

NINA and Fresh Start Pallet Products

The sub-title to this should be “a partnership made in Asylum Hill”, in fact more specifically “at Veeder Place.”

The Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (NINA) has been dedicated to creating homeownership opportunities in the

neighborhood since 2004, and their first, and by some measure, most ambitious project was moving the “Victorian Lady” from it’s original home surrounded by an Aetna parking lot on Sigourney Street to it’s current home at 21 Ashley St. Since that time, they have added more than 2-dozen homeownership opportunities to Asylum Hill and since 2006, they have been a fixture at Veeder Place.

Fresh Start Pallet Products began it’s life in the back yard of Grace Lutheran Church and after a “brief” stay in the basement of Trinity Episcopal Church, were able to find their current home at Veeder place as well.

So when Fresh Start began to expand their work and training opportunities to include custom contract manufacturing, and NINA found their former volunteer suppliers of custom woodwork dwindling, a perfect partnership opportunity arose.

The real test came early on as work on 86 Hawthorn began. The Neo-Gothic design of these town homes was intended to reflect the style of 140 Hawthorn set back behind the apartment buildings on Hawthorn and Forest Streets. It was the home that Mark Twain first occupied while his home on Farmington Ave was being built. The twin gables design on the front of 84-86 Hawthorn was taken from a similar home in Ontario Canada.

In order to make it, and much of the rest of the trim, they would need a new piece of equipment. They would also need a master computer draftsman to make the design exactly fit the gables as they had been constructed.

Fresh Start is fortunate to have some very talented and generous board members, and in this case it was Mark Summers who stepped up and produced the design and specified the equipment needed to produce it. Today the material has all been made and delivered. So if you drive down Hawthorn St you’ll see the results of this most recent partnership. However that’s not the only contract work that Fresh Start is involved in. Much of the interior woodwork and even some of the lighting at Parkville Market is Fresh Start produced, and all the while their employees become more and more experienced.

