



Maker Ed

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

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ABOUT MAKER ED

The Maker Education Initiative (Maker Ed) is a nonprofit organization that envisions every young person having equitable access to maker education: engaging learning experiences that collectively develop their skills, knowledge, and ways of thinking, and that recognize and value their ability to experience and influence their world. To support educators and institutions in creating these kinds of engaging, inclusive and motivating learning experiences, Maker Ed provides training, resources, and a community of support around maker education.

Why Making?

Maker education is a learner-driven, open-ended, interactive learning approach that can enable students of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to develop new perspectives, a belief in their own abilities, and a passion for learning. Through our work, Maker Ed makes it possible for every educator in America—with a particular focus on those in underserved communities—to incorporate maker education into their learning environments in an easily accessible, highly flexible way.



Photo: Maker Ed Staff



Photo: REM Learning Center



Photo: Maker Ed Staff

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Dear Friends,

2015 was a year of renewed focus and growth for Maker Ed.

In order to better reach and serve educators and institutions, we reflected on our approach and implemented several changes to make our organization more efficient and our work more effective.

In the early part of the year, we took a step back to evaluate the work we had done so far and to refocus our efforts. We settled on an approach that took advantage of our strengths as an organization: building the capacity of institutions and educators through training, resources, and a community of support around maker education. This approach not only enabled our programs to continue supporting educators in creating engaging, inclusive, and motivating learning experiences for youth, but also enabled them to better scale nationally.

Along those lines, we modified several of our programs to fit with this approach and to better serve the maker educator community. Maker VISTA shifted focus to community schools; Maker Corps instituted institutional training and support, in addition to the training of individual educators; our Young Makers program continued to be modified to position the program to scale nationally; and the Open Portfolio Project finished its first year of research and shifted to its second phase—a focus on bringing research to practice.

While we put energy into recalibrating our efforts, we also grew significantly in 2015. We created two brand-new staff positions—a program coordinator and a communications manager. Two of our programs—Maker VISTA and Maker Corps—expanded, adding new sites and new program participants, and we developed program-based training and online communities. Through our programs and projects, Maker Ed supported approximately 60 organizations and trained an estimated 370 adults whose work helped reach roughly 250,000 youth & families in 2015, doubling the number of youth and families reached in 2014.

In 2015, we also built several new resources—with the introduction of the Maker Ed Directory and publishing the new Youth Makerspace Playbook—and we expanded the Resource Library, adding the “Spaces and Places” category.

And in 2015, commensurate with our programmatic and staff growth, our revenue grew by more than 110%, from a total revenue in 2014 of just over \$900,000 to just over \$1.9 million in 2015. We’re so excited that this increased support allowed us to reach so many more youth!

We ended 2015 on a high-note, securing a \$485,000 grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to support building and strengthening a robust maker educator community. Specifically, these funds were for the support of a needs assessment and landscape study of the community. Based on these research findings, we will develop resources for maker educators in order to expand and enhance their overall practice, expand the collaborative network, and increase access to in-person and online maker educator communities.

With this growth in 2015, along with our renewed focus, I am excited about Maker Ed’s future. The more efficient and effective we become in reaching and supporting educators and institutions around maker education, the closer we get to giving every young person the learning experiences they deserve—learning experiences that allow them to develop new perspectives, a belief in their own abilities, and a passion for learning. I am very much looking forward to continuing to hone and expand Maker Ed’s work in the coming years.

Sincerely,



Warren (Trey) C. Lathe III
Executive Director, Maker Ed

MAKER CORPS

Maker Corps is an online professional development program that provides training and a community of support to youth-serving organizations as they design and implement summer maker education programming. Maker Ed works closely with on-site supervisory staff to plan program details while also providing resources, a focused community of support, and a national recruiting effort to select summer Maker Corps Members for each site.



Photo: Children's Museum of Houston

At a Glance

- Through the Maker Corps program, Maker Ed worked with 39 partner organizations to support and train 168 adults—both Maker Corps Members and partner site supervisors—whose work reached over 220,000 youth and families.
- An external evaluation of Maker Corps in 2015 identified diversity, relevance, and community as strengths of the program:
 - Diversity: “As in previous years, the diversity of the 2015 cohort reflects the many varied people who make and places where making happens.”
 - Relevance: “We find that participants find Maker Corps to be relevant to their personal interests but also help them develop new skills.”
 - Community: “Building community among Maker Corps Members and partner sites remains an important piece of the program model.”

