measure we'd like to reach. The actions we take today are not just responses to the global pandemic, to economic uncertainty, and to racial justice in America. They are points signaling the future.

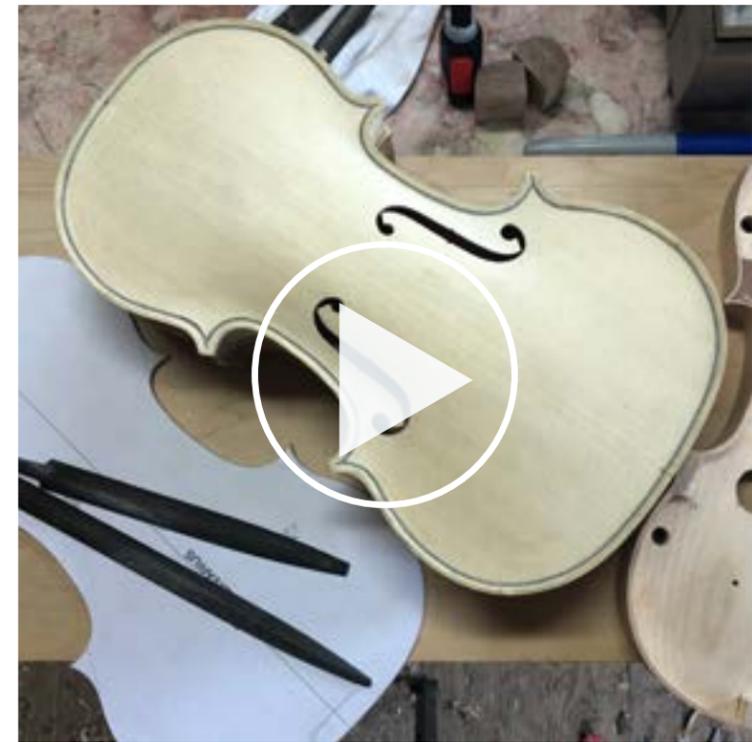
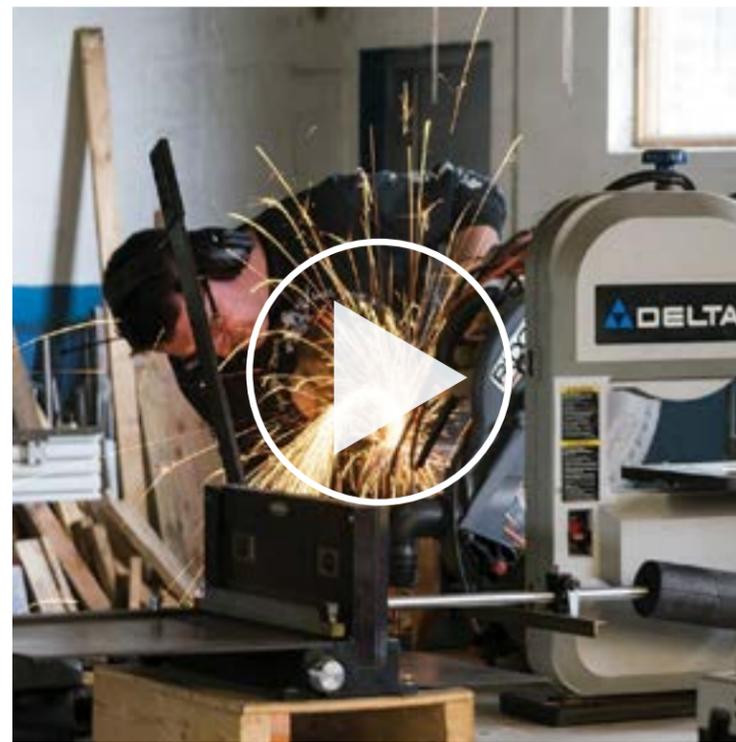
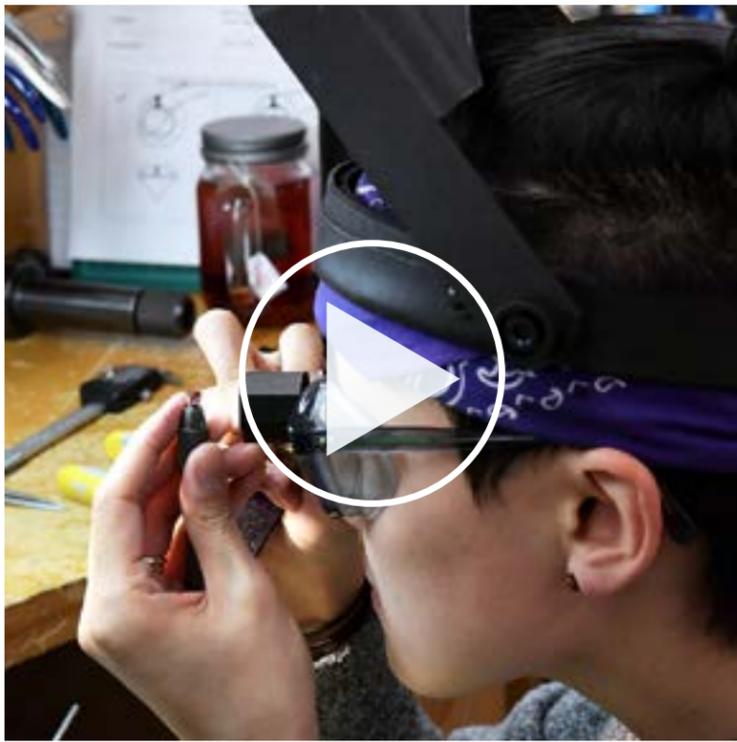
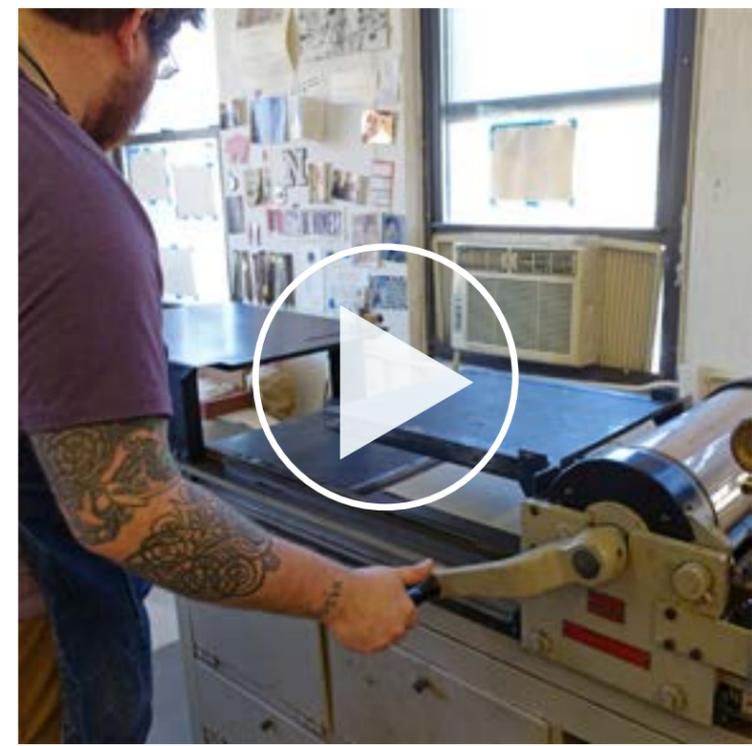
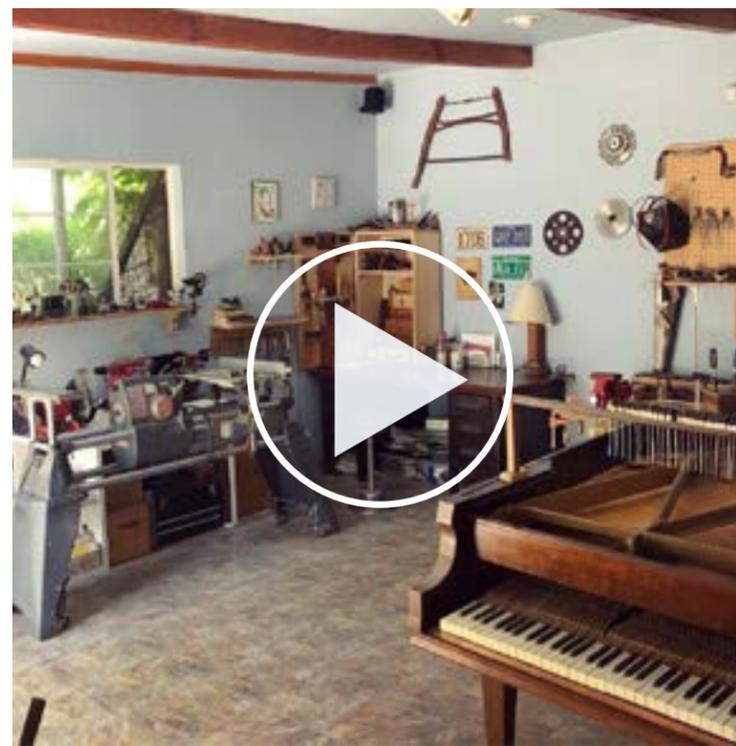
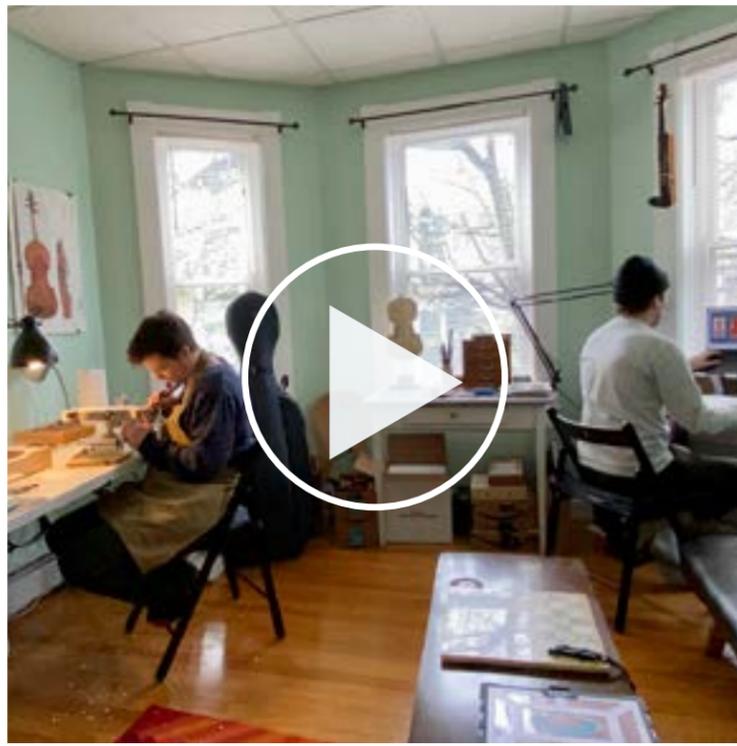
And so we will continue to evolve the ways in which we train and learn, the tools and technology we employ, and the means by which we connect with one another. We too will change, especially in our approach to diversity and inclusion. As we share in "On Justice & Equity," there is no simply returning to the status quo when it comes to this area of work. We as craftspeople understand that what is broken should be fixed, not left to languish. Instead, we are driven to repair, and that's what we'll do.

