

Exploring Asylum Hill - A Fresh Start update

The last time we checked in with Fresh Start Pallet Products, they had just moved into their new home at Veeder Place and were getting settled in. A lot has gone on since then so you deserve to know at least a few of the highlights.

The move to a real manufacturing facility has allowed them to build out a professional woodworking shop. Efficiency and safety are two of the beneficiaries, as well as increases in quality, variety and quantity of products made and sold.

At the same time, the Board of Directors has been growing and maturing. People with a lot of different backgrounds and experiences have contributed to success on many different fronts. One of those led to the TV feature on WFSB's "Better Connecticut", now on the landing page of the website at

www.freshstartpalletproducts.org.

The best way to see the spectrum of the core products, those produced and stocked for sale, would be again at the website, under **shop**. There you will see a dozen different products each with a number of variations available, including color, finish and more.

While these products were the whole business in the beginning, they constitute only a third of Fresh Start's work today. They exist under the heading of Core Products and share shop time with Contract Products.

This first began when The Salvation Army wanted to open a new store in Dayville CT. They turned to Fresh Start to produce much of the store's fixtures and design elements. Word spreads and most recently, Cape Cod Fence Co. has contracted with Fresh Start to produce their mailbox posts. These are a big seller especially in the winter, and fit in nicely when demand for outdoor furniture slows.

The third part of Fresh Start's work now consists of Custom Products, pieces made to order to a customer's specifications. While in the beginning there were always a few of these, especially benches with custom painting, now there are commercial customers with a regular need for products that our trained and increasingly experienced workers can produce. The newest of these is working for our fellow Veeder Place Company NINA. Fresh Start will be producing custom Victorian era architectural trim work for the homes NINA is building and remodeling in the neighborhood.

This is also the 4th year Fresh Start will be appearing at the Flower and Garden Show at the Connecticut Convention Center. Each year has been more successful and this year features a place very near the entrance. People who bought something in previous years are



commenting on the amazing progress of the quality and variety of products, and everyone is encouraging of the mission. It really is inspiring to see what people outside the mainstream are capable of producing when given a chance. Since the Garden Show will be over when you read this, don't despair, Fresh Start will also be at the CT Home & Remodeling Show from 2/28 - 3/1 at the CT Convention Center.

For more about that show, go to <https://www.cthomeshow.com>

Photos from the Flower & Garden Show can be seen at:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/bFdtQFsvdZkR7H1a7>