Spotlight: Expanding Summer Programming at Wilson County Public Libraries

Before joining the Maker Corps program in 2015, the Wilson County Public Libraries (WCPL) often struggled to offer robust summer educational programming for youth. Linda Downs, the technology coordinator for the library, discovered Maker Ed online and became a Maker Corps partner site supervisor for the summer of 2015. Maker Corps not only provided Linda with the training, resources, and community of support that she needed to run summer maker programming at WCPL, but it also helped to increase countywide exposure to the libraries. “People have found the library,” Linda told us. Upon the start of the Maker Corps summer program, “they tripled their attendance to the library and they have kept up the attendance since then.” Parents and children traveled up to 45 miles a day to participate in WCPL’s summer maker programs “because there was nowhere else for them to go to find those kinds of programs.”

Spotlight: Building Community at ReCreate

Before joining the Maker Corps program in 2015, Donna Sangwin, founder and director of a creative reuse non-profit called ReCreate based in Roseville, CA, felt alone in the work she was doing. “For a while I felt like I was on this island out here making,” she told us. “I realized, I need[ed] more community for ReCreate as we developed our maker program. I need[ed] people to collaborate with.”

By participating in Maker Corps’ online training and virtual community, Donna discovered that ReCreate was part of a larger community she hadn’t yet known was out there. “We connected with so many people and organizations taking on similar projects and challenges,” Donna told us. “We had a great experience because it gave us that community we were wishing for..We love the collaboration of Maker Corps.”

MAKER VISTA

Our Maker VISTA program focuses on overcoming poverty through maker education. Maker VISTA members serve year-long in high-need communities across the nation to build capacity and impact through partnership development, volunteer facilitation, resource creation, educator training, and much more. Maker Ed works closely with schools and VISTA members as part of a multi-year partnership.

At a Glance

- Through the Maker VISTA program, Maker Ed worked with 15 partner organizations to support and train 37 adults—both Maker VISTA members and partner site supervisors—whose work reached approximately 9,800 students.
- Maker VISTA members collectively raised approximately \$130,000 in donations and recruited more than 200 volunteers who contributed more than 900 hours of service.
- In 2015, Maker Ed also worked towards shifting Maker VISTA towards focusing on building the capacity of community schools and partnerships connected to community schools. As such, the majority of our subsite organizations are now formal school environments, all operating with a cohesive August-to-August Maker VISTA cohort.



Photo: Maker Ed Staff

Spotlight: Creating Community Partnerships at Bethune Middle School

A key element of VISTA member responsibilities includes creating community partnership opportunities. Maker VISTA member Kira Watson, situated at Bethune Middle School in Los Angeles, established a partnership with NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in Pasadena, CA. Paula Partida, at JPL's Education Department, helped to donate educational materials to Bethune Middle School in July 2015. These donated materials allowed teachers to provide real-world connections within their current space and earth science curricula including the 7-8th grade concepts of force, motion, drag and lift.

Spotlight: Making Makerspaces at Ravenswood City School District

Victor Aw and Montana Manalo, our Maker VISTA members at Ravenswood City School District (RCSD) in East Palo Alto, CA, set up and opened a makerspace for Costano Elementary School students in collaboration with RCSD instructor David Hicks in August 2015. This initiative included an audit of inventory, transporting materials, assembling furniture, and mounting equipment. The makerspace is open to students during lunchtime and supports Mr. Hicks' Design Technology elective that serves 88 middle school students with the goal to serve an additional 307 elementary students. Maker VISTA members used their learnings from Maker Ed's Maker Educator Convening, experience in Cesar Chavez makerspace (also in RCSD), participation with TechHive, and past experiences in art and computer science to inform their makerspace design and implementation. Two of the highlights from the new makerspace included customized iPad apps, specifically oriented for the Design Technology elective, and a wall design using duct tape, which was so popular that it is being rolled out to current and future local makerspaces.

OPEN PORTFOLIO PROJECT

The Open Portfolio Project combines research and practice in order to develop a common framework for documenting, sharing, and assessing learning through portfolios. In collaboration with Indiana University’s Creativity Labs, the first phase of the project, which took place from October 2013 to March 2015, situated the current work within the larger landscape of portfolio practice. Phase Two began in August 2015 and will continue through August 2017. This phase of work will zero in on 3-5 field sites and more deeply investigate the utility of portfolios as a compelling alternative to contemporary assessment practices.

