

# UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS FREEDOM BY DESIGN

2016-2017 Team Led by Lauren Downie, Director and Gretchen Kelly, Project Manager



# DESIGN PROCESS

August 2016 - December 2016



After contemplating several clients from connections with the Lawrence, KS chapter of United Way, KU's Freedom by Design design committee decided to partner with The Shelter, Inc. This client desired a more usable and entertaining outdoor area for a youth shelter home to a safe environment for creativity and exercise. Our committee worked to incorporate elements such as benches, a patio, and sunshades as well as individual planters, a chalkboard, and balance beams to promote spending time outdoors. Though the committee originally wanted to incorporate a farm table and interactive archways into the design, the tight schedule and space limitations negated these elements.

Images of the final design can be seen below:



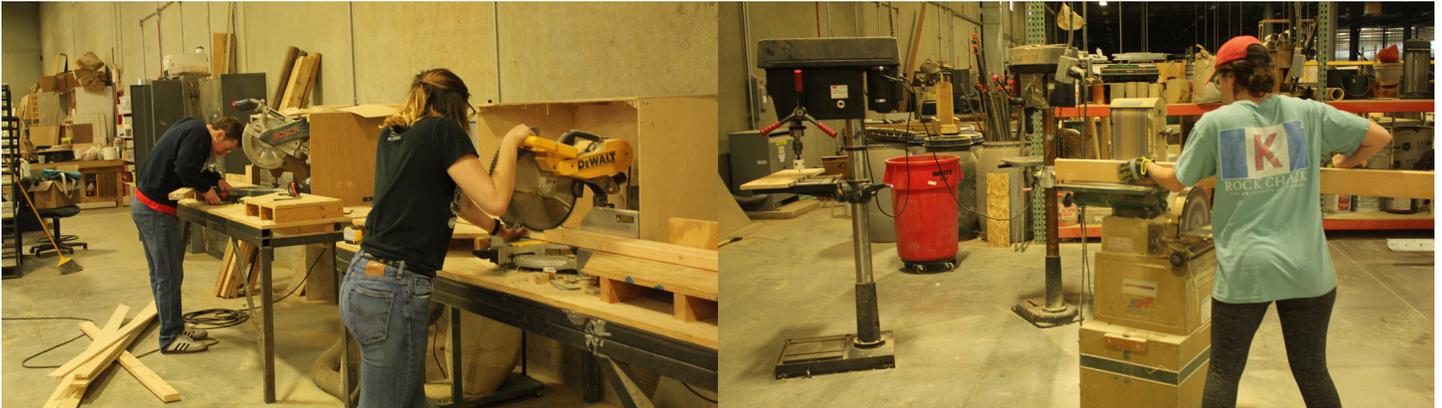
# THE TEAM

Design Committee

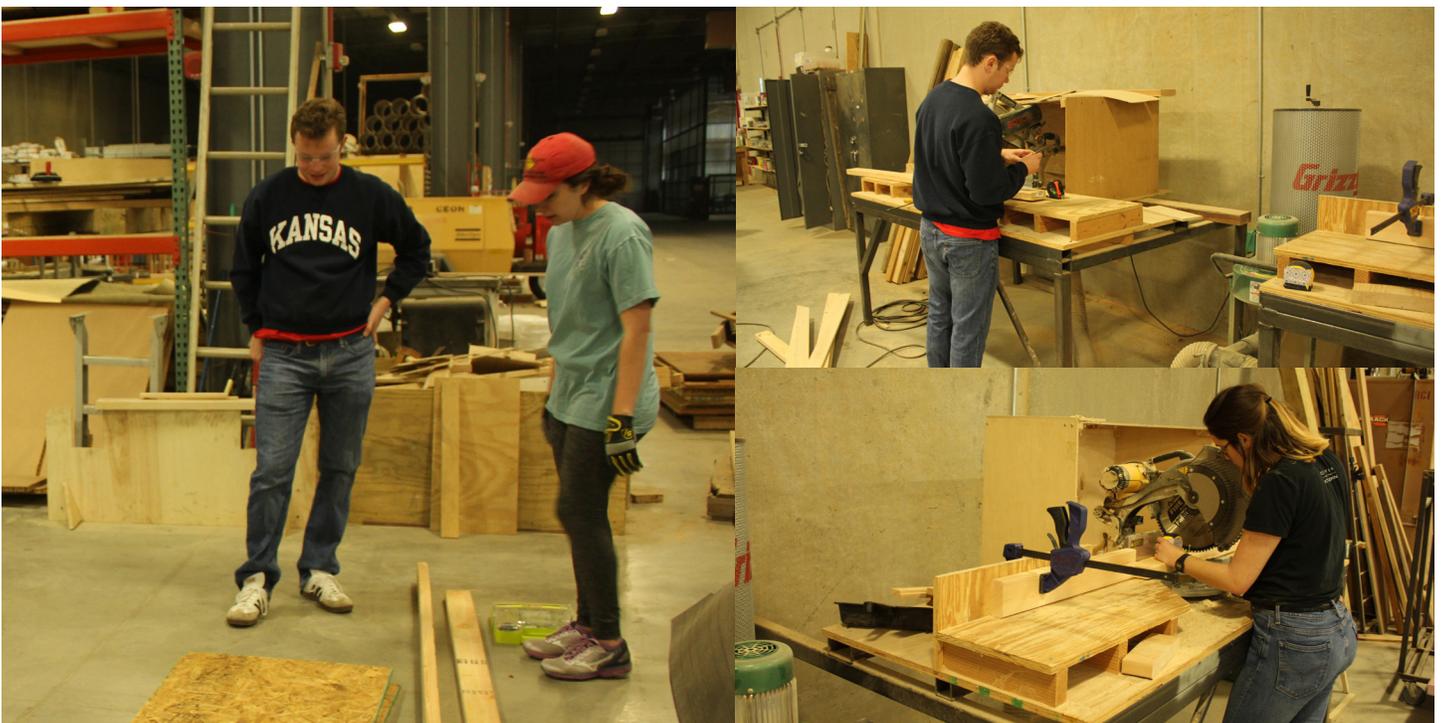


# P R E F A B R I C A T I O N

February 2017 - March 2017



Over the course of a few weeks, University of Kansas's Freedom by Design worked to build benches of varying sizes, planters, balance beams, and concrete stepping stones for the outdoor transformation of the shelter home. The committee originally planned to hand-make each element but later found purchasing finished products to be higher quality and more time efficient. We created the benches, planters and balance beams but purchased finished concrete stepping stones. In the end, the overall quality of the build was heightened by the blend of hand craft and new materials.



# THE BUILD

April 2017



During the days on site, the team dug up grass and soil to install stepping stones and balance beams, assembled and filled the planters, and did minor landscaping. Throughout the build-dates, there were also many, many runs to Home Depot to make sure the team had all necessary tools and materials. Though the team planned on installing the sun shades themselves, they later contacted a contractor to complete this as he installs new fencing. The most impactful part of the build was seeing the residents of the shelter home gardening and playing on the new balance beams. Their smiles made the long, tiring days worthwhile.



# THE TEAM

Building Committee



# FINANCES

## Budget & Expenses

**Budget: \$ 2,600**

\$2,100 from NCARB grant

\$500 from Henderson Engineers, Inc.

