

THE FRESH START **WORX** NEWSLETTER

WORX IN PROGRESS



Our New Newsletter Name “Worx in Progress”

We’re excited to share that our quarterly newsletter officially has a name — Worx in Progress! Inspired by our organization’s new identity, the title reflects the energy and impact of the work happening right here in Hartford. Even better, the name was chosen by the students of Richard P. Garmany Fresh Start Academy, whose voices and creativity continue to shape our future. This newsletter is more than just updates, it’s a celebration of growth, community, and the meaningful contributions of everyone involved in our mission.

New Hires

We are thrilled to have welcomed two new employees in April, Brian K. and Amar A., who have quickly become integral members of our team, making a strong impact from the start.

Brian joined our production team, bringing extensive expertise in CAD/CAM design, 3D printing, laser engraving, and CNC work. Brian brings a wealth of



technical expertise that will further enhance our creative woodworking capabilities. His passion for crafting unique and innovative wood products aligns with our mission, and we look forward to the contributions and improvements he makes.

Amar transitioned from a dedicated volunteer to a key member of our sales team, applying her background in mechanical engineering to strengthen our outreach and engagement efforts. In just a short time, she has made a measurable impact—helping drive sales and embracing new challenges with enthusiasm.

And finally, Albert, a participant in the Hartford Student 5.0 program, an initiative designed to help high school seniors prepare for life after graduation through hands-on experience and career support, joined us as an intern from May to June. The program offers students personalized coaching, industry exposure, and real-world experience, and Albert certainly put those skills to work. During his time with us, he made valuable contributions by organizing inventory and machine manuals to boost operational efficiency. He also played a key role in planning our tag sale. We're incredibly grateful for his hard work and dedication, and we wish him all the best as he continues his journey.

Graduation



Our most recent cohort graduated in May, and the turnout was amazing! So many friends and family came to support their loved ones at the ceremony—our shop has never been fuller! This class of 10 students was also the first to earn the nationally recognized HBI PACT Program certification. This



credential reflects their commitment to the program and shows that they've built the foundational skills needed for real-world success in the construction industry. With a mixture of hands-on learning and career-ready training, these graduates have gained confidence and the tools to secure future employment.

Marc Anthony, a student of this cohort, was able to find employment after graduating. He joined IMTEF, a union pre-apprenticeship program. He says, *"My experience with the Fresh Start Worx Carpentry Program was truly transformative. From the guidance of our skilled instructor, Rick, to the*

hands-on projects we completed, the program equipped me with practical skills and helped me grow both personally and professionally. The knowledge and confidence I gained allowed me to achieve real-life goals, and I'm proud to share that I was recently accepted into the Brick and Allied Craft Workers Union as a bricklayer after passing the entry exam with a score of 90%. I'm incredibly grateful to Fresh Start Worx for believing in me and supporting my journey toward a successful career."

We are currently in the middle of our third cohort of the year. They're now wrapping up Week 3 and just completing their first project—crafting small boxes that introduced key carpentry techniques like precise cutting, joinery, and finishing. It may seem like a humble start, but these early builds are all about mastering the fundamentals and gaining confidence with tools in hand.

The Academy "By the Numbers"



So far this calendar year, we've proudly seen:

Three cohorts completed the HBI PACT CORE program

A total of 30 graduates

A 100% graduation rate

Multiple graduates employed in construction and other industries, including Holiday Inn, JJ Tri-state Delivery, JJ Handyman Services and Portly Pig at Parkville Market.

Honest Jobs

Fresh Start recognizes the employment barriers that many formerly incarcerated individuals face when reentering the workforce. In an effort to address this challenge, we began searching for ways to further help our students find stable employment following our training program. A resource we found was Honest Jobs. This platform promotes fair-chance employment through connecting jobseekers with criminal records to employers who are open to second-chance hiring. Students from our most recent class were able to create a profile and start exploring job opportunities.

Our New Fresh Start Worx Website is LIVE!



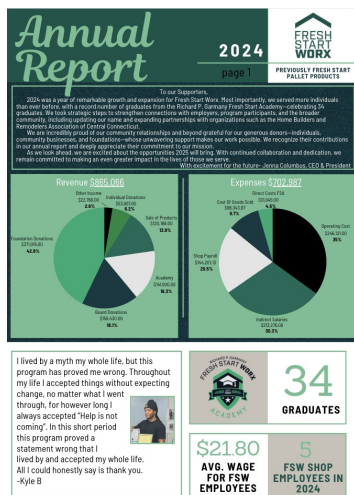
PURPOSE

EMPLOY AND TRAIN INDIVIDUALS SEEKING TO IMPROVE THEIR LIVES

[LEARN MORE](#)

We've updated our website to make it easier than ever to learn about our programs, connect with our team, and see the real impact of the work happening every day. Also, you can explore developmental at the Richard P. Garmany Fresh Start Academy, discover opportunities to collaborate on custom-built projects, and follow inspiring stories of transformation from the amazing individuals in our program. [Check it out here](#)—and help us spread the word about new beginnings and bold futures.

Annual Report Highlights



Our annual report was completed and sent out in April, offering a transparent look into our year of achievement. In this document, we shared key insights into our expenses, revenue, and the meaningful growth of our programs. We celebrated the accomplishments of our graduates, spotlighted the number of dedicated shop employees on our team, and shared data on the average wages earned, all helping to paint a fuller picture of the career pathways we're building together.

This report also gave us the opportunity to recognize the incredible individuals and foundations who support our mission. Our donors fuel everything we do, and we're proud to highlight their role in driving opportunity, long-term change, and second chances within our community. [Find the 2024 Annual Report as well as news from FSW here.](#)

Grants Won

So far this year we have received grants from Cigna, ION Bank, Mystic Garden Club, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving: TAG Grant 2025, Mortensen Foundation, Farmington Bank Foundation, and the Charles Robinson Trust.

This funding plays a vital role in expanding our impact, supporting everything from our academy programs to essential day-to-day operations. We're incredibly grateful for these partnerships and the belief they represent in our mission, our students, and the future we're working hard to build.



In early June, our team had the pleasure of participating in Celebrate West Hartford as a vendor. We connected with many community members, shared our mission, and had some great conversations with folks who were curious, supportive, and eager to learn more.

The weekend was a huge success: we received an overwhelming number of raffle entries and completely sold out of our Picnic Pals! Between donations and sales, the support exceeded our expectations. We're so grateful to everyone who stopped by, asked questions, and learned about what we do!



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