We have been affected by this year's sudden upheaval and urgent learning. Through this, we have innovated in ways large and small, finding both challenges and successes we never imagined. And in all of this, we have flexed and grown.

The grand experiment happening all around us will reshape our habits of work and life. As we forge ahead, [reopening this fall](#), NBSS will be steadily, sturdily at the forefront, helping to cultivate space for a wider community of people. In all of this, we will listen, learn, and work with heads, hands, and hearts aligned.

I look forward to this future, with all of you.





IN THE MAKING

INSIGHTFUL CONVERSATIONS WITH TRADESPEOPLE, ARTISANS, & ENTREPRENEURS OF ALL BACKGROUNDS

SHOP TOURS

A VIRTUAL STROLL THROUGH THE STORES, SHOPS, AND STUDIOS OF NBSS STUDENTS AND GRADS

FROM HANDS-ON TRAINING TO REMOTE LEARNING

BY BARBARA RUTKOWSKI

When NBSS closed its building in mid-March, it not only disrupted schedules and in-progress work, but also upended its educational model. With all students and faculty safely at home, our community dove into untested waters: remote learning. For all of the inherent challenges, the commitment, creativity, and flexibility of all those involved was wondrous to behold.

At first glance, it may seem as though what we teach can't be translated to the virtual world. The hand-based [Sloyd system of manual arts training](#) is the core of our educational philosophy, after all. But while you have to use your hands, Sloyd is not location dependent; the framework of progressing through lessons of increasing complexity can be applied to any project, anywhere.

Unable to meet in person for what would become the rest of the semester, instructors explored a wide range of methods to teach their students. Many maintained hand skills with projects that could be done from the kitchen table, some grew student's knowledge of business and marketing, and several took on research projects they wouldn't normally have time to cover.

But one needs the proper tools to work effectively. Understanding that some students wouldn't have the technical infrastructure or know-how to stay connected, the School provided computers to those in need, made sure internet connectivity was present/sound, and offered tutorials for those with a software learning curve.

Though we acknowledge there's no substitution for in-person instruction, the creativity, passion, and willingness to stay the course has been truly inspiring, and is a testament to the strength and character of our community.

