



## *FIREWEED COMMUNITY WOODSHOP*

*Empowering women and nonbinary makers through the art of woodcraft*

Dear friends,

On behalf of all of us at Fireweed Community Woodshop, I'm excited to introduce you to the woodshop and to invite you to consider joining our board.

When I moved to the Twin Cities three years ago, I found the woodshop right away, and I felt at home with the supportive community helping me to get comfortable with power tools and my own capacity to make things. I've since built a table, made a picture frame, turned bowls, helped build a cabinet and an outhouse, carved woodblocks to make prints, and more — all while meeting and learning from awesome humans.

Over the past two years, the woodshop's founding board has been building the bones of an organization that can lift the weight of its operation from one amazing person's shoulders (thank you, Jess!) and spread it among many. The board has helped carry the organization thus far through the local iteration of our global pandemic, through the decision to temporarily close our physical space and weather the pandemic by going virtual, and into this new moment where we're working to plan the woodshop's future in an unpredictable present. The need for a safe, welcoming, and community-minded space to empower women and nonbinary folks around building and creating has not diminished since we've begun this journey; it's more necessary than ever as we figure out together how to rebuild the world we want to live in.

At the core of it all: this group of folks is rad and powerful, and we are committed to ensuring that Fireweed can grow and thrive. The woodshop is a real place (even if it's currently a virtual place) made of real people finding each other, forming meaningful bonds, and learning new skills together and from one another.

Fireweed's founding board has been collaborating to lay the groundwork for the woodshop's sustainable future, and we're eager to bring in new folks with their unique skills and energies. I believe that if you want to have good things like Fireweed in your community, you have to be willing to help keep them alive; the woodshop is alive because of its founder and all the students, instructors, board members, and supporters behind the scenes. If this sounds like something you want to be a part of, we want to talk with you!

Sincerely,  
Eva Rogers, Co-Chair

## *Mission*

Fireweed fosters community and individual growth through woodworking classes, fabrication training, volunteering, and celebrating students. Our inclusive and exploration-centered teaching approach empowers women and nonbinary makers to build a new culture in woodworking.



## *Racial Equity Commitment*

Fireweed Community Woodshop is committed to Black liberation, dismantling white supremacy, and mutual aid for the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, & People of Color) community. We strive to amend the injustices of marginalized communities within woodworking, not because there hasn't been a presence of BIPOC makers, but because their talents have been white-washed through systemic racism and resources have been hoarded. Fireweed believes in wealth and resource redistribution as a fundamental step towards equality and inclusion. Fireweed believes in BIPOC-only classes to increase accessibility as woodshops have been dominated by cis-white men. Fireweed believes a diverse body of staff and instructors creates a safe space for BIPOC students.

Fireweed's Racial Equity committee will serve as the shepherds overseeing the organization's actions, from course curriculum planning, budget allocations to BIPOC owned business, partnerships, mutual aid projects and document language. The Racial Equity committee will hold Fireweed accountable for centering BIPOC liberation as a core value to the organization.

## *Strategic plan*

Fireweed is primarily an educational institution with 4 legs of support: education, retail, fabrication, and consulting.

Our largest leg, Education, is composed of online and in-person classes. Classes are categorized as craft (spoon carving, basket weaving), furniture making (building tables, stools), and handyperson (home improvements, carpentry). Classes primarily meet 1x in the Twin Cities area or online with a total of 4-16 students. Class times range from 2-8 hrs. Fireweed also offers free video tutorials on woodworking basics.

Retail sells wares made by instructors and students at craft sales and online. Retail also sells tools and materials to students to encourage continuous learning. Retail will be partnering with fabrication to sell wares made by apprentices in 2022.

Fabrication pairs apprentices with professional makers. Projects can range from picture frames to yurt deck platforms. Fabrication hires contractors to lead projects and teach apprentices how to professionalize. Fabrication will start an apprenticeship program onsite when a new home is found for Fireweed.

Consulting offers advice to shops on making equitable space, guidance on home projects without the inclusion of labor, and assists with students building out their personal shops.

In 2022, Fireweed is aiming to locate a new space to house classes, retail, and fabrication.



## *Quick Stats*

Operating Budget: \$102,000 (draft 2022 budget)  
Annual Student Enrollment: 480 (Jan 2021- August 2021)  
Members: 72  
# of Classes per month: 4-10  
Employees: 1 part time  
Instructors: 37 (both local and abroad)

## *Board Duties*

### *Functions*

The Fireweed board upholds the mission, goals, and growth of the woodshop. The board oversees the budget, writes policies, hires staff, helps fundraise, volunteers at events, and strategizes plans and programs that align with the Fireweed mission.

### *Responsibilities*

Makes sure Fireweed is conducted in an ethical manner, listening to students, staff, and instructors to grow as a healthy, inclusive environment.

Approves the annual budget and assists in fundraising to meet budget goals.

Researches federal requirements for operating the nonprofit and upholds ethical contracts for instructors and staff.

Writes job descriptions, hosts interviews, and submits final candidate selection to the board for hiring.

Makes a meaningful contribution personally, publicizes fundraising events to personal networks, and helps to write, edit, or shape grant applications.

Hosting an online class, tabling public events, and/or assisting with special projects at the shop.

Participates in 80% of meetings, chairs one committee

Brings individual insight and enthusiasm to the board while maintaining openness to many ideas and perspectives.

Stays educated on the Racial Equity Mission and up to date on LGBTQA issues that are sensitive to our students, instructors, and staff.



*Committees*

- Education
- Finance & Fundraising
- Governance
- Racial Equity



## *Founding Board 2019-21*

**Christina Adams** | *Title:* Secretary

*Short-form bio:* Digital Accessibility Software Engineer at Siteimprove, Designer, Maker  
Pronouns: she/her, they/them

**Jess Hirsch** | *Title:* Fabrication Chair

*Short-form bio:* Craftsperson, Instructor, Founder of Women's Woodshop/Fireweed  
Pronouns: she/her, they/them

**Jessie Merriam** | *Title:* Vice Chair

*Short-form bio:* woodblock printmaking Instructor, art gathering/learning organizer, farmer/gardener, board director.  
Pronouns: she/her

**Kate Moening** | *Title:* Marketing Chair

*Short-form bio:* Freelance Editor, Writer, and Maker  
Pronouns: she/her

**Eva Rogers** | *Title:* Fundraising Chair & Co-Chair

*Short-form bio:* Independent Writer, Designer, and Fundraiser  
Pronouns: she/her

**Bozena Scheidel** | *Title:* Education Chair

*Short-form bio:* farmer, organizer, musician, craftsperson  
Pronouns: she/her

**Ema Thoen** | *Title:* Operations Chair

*Short-form bio:* Higher Education Academic Administrator, Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Maker, Board Director  
Pronouns: she/her, they/them

**Leah Van Tassel** | *Title:* Finance Chair

*Short-form bio:* Chef and Baker, Entrepreneur, Board Director  
Pronouns: she/her

**Vanessa Walton** | *Title:* Co-Chair

*Short-form bio:* International educator, life-long learner, maker, board member  
Pronouns: she/her

**Nia Zekan** | *Title:* Racial Equity Chair

*Short-form bio:* maker, minimalist, poet  
Pronouns: she/her



## *TIME COMMITMENT*

Three-year term commitment

Approximately 6 meetings a year (1x every 2 months) with full board @ 2 hrs

Committee meetings 6-12 meetings a year with smaller committee @ 1-2 hrs

Homework 1-2 hrs per month per committee

Special events (moving, tabling, hosting zoom class) 12 hrs per year

Yearly hrs approx 48, 4 hrs/ month