

Tiny house projects: hands-on learning

Tippecanoe students eagerly sign up for second course.

LOCAL

By Nancy Bowman - Contributing Writer

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Tippecanoe High School student Noah McElhose works with teacher Jim Kitchen as work on the inside of the first tiny

house, a project by the school homebuilding classes, continues to take shape. Work has begun on a second tiny house. CONTRIBUTED

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TIPP CITY —

As finishing touches were being made to the first Tippecanoe High School tiny house, work on framing a second, smaller tiny house was underway.

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Students in an afternoon Homebuilding II class donned hard hats and safety glasses Jan. 24 as another semester of the popular program got off the ground. As snow swirled outside, more than a dozen students received instruction from teacher Jim Kitchen on framing, tearing apart a section he deemed needed re-done.

While the hammers and saws were busy in the recent class, Kitchen said the students gain experience in a number of skills including electrical, plumbing and other tasks required in building or maintaining a home, large or small.

The instruction includes students designing the tiny house layout using a design program, Homestyler.com

Sophomores Austin Jackson and Noah McElhose said they enjoyed the hands-on experience the Homebuilding I class offered and eagerly signed up for the second course.

“It was a great experience,” said Jackson, who added he wants to pursue a construction career.

McElhose called Kitchen “a book of knowledge.” He doesn’t know if he’s interested in a construction related-career, but said the skills being learned would come in handy down the road. “You will save a lot of money using these skills,” McElhose said.

As Kitchen showed off the work done on the first tiny house, he pointed to a broken window. “We had a few issues here and there. A student broke a window by accident. They are going to learn how to fix a window as a result of that,” he said.

This is the second year for the tiny house project in the homebuilding classes.

The program has been supported by monetary and in-kind donations and grants with materials including a lot of wood being recycled. Students pay a \$30 fee for the course.

Last year, there were 40 students working on the project. This year, the classes attracted nearly 200.

The first house is 80 percent complete and will be auctioned in May. Plans are for the second smaller, tiny house to be done this semester and donated to someone in need, also in May during the school's Elevate the Arts event.

Work remaining on the first house, parked on its trailer outside the high school, included completing insulating with a material made from recycled denim, sealing interior walls and painting the exterior. An inspection will follow.

For more information and updates on the tiny house projects, go online to www.tipptinyhouse.weebly.com or on Facebook, www.facebook.com/tipp.tinyhouse.5.

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