At a Glance

- The Open Portfolio Project completed publication of its [full Research Brief series](#) in spring 2015. The complete series shares data, case studies, and stories from makerspaces across the country, focusing on reflections and emerging themes on the use of portfolios to support learning. Key findings include:
 - The 51 surveyed makerspaces reported that they are cultivating 21st-century and life skills—such as creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking—with youth. This data points to the importance of how this growth and development is documented and made visible. As opposed to a grade or a score, portfolios can often be a better way to display and reinforce these skills because they necessitate time for reflection, opportunity for youth voice, and a showcase of diverse abilities.
 - The concept of portfolios has picked up quite a bit of momentum since our start in 2013. A number of higher education institutions link to our research, including the MakeSchools Initiative, which was created in response to President Obama’s first White House Maker Faire in 2014.

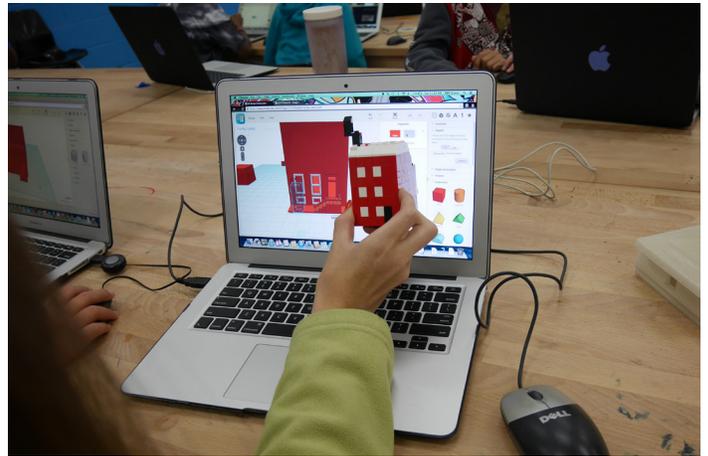


Photo: Digital Harbor Foundation

Spotlight: Furthering Research on Portfolios at Digital Harbor Foundation

Of the 10 field sites that we worked with in Phase 1, we are excited to continue our research efforts in Phase 2 with Digital Harbor Foundation (DHF), an afterschool tech center in Baltimore, MD. We conducted a fall 2015 visit and new iterations of design experiments and workshops with youth and adult educators. We investigated the nuances of creating portfolios with others, as opposed to on their own. Design experiments included asking youth to document their project work collaboratively and individually, as well as engaging in maker projects in both collaborative and independent approaches. Educators were also asked to talk out loud when reviewing portfolios with researchers, revealing the indicators and evidence of learning and growth that they are apt to notice.

In 2015, all portfolios at Digital Harbor shifted to a common Wordpress platform, and each youth member received access to their own portfolio and website. As such, youth are regularly updating their sites with news, posts, and photos. In one of DHF’s Minecraft courses, youth worked collaboratively over the course of multiple weeks and updated their portfolios regularly. With such frequent posts, the portfolios begin to show strong evidence in evolution of thought and self-reflection, of development of skills—both in relation to 3D design and collaboration, and even in overall project management. The work done at DHF reveals the value of what portfolios can show of youth’s learning and growth.

YOUNG MAKERS

The Young Makers program brings together a community of young people, ages 8-18, of varying backgrounds, interests, and skill levels, with mentors and a space to make. In small clubs, participants work together throughout the season to design and make a youth-chosen, open-ended project, culminating in an opportunity to share and exhibit at a showcase event.

At a Glance

- Over 270 young makers, with support from 160 mentors, exhibited 97 projects at Maker Faire Bay Area. These projects included an arduino-powered skeeball machine, button-making, paper mache animals, complex computer games, a pinball-type board game, a cardboard/human fortune teller, small-scale, functional versions of R2D2, and more.
- In 2015, in partnership with Girl Scouts of Northern California, Bay Area Video Coalition (BAVC), and YWCA Silicon Valley, Maker Ed was able to leverage the support of three Regional Coordinators in the Bay Area, one from each partner organization, to help coordinate Young Makers in the East Bay, San Francisco/North Bay, and South Bay regions.
- The [executive summary of our 2015 external evaluation of Young Makers](#) notes that “the data collected suggest that the Young Maker clubs foster an environment where youth are comfortable learning new things, making mistakes, and developing important life skills through the support of dedicated mentors.”



