

Caledonia couple launches Build-It-Yourself Woodworking Kits for Kids

Kits teach kids to use hands-on skills



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Jon and Heather Glasser have a passion for teaching.

The Caledonia couple are both educators — he teaches construction, and she teaches English. Recently, they were able to utilize the skills they’ve learned in the classroom to launch their own business, Build-It-Yourself Woodworking Kits for Kids.

Glasser has a passion for woodworking and video games, so when the opportunity came for him to purchase a computer numerically controlled machine specifically for wood, he was excited, because he saw it as a way to bring the two spheres together.

He said the machines are a bit expensive, so after he got it, “the thought was, how can I use it to recoup some of the money I spent on it?”

Then the pandemic hit, and suddenly both of them were teaching online.

Glasser, especially, was struck by how difficult remote teaching was, with skills like hammering and gluing techniques needing to be hands-on.

“(When) these kids are at home, there’s no exposure to this type of education,” he said, adding that whether or not a student is planning to go into the field, they’re still good life skills to have.

So, the couple came up with the idea of woodworking kits for kids, and now offer four different options: birdhouse, bird feeder, squirrel picnic table and stunt biplane.

Using the machine, Glasser pre-cuts the wood pieces; he also sands the edges and pre-drills holes for the nails.

Kids as young as about four can build the kits with adult supervision — and less oversight as they get older.

Not only do the kits have written instructions, but the Glassers have also made online how-to videos to walk people through the process.

Heather said once they started advertising their kits on social media, “It took off, really quickly.”

She said they’ve been getting great feedback from their customers, who include parents looking for something to keep their kids occupied during lockdowns, grandparents looking for gifts for special occasions, and even schools looking to teach students about things like spatial understanding and interpreting instructions.

Glasser said the kits have been designed to be very user-friendly.

“They can use as much or as little as the instructions that we provide for them as they want, and there’s still a very good chance that they’ll have a high-quality product in the end.”

That doesn’t happen by accident, though — each kit design has gone through rigorous testing, by their own daughters, as well as friends, neighbours and family.

“It takes months,” Glasser said. “And even after ... I’m still finding little issues, and things I need to tweak.”

The work has been paying off, though; the demand for the kits keeps growing.

Glasser likened their business' success to thinking about winning the lottery, "but having a slight bit of control," he said.

The Glassers don't intend to make this their primary source of income any time soon.

"Heather and I both love our jobs; we love teaching," Glasser said. But that doesn't mean they never would, either.

"We feel as though the potential is there," he said.

For more information or to order kits, visit the company's [Facebook page](#), or website: buildityourself.ca/.