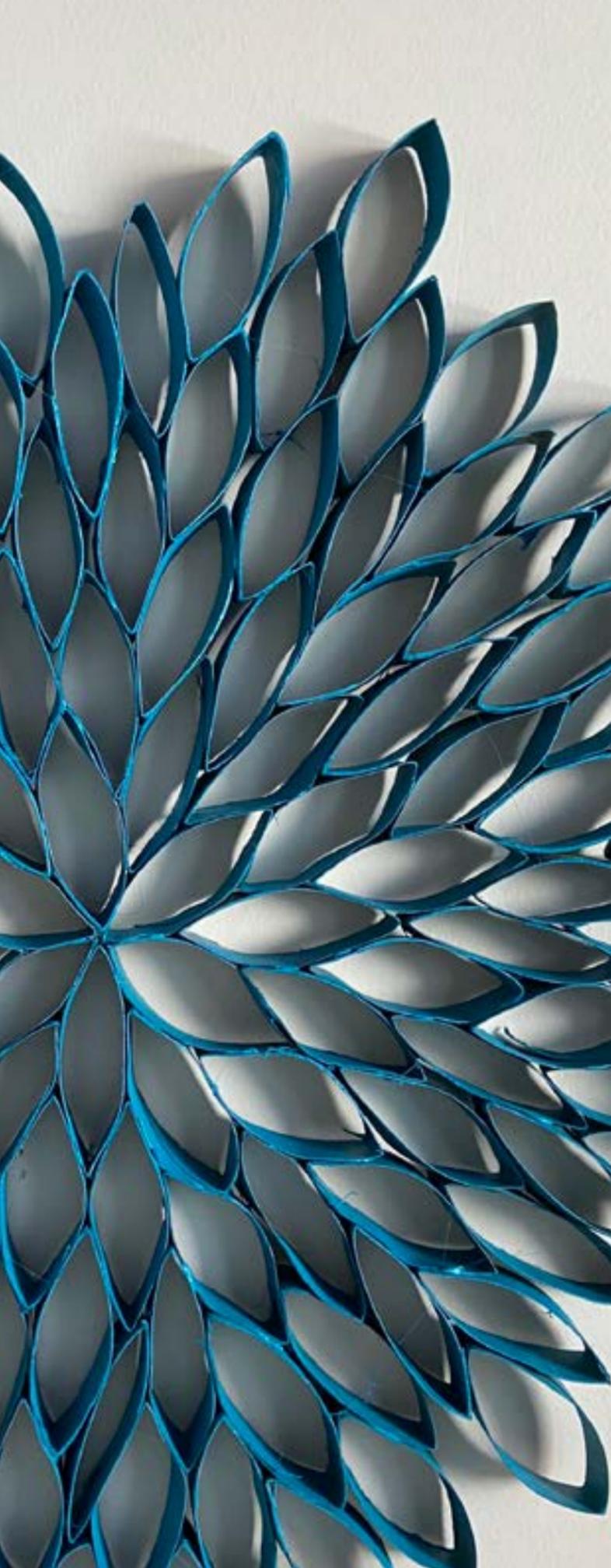
The move into online instruction is no small feat, and our community flexed like never before in response. We know that the lessons learned now will continue to serve both the School, and our students, well for years to come.



HOW THE WORK WAS DONE

For all of their similarities in approach, the specific tasks varied widely by program:

- Cabinet & Furniture Making and Bookbinding programs partnered with publishers [Lost Art Press](#), [Guild of Bookworkers](#), and [Fine Woodworking](#) to dig into research-based projects. These companies generously shared their content with our students.
- Jewelry Making & Repair students worked remotely in groups, keeping them up to speed on the technical complexities of small-scale joinery and attachments.
- Preservation Carpentry students surveyed and drafted assessments of historic buildings in their neighborhoods.
- Piano Technology and Locksmithing & Security Technology students were given hypothetical clients and tasked with quoting out the job—important practice for the real world.
- Carpentry students utilized Google classroom to teach the principles of roof & timber framing.
- Violin Making & Repair students got a jump on research papers needed for graduation, and due to the nature of their work, many were still able to progress on their projects.
- Continuing Education instructors created a series of [fun how-to videos for kids](#) that could be done remotely using materials and tools found around the home.



DO TRY THIS AT HOME

OUR MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM GOES ONLINE

Before the pandemic, the [NBSS Middle School program](#) was a glorious mess. Four instructors (three of whom are NBSS graduates) gave lessons in book arts and woodworking for students aged 9-14 from two local schools. An annual paste paper project was “legendary,” says Director of Continuing Education Katie Theodoros, for the chaos it created. “Instructors would have to come in at 6:00 am the next morning to clean it up.”

What’s happening now? Our instructors have been making brief, bright how-to videos for a range of projects: a petal fold book, a Turkish map fold, a recycled cardboard flower sculpture. The videos keep students active, allow instructors to apply their ingenuity in new ways, and continue the School’s tradition of being a partner with the local community, which is now global.



Erin Fletcher BB '12, middle school instructor: We jumped right into the process of making videos, partly because we wanted to make an April 1st deadline to celebrate International Edible Book Day. We scraped together items from our house to make camera rigs and worked with the natural light beaming into our kitchens.

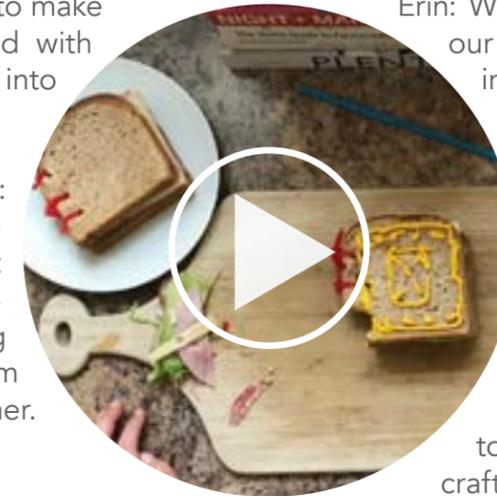
Colin Urbina BB '11, middle school instructor: When you’re involved in a craft, you have to become a problem-solver—so figuring out a way to hold my phone’s camera for a top-down view wasn’t particularly difficult. My rig is a bunch of scrap wood and hardware from my basement, hot glued and screwed together. It’s not pretty, but it gets the job done.

Erin: We had to rethink certain aspects of our teaching style. We had to be concise yet informative. We also had to work with materials that would be readily available to most viewers.

Katie Theodoros, Director of Continuing Education: Bringing lessons online is less about following the curriculum and more about human connection. Many students are now apart from their friends and their school routines. Seeing familiar faces and engaging in activities they enjoy is an important part of lowering the additional stress and anxiety that many young people are currently facing.

Erin: Middle schoolers go into the experience of making—the tools, the techniques—with such curiosity and humor and awe. It’s a joy to nourish their creative ideas.

Colin: I love the way they respond differently to our projects. Some of them want to go carefully, step by step, through a process; some of them get an idea and run with it. Printmaking, calligraphy, comic strips—they’re open to anything.



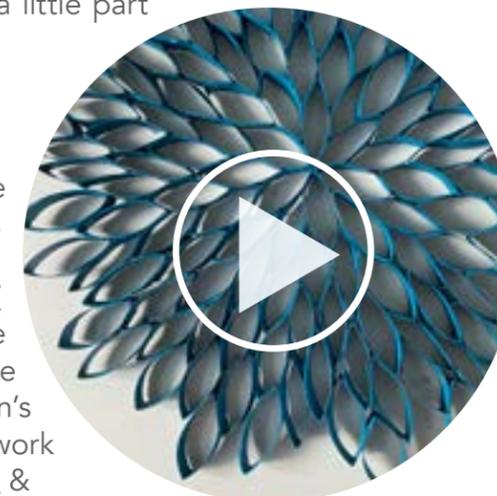
Katie: One of the cornerstones of our Sloyd philosophy—which is really the founding spirit of NBSS—is getting people to work with their hands. And the research about effective career and technical education is clear: you have to start early to engage young people. So if we can help local schools see the value of handwork, then we can slowly start to change the cultural conversation.

Erin: We make these videos with our middle school students in mind, but I hope they reach a wider audience. Working with your hands can be therapeutic; it stimulates the mind in technical and creative ways. Maybe the videos will pull someone out of a funk, or inspire a new hobby, or bring a family together around a shared craft.

