



Creation Station

Greenwood Public Library provides a space for makers

BY JON SHOULDERS // PHOTOGRAPHY BY JANA JONES

Ever wanted to start your own craft project, but lacked the resources and space to do so? Have a great podcast or YouTube series idea but don't want to shell out the cash just yet for the equipment you'll need to get it off the ground? Well, take a trip to the Greenwood Public Library because your time has come.

In early March, the GPL officially opened The Studio, composed of two maker spaces dedicated to group or individual creative projects of almost any conceivable sort.

"It's basically a space for self-guided making for the community," says Emily Ellis, GPL assistant director. "We really want to encourage people to get hands-on with different materials and resources and take a journey on their own. We're going to help them connect with resources and get them started, but it's

really about experiencing things yourself.”

Inside The Studio you'll find two areas, one of which is devoted to an audiovisual lab teeming with equipment for just about any A/V project: We're talking microphones and a sound mixer for podcasting or musical recordings to photo editing to green-screen filming for YouTubers. The library recently even purchased a few accessories to help enhance visual content including a Socialite LED Ring, that is, a round, mountable light for improving social media photo and YouTube video quality.

“We've had people come and do interviews on video on the green screen for a class project,” says GPL Director Cheryl Dobbs. “We also have a very small photo booth for people who might sell their creations on Etsy or eBay and want to take a really sharp professional photo, so they can level up their work and use good equipment that they might not buy at home.”

The Studio's second space allows artistry to roam free; patrons can simply use it for their own projects or choose from more than 20 do-it-yourself kits ranging from painting, leather crafting and jewelry making to STEM-related activities, including a Circuit Scribe kit and an Ozobot kit that allow youngsters to code and create toy robots. Finish that long-languishing DIY project by making use of the space's computers, analog-to-digital converter, sewing machine, loom, iPad, camera, photo scanner and more.

“It's a nice combination of different kinds of resources, and then it also has community equipment with the idea that if someone can't necessarily invest in equipment themselves, or if there's something that they'd like to use once and might not need again, they have access to it here,” Dobbs says.

In March, Greenwood resident Amber Core completed a project to honor her grandfather, who served in World War II, thanks to a button-making kit available at The Studio. Core volunteers with Indy Honor Flight, a nonprofit that transports World War II, Korean War and Vietnam War veterans from Indiana to Washing-

Ready to create?

The Greenwood Public Library Studio is located at 310 S. Meridian St. and is available to library members and nonmembers who can provide ID.

The Studio is open during library hours: Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday and Saturday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Space is available through reservation only, in two-hour blocks for a maximum of four hours per week. Information: (317) 881-1953 or greenwoodlibrary.us/studio.

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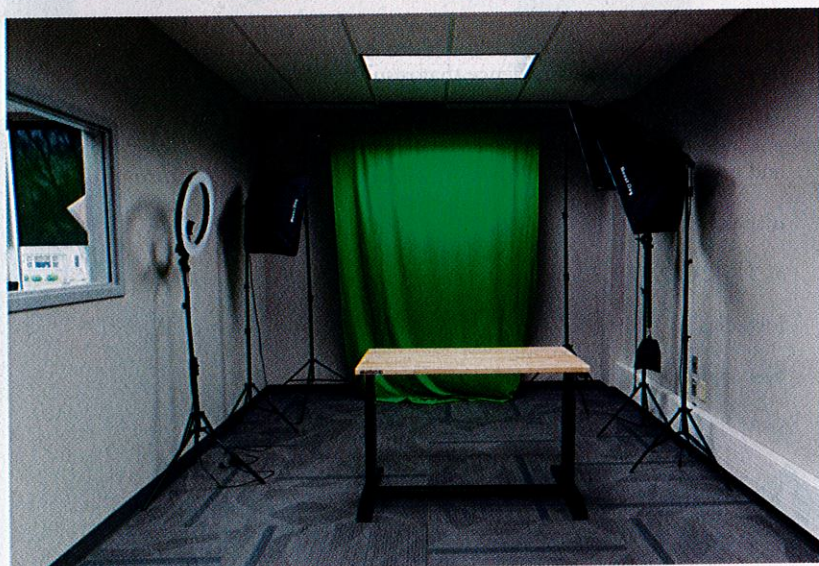


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ton, D.C., to see their monuments, and after her grandpa passed away she decided to make buttons with his image for her family.