Photo: Maker Ed Staff

Spotlight: Training Young Makers Mentors in Physical Computing

Mentors and educators in our Young Makers program can sometimes feel intimidated when introducing concepts to youth that they're just starting to understand themselves. In March 2015, Maker Ed held a workshop designed to lower barriers and provide opportunities for these mentors and educators to explore and learn together. Thanks to a Google RISE Award, Maker Ed brought 10 educators together at the Lighthouse Community Charter School's Creativity Lab for a professional development workshop entitled “Physical Computing: Tinkering with Light, Sound, and Motion.” Given that so many young makers are interested in coding and computer programming, Maker Ed was delighted to introduce the concept of physical computing, an area that melds the physical with the digital world, as well as many of the common tools and materials used to get started. Just as importantly, we modeled the open-ended, inquiry-based facilitation approaches that mentors can utilize to allow for youth to work collaboratively to answer questions, work through challenges, and explore their curiosities.

One of our workshop participants wrote, “I had so much fun...and I really loved learning through discovery and peers.” Additionally, external evaluators of the workshop found that, “[b]y providing a comfortable space for mentors to gain confidence with these tools, materials, and activities, Maker Ed is directly supporting their ability to do these same things in other settings. While they may not be leaving as experts, they are likely leaving with abilities and confidence they didn't have before.” The 10 educators who attended this workshop went on to work with 370 young makers, and many of the youth projects showcased at Maker Faire Bay Area included a physical computing component.

SPECIAL PROJECTS: MAKERSPACE RESOURCES

In September of 2015, Maker Ed launched a series of new resources to provide context and support for those looking to create and sustain youth makerspaces.

These resources—which are all available for free on Maker Ed’s website—include a 75-page guide called the Youth Makerspace Playbook, the accompanying Makerspaces: Highlights of Select Literature, and a newly launched “Spaces and Places” category on Maker Ed’s Resource Library.

Youth Makerspace Playbook and Accompanying Resources

Created by Maker Ed with input from the wider maker educator community, the Youth Makerspace Playbook (accessible at MakerEd.Org/makerspaces) provides context and support for those planning spaces for youth to make.

The Playbook begins by offering ideas on how to get started with makerspaces, encouraging educators to start simply and to look to their young learners for ideas and inspiration in creating the space. The resource then dives into practicalities of creating and running a makerspace, providing a deep look at the physical spaces, tools and materials, and learning approaches and practices that might be used in makerspaces. Lastly, the Youth Makerspace Playbook provides details on how people, culture, partners, fundraising, storytelling, and assessment can help sustain makerspaces in the long-term.

To accompany the Youth Makerspace Playbook, Maker Ed released “Makerspaces: Highlights of Select Literature,” a research document that showcases a selection of the latest thinking and evidence emerging from the growth of makerspaces and their developing roles in education and communities. It surveys selected recent seminal academic papers, articles, blog posts, and published books on making and makerspaces. Additionally, Maker Ed published the site surveys used to inform the Youth Makerspace Playbook.

Spaces & Places category on Maker Ed’s Resource Library

The [Spaces and Places category on Maker Ed’s Resource Library](#) is a curated collection of information for those interested in getting started or continuing in maker education. Aiming to inform and inspire anyone looking to jumpstart, organize, or expand their own spaces, the Spaces and Places category showcases makerspaces, schools, libraries, and museums across the country through links to video, images, and multimedia content. In addition, the category links to articles and guides with concrete tips for those who are planning or improving a youth makerspace.

Engaging the Maker Educator Community

In the run-up to the launch of these resources, Maker Ed also engaged the maker educator community on the topic of makerspaces through a month-long Twitter campaign. The campaign invited educators to further the conversation around makerspaces by sharing photos of their spaces using the hashtag #MakerEdSpace. Each week of the campaign focused on a different makerspace element, such as storage or signage.

SPECIAL PROJECTS: EVENTS

In 2015, Maker Ed supported maker educators by providing opportunities to connect and learn from each other at several events across the country, including our first annual Maker Educator Convening and education stages at flagship Maker Faires. Additionally, Maker Ed was honored to present at and contribute to the White House Science Fair, the National Week of Making, and other educational and maker-related conferences and events throughout the year.

Maker Educator Convening

On May 13, 2015, Maker Ed hosted the first annual Maker Educator Convening—a day long event that brought together a diverse set of facilitators and advocates of maker education. Traveling from across the country (and beyond), and leaving behind their schools, museums, libraries, universities, and community organizations, maker educators came together to take advantage of the opportunity to gather under one roof and connect across geographic borders and educational settings.