Colin: North Bennet Street has played a central role in my life for nearly twelve years. I went through the Bookbinding program, I’m active in the neighborhood, North Bennet graduates rent bench space in my studio and are some of my best friends. It’s such a wonderful community—and we’re doing our part to bring a little part of it online.

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You can find more hands-on activities for learners of all ages at nbss.edu/ce. And make sure to check out more of Colin’s and Erin’s book artistry and work at [@low_mountain](#) & [@herringbonebindery](#).



This past February 6, NBSS held its first [Founder's Day](#), a celebration of the work of Pauline Agassiz Shaw. Pauline was a visionary social and educational reformer who opened the country's first public kindergartens, funded the suffragette movement, developed settlement houses, and, in 1881, established North Bennet Street Industrial School.

Primarily a virtual celebration, we shared archival photos, held trivia contests, and connected with our friends and followers online. We also posted a four-part history of NBSS, drawn largely from [Rewarding Work: A History of Boston's North Bennet Street School](#), a comprehensive study of Pauline and the School, co-written by former Executive Director Walter McDonald.

We were inspired to celebrate by a confluence of factors. Our current year is the 100th anniversary of women winning the right to vote in America, while 2021 will be the 140th anniversary of the founding of NBSS. We also wanted to bring our community together – with a special effort to engage graduates across the country – around the inspiring story of the woman who brought our institution to life.

The truth is, Pauline's guiding principles are still relevant, even urgent, today. She believed in the value of functional skills. She believed that everyone deserved a path to employment, a chance to make a tangible contribution to their immediate self and community. She likewise believed that the School should be a kind of public resource, dedicated to working alongside its neighbors and helping new arrivals (mainly immigrants) make their way.

People from across the city and around the world still see us that way today. So many students talk about finding NBSS as an epiphany, a meaningful moment when they discovered their calling in life. And if not their calling, then their community—the thousands of people who have a deep appreciation of a life built by hand: the time, the skill, the patience, the focus, and the craft itself.

Here's to Pauline Agassiz Shaw, to our legacy, to our community—and to the next 140 Founder's Days to come.

THE WOMAN WHO STARTED IT ALL

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND WORK OF OUR FOUNDER FOR THE FIRST (BUT NOT THE LAST) TIME



ON JUSTICE & EQUITY

OUR FOUNDING PRINCIPLES AND FUTURE LEGACY

In 2021, NBSS will turn 140 years old, and our anniversary is cause for celebration and reflection—not only upon our current place in the world, but also upon our founding principles, and our future legacy. It is a critical moment that calls for us to work differently and bravely in light of the global pandemic, economic uncertainty, and movements for racial and social justice in our communities.

Historically, NBSS created opportunities for immigrants to adjust to their new home in America through vocational training and social services, with childcare as a key part in supporting new families. Over time, our offerings changed while our commitment to community and skill-building endured; we have remained, however, a predominantly white School.

Our work during the next several years will involve critical learning, change, and adaptation. Our board, faculty, and staff have united and confirmed our commitment to become a more diverse, equitable, and transformed institution through both near-term and long-term projects. We have dedicated funding to a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, which will hire outside experts to bring anti-racism and anti-bias education to the School. We will work to achieve a broader population of people in our craft and trades: people who are black, indigenous, people of color, LGBTQ+, women, and others who have traditionally been marginalized due to structural biases. We will examine and work against the white-centric privileges present in our fields and in our School, which may involve rethinking our curriculum, methods and teaching styles. We are establishing new and specific goals, and we will share updates on who we are and who we want to become moving forward. This process will involve a critical and honest look at ourselves as an institution.

Why is this the work of a small, specialized craft and trade school? It is not our work alone – it is everyone's work – and we will utilize NBSS's unique strengths and character to address it.

NBSS recognizes our position and responsibility as an educational leader in our fields of crafts and trades. As such, we commit to becoming a more diverse, equitable, and transformed School within Boston, as well as in our reach across the country and the globe. This is long-term work, not a one-year effort, and we hope you will join us.

STEPPING UP

WHEN THE PANDEMIC HIT, OUR COMMUNITY—AND THE NBSS EMERGENCY FUND—CAME THROUGH



We closed our campus on March 11—and then we started planning. How could we take care of our students and faculty during an abrupt transition to remote teaching and learning? How could we keep our community engaged and inspired?

One answer: The [NBSS Emergency Fund](#), a short-term resource with long-term impact. “A number of individuals and foundations reached out to ask how they could help,” says Director of Development Colleen Walsh Powell. “That’s where the idea for the fund came from. People wanted a way to support the school during an incredibly challenging time.”

Once we established the fund, says Colleen, “the response was tremendous—from across the community, at all levels of giving.” Gifts helped NBSS address its most urgent needs: providing tuition relief to students; supporting technology and training for faculty; and making sure students had the tools and materials to continue meaningful learning at home.”

For President Sarah Turner, the fund is proof of the School’s ingenuity, resilience, and humanity. “Over the past few months,” she says, “the community has reflected the morality of our institution, and our maker mindset: practical and purposeful. We’re incredibly grateful for our supporters’ trust and generosity—it has kept NBSS whole.”

The fund will be retired at the end of the current fiscal year, July 31. Going forward, says Colleen, “we’ll direct people to the School’s annual fund, which is a consistent, flexible source of support. Heading into another challenging year, response to the Emergency Fund has given me a lot of optimism. When a crisis hit, people stepped up.”

WE ASKED SIX DONORS:

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO GIVE TO THE NBSS EMERGENCY FUND?

“I’ve talked with my classmates; I know how much of an impact the pandemic is having. My graduation was delayed; a lot of us are struggling to cover living expenses; making the transition into our careers is much more complicated. I’ve been fortunate to find some work—and I feel a responsibility to share what I have. If we’re going to succeed—if we’re going to meet our mutual needs—then we have to have resources that help us finish our programs and be prepared for what’s ahead.”

– Elizabeth Rochow, PA ‘20

“We’ve supported NBSS for more than a decade. Why? We’re dedicated to preserving and continuing the applied arts in America. In these troubling times, making an additional gift to the Emergency Fund felt critical to us. This is an important moment—and an effective way—to help people who want to work with their hands. If they can carve out a craft, make a living wage, and support themselves—that’s a precious opportunity.”

– Jolie Stahl, Director & Founder, Ddora Foundation

“Nothing can replace the hands-on experience inside the shop—but students deserve the best support we can give them. And I want NBSS to continue to be a leader in the crafts world—to keep the community strong, advocate for skilled disciplines, and train the next generation of craftspeople. So I was inspired to help make this period of remote learning successful.”

– Josh Thornhill CA ‘19

“I love the story of the genesis of NBSS—how its founder, Pauline Agassiz Shaw, wanted to help immigrants develop a skill. That’s still really important. We need people who actually know how to make things; it helps them and it helps society. My son came to NBSS and gained so much—and then he went on to work for one of the best violin makers in the country, eventually managing his shop. Now he’s got his own shop in Philadelphia. We need more stories like that.”

