

Lehigh Valley Holiday Tradition: Manufacturers Learn While Giving Back to the Community

by Paul Muschick

Lehigh Valley - Sixteen workers from four Lehigh Valley area manufacturers teamed up on the same assembly line to build bicycles for children for the holidays, as part of a training exercise to learn Lean Manufacturing techniques.

Known as Santa's STANDARD WORKshop, the event is an example of the creative training offered by Manufacturers Resource Center and of the community spirit of the Lehigh Valley business community.

Staff from Just Born Quality Confections, Lutron Electronics, Ocean Spray, and Northeast Products & Services assembled 40 bicycles on Dec. 10, the second day of the two-day training. The bicycles were donated to Community Bike Works, a local non-profit.

"This event reflects the best of the Lehigh Valley's manufacturing community — companies learning together, improving together, and supporting the next generation. Santa's STANDARD WORKshop has become a tradition that showcases not only skill development but the generosity and teamwork that define our region," said Rich Hobbs, President & CEO of Manufacturers Resource Center.

Located in Allentown, Community Bike Works offers mentoring programs that use bicycles and books to connect youth with adult and peer mentors who can teach them skills that help them succeed.

"Community Bike Works is grateful for the enormous contribution of bikes from Manufacturers Resource Center," said Director of Programs James Williams. "I'm inspired by the teamwork displayed during the workshop and the efficiency these folks learned."

The hands-on learning experience provided participants with practical exposure to:
 Introduction to Lean Manufacturing - Core principles applied directly to the bicycle assembly line.
 Waste Reduction & Process Flow - Using Lean tools to optimize the build.
 TWI Job Instruction - Standardizing work for quality, safety, and efficiency.
 Team Building, True North, and Continuous Improvement - Real-time problem-solving on the shop floor.

Lehigh Valley is among the Top 15% of manufacturing markets in the U.S., based on Gross Domestic Product. About 700 manufacturers make a diverse array of products including semiconductors and optoelectronics; food and beverages; pharmaceuticals and medical supplies; clothing and other consumer products; hydraulic systems; chemicals; metal products; mineral products; plastics; building supplies; and national defense components. Global brands including Crayola, Mack Trucks, Martin Guitar, and Olympus are based in the Lehigh Valley.

Manufacturers Resource Center serves manufacturers in the Lehigh Valley and surrounding counties, to enhance their productivity and technological advancements.

The center is part of the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Manufacturing Extension Partnership, a network that helps manufacturers connect with government agencies, trade associations, universities and research laboratories, state and federal initiatives, and other resources to help them grow and innovate.



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