"I wanted to be able to wear a button of him, so I printed pictures and then used the library's button maker to finish because I don't have one," says Core, who took her grandpa on the Indy Honor Flight back in 2014. "Now I have a way to represent my grandpa that other people can see. When I was there, I also learned about mosaic making, and my son learned about camera and green-screen technology."

Dobbs says the idea of a creativity space for patrons of any age began about six years ago, when library leaders considered building a video studio to assist teams entering GPL's annual Teen Film Festival. The staff began researching existing library studios throughout Indiana and Ohio and realized a more comprehensive area for all manner of creative endeavors would be beneficial for youngsters, students and adults alike.

"We've seen this kind of thing growing, and it's different for every library," Dobbs says. "We've seen large inner-city libraries that have an entire floor dedicated to this

kind of space, and we've seen other libraries like ours where they have a room or a space that they've been able to carve out for making and creating."

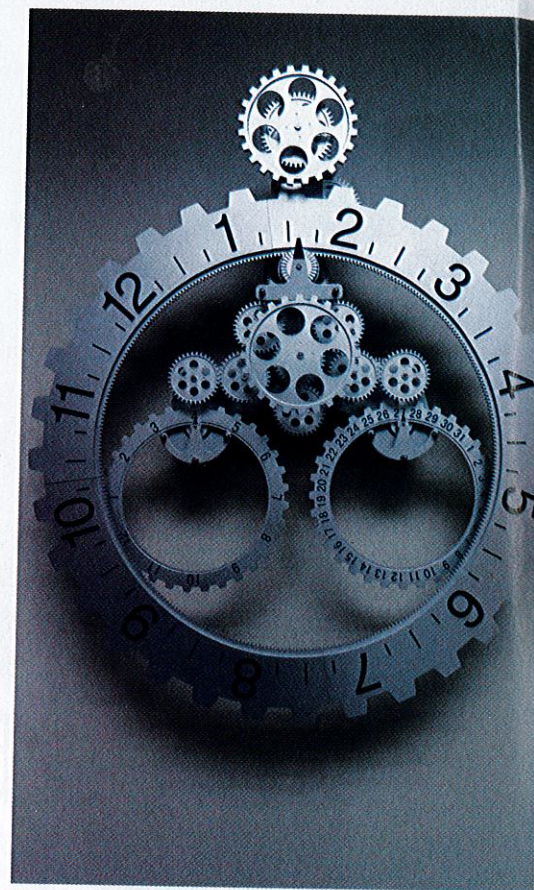
Aaron Garner, co-founder and CEO of Greenwood-based digital marketing agency Tetra Prime Consulting, recently shot video content in The Studio's audiovisual space. He sees the potential for local organizations to grow their brand by making use of GPL's resources.

"There are a lot of small businesses and nonprofits that deserve to get their message out, but they don't have full-scale marketing teams that have all the costly equipment and capability," says Garner, whose company represents mental health care organizations. "It's a great option to be able to use the resources in the library. They have a few pieces of equipment that I don't have at home like their LED light

ring, and I plan to go back and experiment with the space again. It's great to have a central community location that's convenient for everyone."

Dobbs says The Studio has seen more traffic from individuals, families, schools and small businesses than she anticipated since officially opening the space in March. She foresees the possibility of adding more equipment and art kits based on community response and feedback in the coming months.

"Once we're into it six months or so down the road, I think we'll be able to examine and see what we want to add or adjust based on what it looks like day-to-day," she says. "Right now, we're just trying to pace ourselves and make sure we understand how people are using it and how we can keep it practical and focused on our community." ●



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