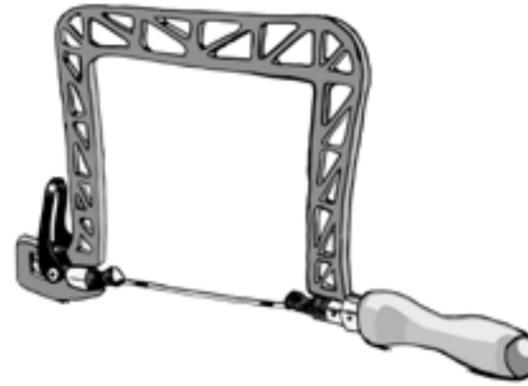
– Charlie Hess, parent of Justin Hess VM ‘11

NBSS was a transformative experience. I graduated with a fellowship and a job lined up. I could only wish the same for every student in every program, every year, but the pandemic and resulting economic devastation are thwarting many promises. Right now, the most meaningful way for me to help is with financial support. I trust the school to make the best use of my gift. I came into bookbinding because of the guidance and mentorship of people at NBSS. Giving to the Emergency Fund provides that guidance and mentorship for a new generation. It’s like keeping a vital promise.

– Aude Gabory BB ‘09

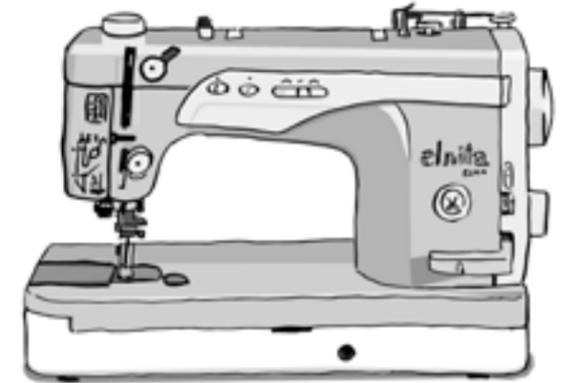
TOOL MVPs

We asked our followers which tools they're reaching for most while working at home, and got some unexpected (though entirely reasonable) answers along the way... View just a few here.



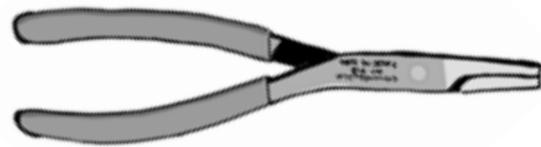
KNEW CONCEPTS COPING SAW

Brooke Esplin VM '19
@theviolinmaker



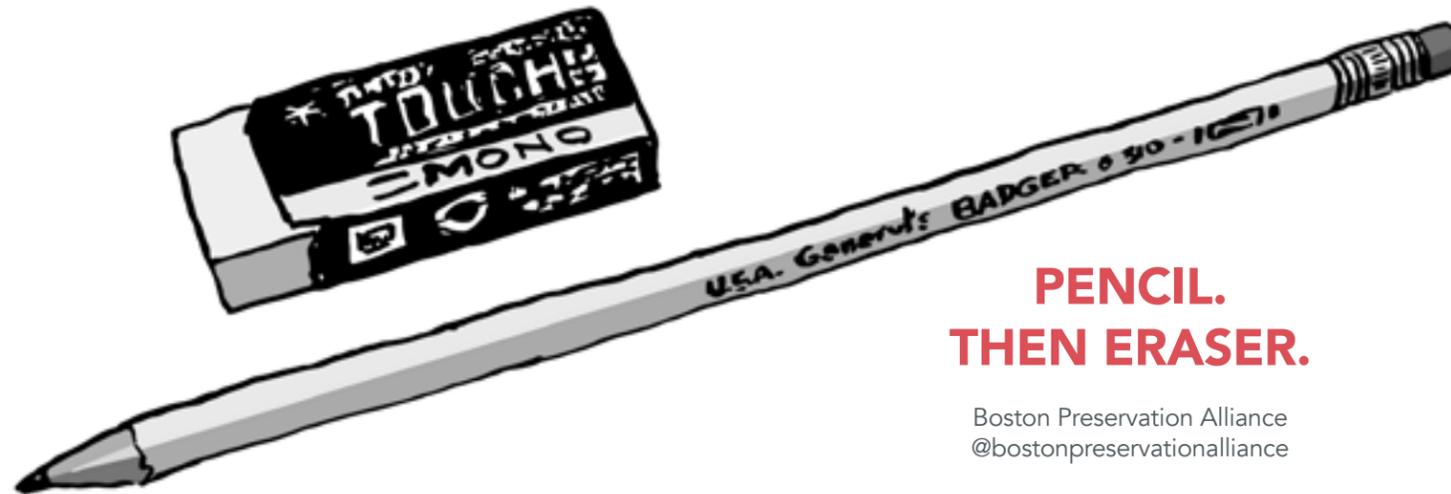
SEWING MACHINE

Jason McKenzie CA '20
@saw_horse



CHANNEL LOCK 718 PLIERS

Christina Scroggins PT '16
@chrissyChris1972



**PENCIL.
THEN ERASER.**

Boston Preservation Alliance
@bostonpreservationalliance



GB LARGE CARVING AXE

Sasson Rafailov
@sas_son



DUTCH OVEN

Nathan Abbe VM '20
@naabbe



**MILWAUKEE FUEL 12V DRILL
AND IMPACT FOR FINISH**

Chris Cavalieri CA '09
@c_cav_construction



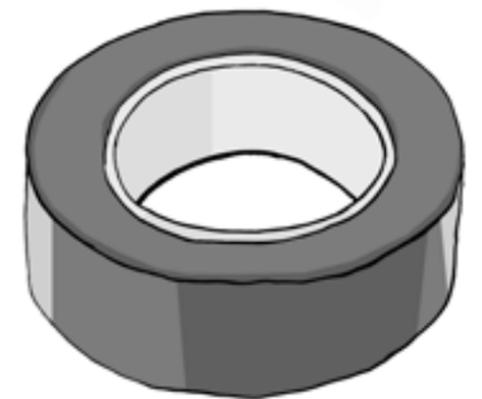
16" MACBOOK PRO

Kei Sasaki
@kei_crmx_pottery



MICROMOTOR

Sergio Jaramillo JM '16
@sc.jaramillo



BLUE TAPE

Seth Capista CF '16
@seth_capista_woodworking

Illustrations by *Valeria Trucchia*



SANCTUARY & SYMPHONY

BY TZUNG-SHIUN (SHIN) WU PT '16

Reprinted with permission from the January 2020 issue of Piano Technicians Journal

“Wow, this is amazing.” I was reading the Taiwanese newspaper on my grandfather’s small sofa. The article was about [Paul Barton](#), a pianist from the United Kingdom who had played classical and contemporary piano repertoire for elephants in Thailand’s sanctuary for many years. He had dedicated himself to bringing tranquility to the souls and minds of those injured, blind, abused, and long-ignored creatures of beauty. Having been an animal and music lover since my youth, I believed there must be something I could also do for them.

Setting myself to the task, I reached out to Paul and just two months later, arrived in Bangkok with bags and tools in hand. Traveling from the airport was a challenging affair, as it’s easy to get lost within one of the most notoriously congested cities in the world. After several hours of navigating and hand gesturing with the cab driver though, I finally arrived.

As soon as I saw Paul and his six adopted dogs, I gave him a big hug. Paul introduced his wife Khwan, and his daughter, Emilie, and we all began talking about how he came up with the idea to communicate with the elephants through music. We spoke late into the night, sharing our love of animals and our life stories before deciding to call it a day. With eager anticipation for the sanctuary, I fell asleep with the lullaby of trees rustling under the moonlight.