Community, access, and inclusivity were central themes to the Maker Educator Convening, and were reflected in one of the day's most popular sessions: a panel discussion on broadening participation in making. Panelists shared inspiring stories about reaching the youth that they serve (including Latina girls in the L.A. area and vulnerable communities in rural Red Bluff, California). They also offered tips on designing making experiences that are accessible to all youth, and began a thought-provoking conversation about what it means to be inclusive.



Photo: Maker Ed Staff



Photo: Maker Ed Staff

Maker Faires: Bay Area and New York

Described by the Maker Faire team as a “gathering of tech enthusiasts, crafters, educators, tinkerers, hobbyists, engineers, science clubs, authors, artists, students, and commercial exhibitors,” Maker Faire is an opportunity for makers of all ages to connect with one another and share what they’ve made.

Maker Ed contributed to both the Maker Faire Bay Area in San Mateo, CA in May, and World Maker Faire in New York in September. At both events, Maker Ed was pleased to once again host the Education Stages, bringing together a total of more than 60 speakers to share their insights about maker education and to spark discussion about important topics in the field. At Maker Faire Bay Area, Maker Ed had the additional pleasure of organizing the Young Makers program area, where 272 young makers, supported by 162 mentors, came together to exhibit 97 amazing projects.

SPECIAL PROJECTS: EVENTS

White House Events

In 2015, Maker Ed had a presence at two White House-related events: the fifth annual White House Science Fair in March and the National Week of Making in June.

At the White House Science Fair, a Maker Ed-nominated student, Sierra Seabrease (pictured to the right), was selected to display her Jukebox Piano project. Sierra attended as a member of the Digital Harbor Foundation, one of Maker Ed's program partners since 2013.

In June, Maker Ed participated in the White House's National Week of Making and learned from panels at the Congressional Maker Caucus, checking out the work of partner sites at Capitol Hill Maker Faire, hearing presentations from youth makers at the White House for the National Week of Making kick off event, and, of course, attending the National Maker Faire held at the University of D.C. campus. To end the week, Maker Ed led an "Afternoon of Making and Exploring Possibilities" at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). The event brought together educators and superintendents from across the country to hear from the Deputy Director of the USPTO and to make and learn through play.



Photo: Digital Harbor Foundation

Maker Ed at Conferences and Events

Maker Ed also participated in approximately 35 national conferences and events in 2015. Highlights included:

- Presenting on "Open Maker Portfolios: Capture, Share and Assess," at SXSWedu.
- Presenting on "Capturing Design & Process in Youth Portfolios" and "Cases for Makerspaces: Flexibility, Expansion, and Community," at the Intel Computer Clubhouse Network Annual Conference.
- Participating on a panel at a White House Convening on the Representation of Girls in the Media and Toys.
- Participating on a panel about libraries and museums at the American Library Association Annual Conference.
- Presenting on our Youth Makerspace Playbook, co-presenting with Children's Museum of Pittsburgh on "Making and Learning: Tools for Creating, Refining, and Reflecting," and running a workshop, "Capture It! Making Open Portfolios," at FabLearn.
- Running a session on "Making as a Learning Process: Principles of Practice and Design," and presenting in the "Small Changes, Big Impact: Hacking your Best Activities to Bring in the Girls," workshop at the Association of Science and Technology Centers conference.
- Participating on the planning committee for and attending the National Science Foundation Maker Summit.

SUPPORTERS

Maker Ed's programs, projects, and initiatives are made possible through the kind generosity of our supporters. We are pleased to acknowledge the following supporters of our work:

Changemaker (\$450,000+)

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Gordon & Betty Moore Foundation*

Innovator (\$150,000 – \$449,000)

Cognizant

Visionary (\$50,000 – \$249,000)

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Tony DeRose
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EDUCATOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

In 2015, we established the Educator Advisory Committee (EAC) to gather the input and perspectives of maker educators who are leaders in the community. The EAC provides insightful guidance and support for our organization as we work to achieve our vision. By choosing members that represent a broad range of institutional roles, educational settings, and geographical regions, we hope to better understand and meet the needs of educators through the training, resources, and supportive community we provide.

Danielle Martin

Knowledge Manager, Intel Computer Clubhouse (2015); Program Manager, Team4Tech (2016)

Jackie Moore

Program Developer, Level Up

Pam Moran

Superintendent, Albemarle County Public Schools

Ryan Moreno

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