

## LORAIN COUNTY

# LCCC offers summer STEAM design academy for students

By Zach Srnis

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Lorain County Community College has a program that allows high school and college students to earn college credit and make money while working on a myriad of art-based projects over the summer.

"The program is our STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) Makers Academy which offers five-week and 12-week programs for students here in the Campana Center," said Joan Perch, program coordinator with the Campana Center for Ideation and Invention at LCCC. "We have them focus on art-based projects while they use 21st century technologies and learn new skills to design and build."

Perch said the latest fabrication technology is available at LCCC.

"With the CNC router, laser cutter, a 3D printer and more, these guys are able to design knowing that these tools allow them to bring their ideas to life," she said. "It helps them with development and introduces them to the workforce as this is essentially a summer job for them."

Perch said the group works on several different projects to help other organizations.

"These students are contracted for different projects," she said. "We have a group that is working on book shelves for the Early Childhood Learning Center here at the college."

"We also have some of them working on some masks for the Lorain Public Library for the upcoming FireFish Festival. They get the exposure to getting a contract to do a project for someone and seeing from the design and creation process."

Perch said the students are paid for their work in the STEAM Makers Academy by Ohio Means Jobs.



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Christian Billings, 19, an LCCC student from Elyria, shows off his skateboard box during the STEAM Makers Academy.

**"We have them focus on art-based projects while they use 21st century technologies and learn new skills to design and build."**

— Joan Perch, program coordinator

"It's a great opportunity that has them getting paid while they work," she said. "We have students that are in high school at Elyria and Lorain, along with a couple of students who are currently at LCCC, who are able to get college credit, get paid and learn a skill."

"It also gets the high schoolers acquainted on our



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Lorain High School students Alyssa Hoffee, 16, right, and Carolina Messer, 15, work on a desk box at Lorain County Community College during the STEAM Makers Academy.

campus, the faculty and the technology available here. It's made possible through our partnerships with Ohio Means Jobs, the Fowler Family Foundation. Ohio

Arts Council, Elyria and Lorain city schools and the Nordson Foundation."

## Students benefit

Ryan Craycraft, a professor at LCCC, said the program is beneficial for students.

"They work a seven-hour job, Monday through Friday, in the summertime," Craycraft said. "That is legitimate job experience they are getting while they are still in school."

"It's great to see them design these projects and see them come to life."

Christian Billings, 19, a current LCCC student from Elyria, recently worked on designing a skateboard box.

"It's a small wooden box that I can use to work on different skateboard moves," Billings said. "You can buy them, but they are pretty expensive, so I made my own."

"I have really loved being in the art program at LCCC. This is the beginning of my third year, and it has allowed me to push myself and work with the best."

Alyssa Hoffee, 16, a Lorain High School student, is using the time at the Makers Academy to make a desk box.

"It's something you put on your desk, and I have LEDs set that will light up some glass I will put on the top," Alyssa said. "I have really enjoyed the overall positivity and teamwork."

"It's a situation that really encourages me to design and work on the projects that I want."

Sadia Tucker, 17, an Elyria High School student, said she was working on a mask for the FireFish Festival.

"It's something that has taken some time to design, and I'm modeling it after African masks," Sadia said. "I think the program is a really good one."

"Even if art is not your thing, you learn how to use tools like a CNC router. It has allowed me to do projects I haven't done before."