Images: Tzung-Shiun Wu PT '16 & Paul Barton

“It was extremely challenging to regulate damper spoons in the dark, with moths and mosquitoes flitting in front of my eyes, and with crickets and other insects singing in my ears.”

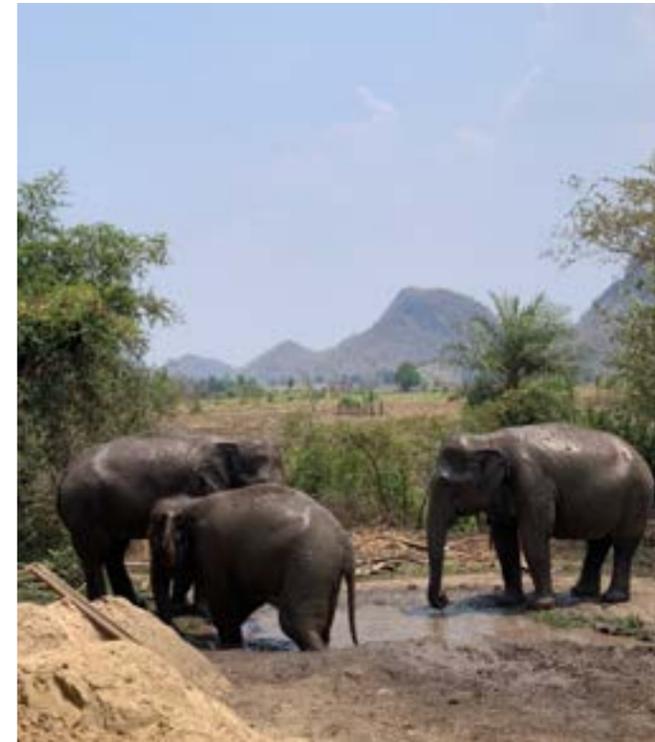
The next day, we headed to [Elephants World](#), an environmental conservation organization located on the hillsides of Kanchanaburi, with the iconic River Kwai flowing by. "It's beautiful, isn't it?" said Paul as we arrived at the solid-wood gate in the afternoon. The pristine, tranquil atmosphere had the fresh scent of grass. After meeting some of the staff there, Paul introduced me to the first piano housed in a small cottage: a glossy black upright which was being "played" by a curious elephant named Rom Sai (which means sacred tree). Sadly, Rom Sai's left eye had been impaled by a sharp tree branch while he was used as a logging tool in Northern Thailand's forest, leaving him visually impaired.

Paul and I moved the piano away from the wall and did a thorough assessment. The bottom front panel was squeezed deep into the cavity, one of the back posts was damaged, and a few treble keys were jammed and shifted to the right. After undertaking a quick fix, I realized that bigger technical problems remained. All things considered, the piano needed urgent maintenance and serious regulation.

I told Paul it would take a while. In clients' houses, you would not usually encounter a piano this far out of regulation, but this was an instrument being played by elephants weighing up to 6,000 kilograms. Fueled by the desire to get the piano in good order, I began my work right away.

After a couple of hours, everything turned dark—an absolute pitch-blackness, with the exception of the shining stars and galaxy above. (We had been told that power would be switched off at 10:00 pm for generator rationing, and I'd lost track of time.) As one could imagine, it was extremely challenging to regulate damper spoons in the dark with moths and mosquitoes flitting in front of my eyes, and crickets and other insects singing in my ears. Paul managed to make a temporary torch, attaching it to the side pole of his recording microphone stand. By taking full advantage of the remaining time left, I completed as much work as I could before hitting the hay around midnight.

Misty dawn and the soothing sound of a river symphony woke me the next day. I went straight to the cottage and continued working on Rom Sai's piano. After a morning of regulation work, Paul drove me to the sanctuary's dining hall and introduced me to other staff and several friendly baby elephants and dogs. After finishing our plates, we were offered a chance to walk with almost 20 elephants and their mahouts to the banks of the River Kwai.



"In clients' houses, you would not usually encounter a piano this far out of regulation, but this was an instrument being played by elephants weighing 6,000 kilograms."

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To see how the elephants enjoy themselves in the river was such a privilege, especially after learning about their troubled lives before the sanctuary. These sensitive creatures shipped lethal weapons for countries, helped loggers deforest their own habitat, and acted as toys in the tourism industry. My heart broke as I thought about their past. While their physical captivity and pain has been relieved, what mental scars might remain?

While collecting my thoughts, I went back to tune the "played" piano. Just as I'd guessed, the pitch dropped again. "Okay, let me do a few tunings and stabilize you as much as I can," I said to the piano. During the tweaking and setting, more issues would become apparent. But eventually I got the instrument to a good place; I hoped it would stay firm at least for a few weeks, or even months.

For my last day on site, Paul and I had lunch with the founder of the sanctuary, who was obviously passionate about caring for these gentle creatures. In reflecting on our conversation, I found myself thinking that we humans are just little beings on Earth, and I truly hope no matter what kind of profession we have at present, we can all do something to care for the world around us.

As a concert pianist and a painter, Paul chose a very different path, and I do see and appreciate its value. Although I am sad for what these elephants have suffered in the past, I am grateful to have had a chance to see what has been done to bring the elephants a better quality of life, and to have played a minor part in their amazing rehabilitation.

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[Learn more about Tzung-Shiun \(Shin\) Wu PT '16](#)



HANDMADE BOOKS, JEWELRY, BOWLS, FURNITURE, AND MORE.

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ALWAYS OPEN • ALWAYS INSPIRED

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

DAVID BETTS PT '72, HON PA '20

“David has shared his wisdom and wit with hundreds of students who have passed through the doors of NBSS, and all of us are better for it.”

The [Distinguished Alumni Award](#) recognizes a distinguished graduate from one of our nine full-time programs based on their professional accomplishments, contributions to their industry, and promotion of excellence in craft via schools and organizations. We are proud to announce that David Betts PT '72 is the recipient of the 2020 Distinguished Alumni Award!

Since graduating in 1972, David has worked as a self-employed technician and rebuilder for more than 45 years, making him one of the foremost experts in the field. He's been a regular master teacher at regional and national PTG meetings, and was awarded the organization's Member of Note Award in 2002 for his outstanding contributions to the field.

After his graduation from what we now know as the [Basic Piano Technology](#) program in 1972, he started as an Instructor in 1974. David recognized the opportunity for, and developed, what would become our [Advanced Piano Technology](#) program in 1978. He later seamlessly moved into the role of Department Head for both the Basic and Advanced



programs. David's outstanding performance in this capacity is evidenced by the industry renown of the School and its programs, both on a national and international level.

David's accomplishments and contributions to NBSS and the field of piano technology are too countless to mention. He has provided lifelong dedication to the education of piano technicians as well as mentorship for graduates long after graduation. According to nominators, David has been described as a "piano rebuilder of the highest caliber" and an "innovative leader in the piano tuning and rebuilding trades." For his extensive work and excellence in his craft, NBSS bestowed an Honorary Diploma in Advanced Piano Technology to David this past spring.

We will end with the following quote from a piano technology alum: "David has shared his wisdom and wit with hundreds of students who have passed through the doors of NBSS, and all of us are better for it."