**Total Expenses: \$2,100.16**

**Excess funds remain in FBD account to fund next year's project: \$499.84**

# REFLECTION

## Highs & Lows

This year's project was a big commitment after the incompleteness of the previous Freedom by Design project. The team was motivated and encouraged to push through any and all obstacles they faced during this process and worked hard to design and implement the best project possible. As with all projects, the budget was a major concern throughout the entirety of the process. However, the generosity of NCARB and Henderson Engineers allowed the team to dream big and also invest in tools/supplies to use for years to come.

As our FBD program rebuilds at KU, it was most difficult to find participants. The financing and clients were easy to work with, but we worked to recruit help to implement the ideas. In the end, our intimate committees were able to get to know one another and establish a working relationship that was beneficial to the on-site build.

Many of the volunteers were new to woodworking and construction. This caused the pace to slow down immensely, however close relationships were established between team members. By taking the time to work with one another and teach each other the necessary techniques, the team became closer creating a better working chemistry once on site. Another challenge imposed by the lack of experience of the team was the assembly of the sun shades. Once on site, the team realized that the skill required to assemble the shades was far beyond our reach. However, The Shelter, Inc. was already working with a contractor for new fencing and he will be installing the shades alongside his current work. Its completion is still pending.

Designing for this group of people was particularly challenging, as the team had to think about issues and dangers that had never come up before. There needed to be a balance between safe and fun that included more than just a few benches. Regardless of design constraints, the design committee worked to come up with creative and fun things to incorporate into the site, such as planters, chalkboards, and the balance beams.

The client the team chose to build for this year was immensely grateful for the effort we put into the home and was well deserving of Freedom by Design's labor. Seeing the faces of the children who live there light up after seeing their new backyard was more than worth the labor and reminded the team of why they do what they do.

# BEFORE

Site Design



# AFTER

Site Design