GETTING THE JOB DONE

AFTER SERVING IN THE ARMY, LUZ BRENZ CA '20 WAS READY TO BUILD SOMETHING NEW

NBSS [Carpentry](#) Head Peter Smith PC '04, says Luz Brenz “has real leadership qualities. She’s a team player who knows how to lift up the whole environment. There’s a quiet confidence to Luz. She asks smart questions, brings people together, and gets the job done.”

We talked to Luz Brenz by phone from her home in Lawrence, MA—where she’s always lived, except for a stint in the Army. Because of the pandemic, her coursework in the Carpentry program moved online in March, and she looks forward to finishing up her training in the fall. Rather than a typical interview, we asked Luz her thoughts on a range of topics, from work in the program to her plans for the future.

Her early inspiration: I’ve always liked to build things. My mom got me a model car for Christmas, and I built it from scratch. When we ordered furniture, I’d be the one to assemble it. Even now, my friends call me when they need something put together. To me, at a young age, I was like: “Wow. I started with a bunch of pieces, and I made them into something real, almost like art.”

Making the choice: The first time I saw the NBSS website, I knew this was the place for me. So many contracting and carpentry companies come to NBSS looking for employees; they know how well the students are trained and taught. When I looked at NBSS, I could see the process and the results.

Making it possible: A lot of vets come back from serving, and they’re not in great financial shape. I knew the School accepted the Post-9/11 GI Bill®; and Rob O’Dwyer in admissions told me about the [NBSS Yellow Ribbon Program](#). I was incredibly grateful to also receive an NBSS scholarship from the Kennedy Family Scholarship Fund. I applied for anything and everything I could—and I ended up in a position where I can graduate without any student debt. Which is amazing.

Building Bennet Town: Carpentry is team-based, so you have to find that cohesiveness where you’re not stumbling over each other. Our first big project was “Bennet Town,” where different groups are building rooms in different parts of the workshop. It’s cramped, it’s hot, and we’re just learning how to work with each other. It takes a lot of patience, a lot of understanding, a lot of listening. In the end, you’re all reaching for the same goal, and it’s so fulfilling to get there.

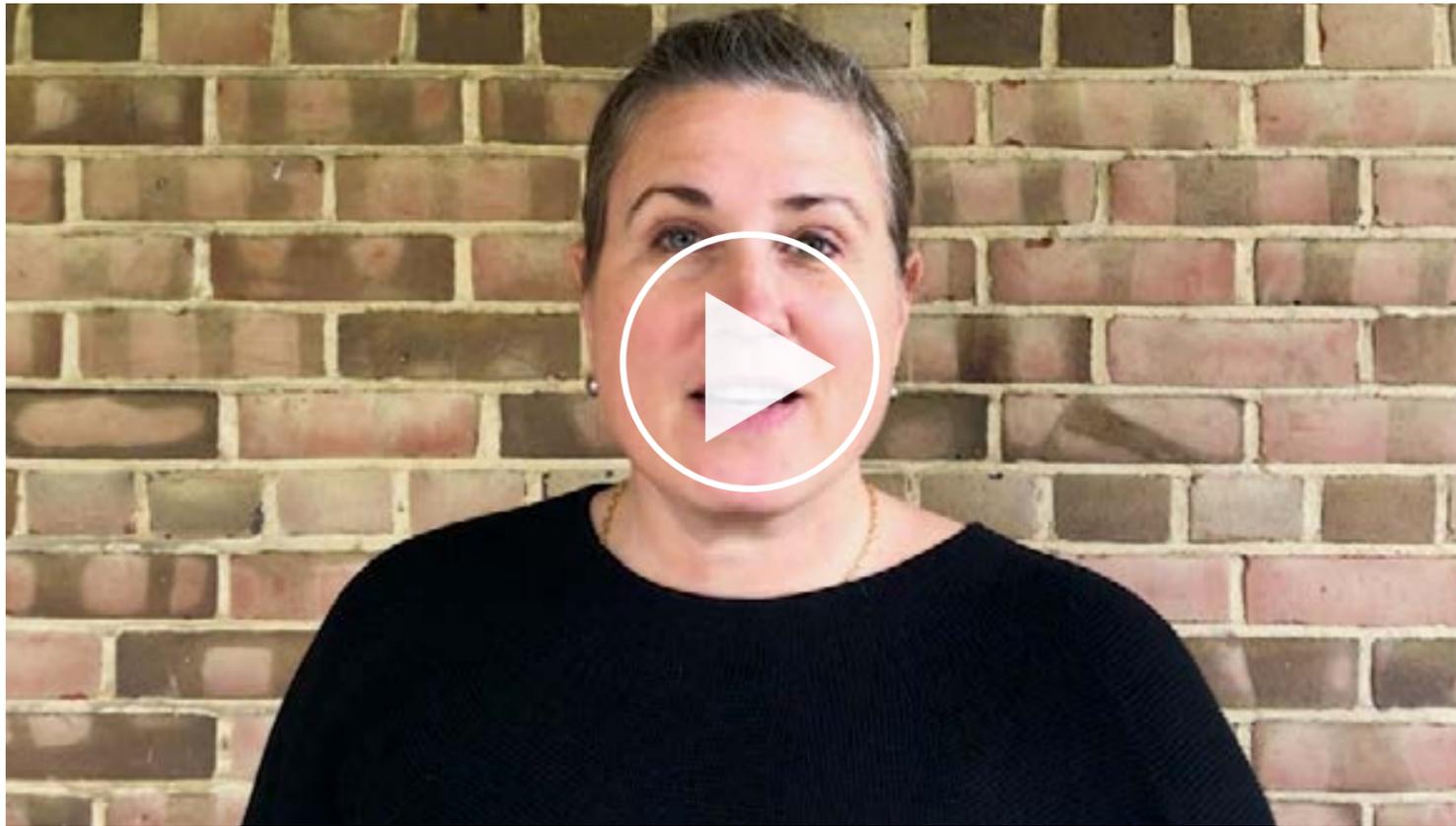
Peak experience: The owner of a contracting company called [C2MG](#) (who’s also a member of the School’s Program Advisory Committee) reached out to Peter about our class helping his carpenters on a project in Dover. It was a full-scale house remodel. The builders were incredibly helpful, almost like extra instructors. It was just a great, one-of-a-kind, real-world experience.

In the future: My siblings and I have thought of starting a house-flipping business. My sister is in real estate, and my brother is an apprentice electrician. But to start, I want to work for a contracting company, honing my skills and learning from the best in the business, so one day I can become the best in the business.

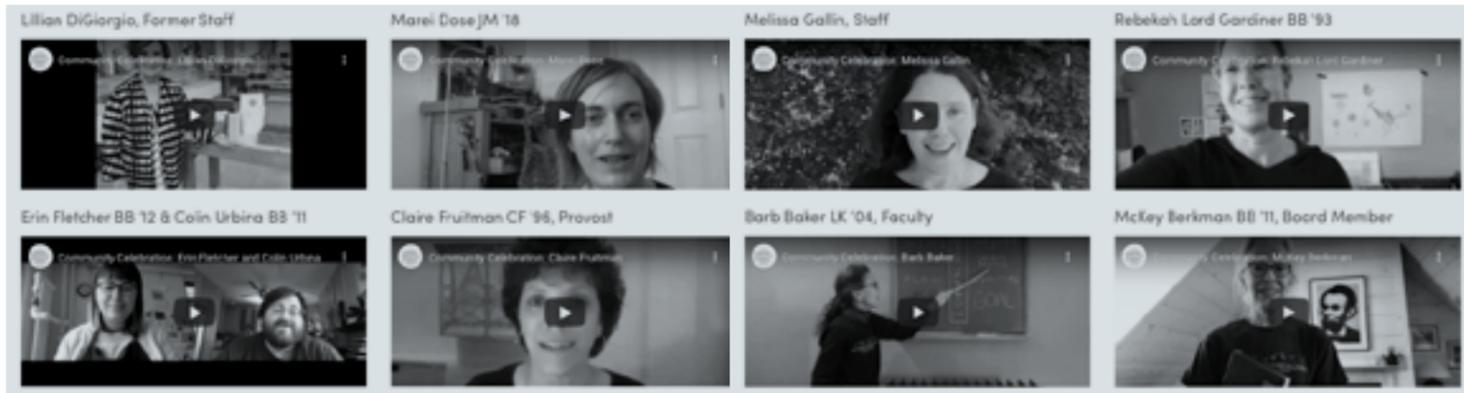


CELEBRATING STUDENTS

To mark the end of the academic year, the NBSS community wanted to recognize our students for their resilient efforts during our building closure. So we collected encouraging words, inspirational notes, and congratulatory videos from near and far. We hope these heartfelt messages make students feel special, while also helping to close out the semester in the same celebratory spirit as in years past.



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FIND YOUR FINANCIAL AID

We're dedicated to keeping excellence accessible. Our community has raised substantial funds, helping to create a range of scholarships, and allowing us to freeze tuition at the current level. In 2020-21 we'll provide more financial aid than ever before, making an education at America's first trade school more affordable for our students.

LIVE IN GREATER BOSTON?



Workforce Development Initiative

Provides comprehensive scholarships to high-need individuals who experience significant barriers to employment.

Well over

40

students have received this aid to date, offering them a clear path to the workforce.

ALREADY HAVE A DEGREE?



NBSS Pell Yes!

Funds that provide an equivalent award as the Federal Pell Grant. A valuable tool now available to degree-holding students.

Provides up to

\$6,345

to need-qualified students who already hold a bachelor's degree.

ARE YOU A VETERAN?



NBSS Yellow Ribbon Program

A special program to honor military service members, this fund covers tuition and all other qualified educational expenses.

Nearly

20%

of our student population is veterans, and this means one less obstacle in building their post-military lives.

QUESTIONS?

Contact Jamie Dergay, Director of Financial Aid at jdergay@nbss.edu or 617.227.0155 x115.

an all new

OPEN HOUSE

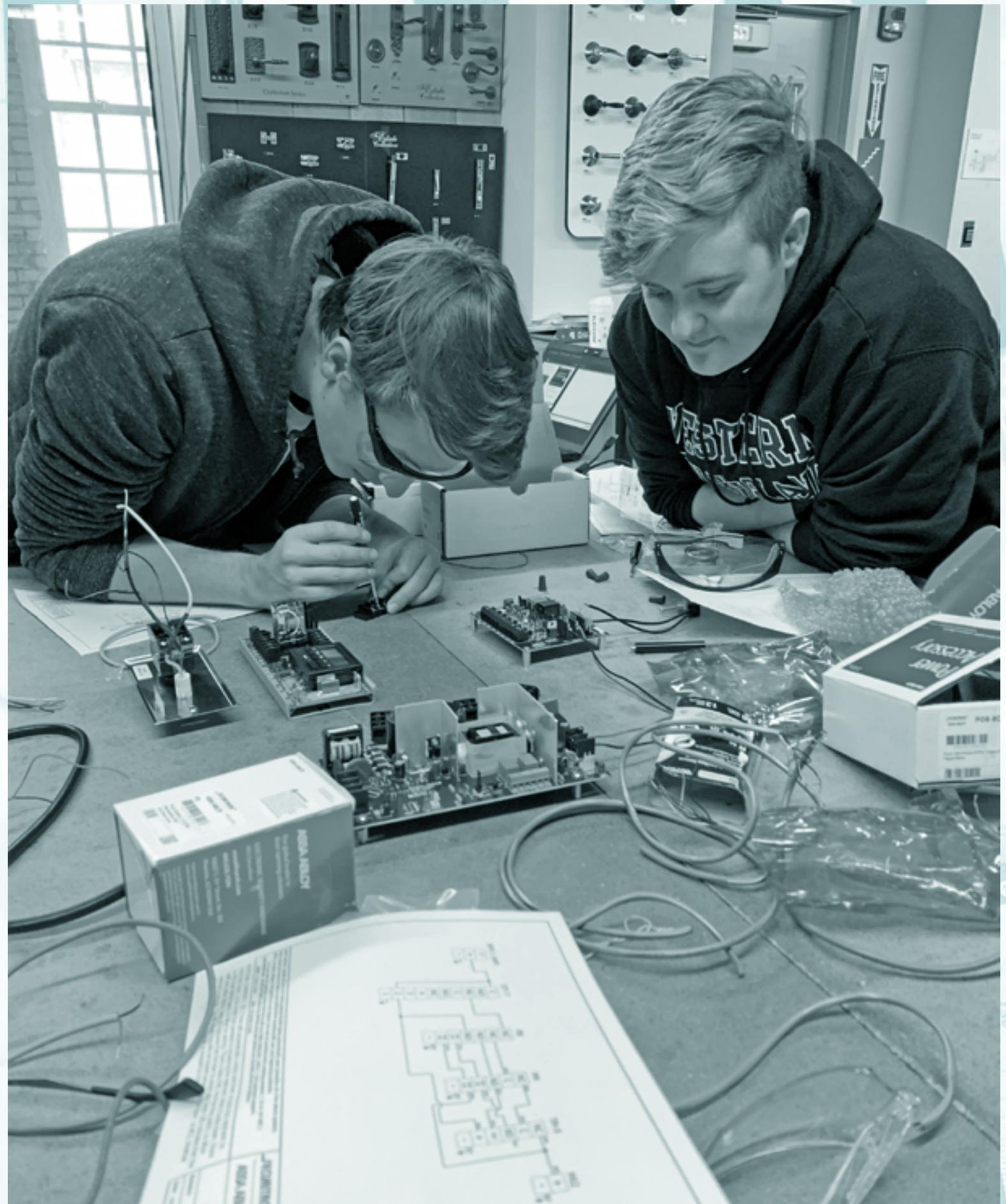
COMING THIS DECEMBER

This once-a-year event is the best opportunity to get a behind-the-scenes look at America's first trade school. Featuring live demonstrations in woodworking, jewelry making, bookbinding, musical instruments, and more!

Check out our nine programs in traditional trades; talk to students, faculty, and alumni; learn more about our financial aid offerings; and connect with a like-minded community of artisans.

Free, open to the public, and 100% virtual. Stay tuned for more info, including dates held and all the great activities we have planned. We hope you'll join us to discover all that North Bennet Street School has to offer.

[NBSS.EDU/OPENHOUSE](https://nbss.edu/openhouse)





A GOOD LIFE, BUILT BY HAND.

NORTH BENNET STREET SCHOOL
NBSS.EDU | @NBSSBOSTON