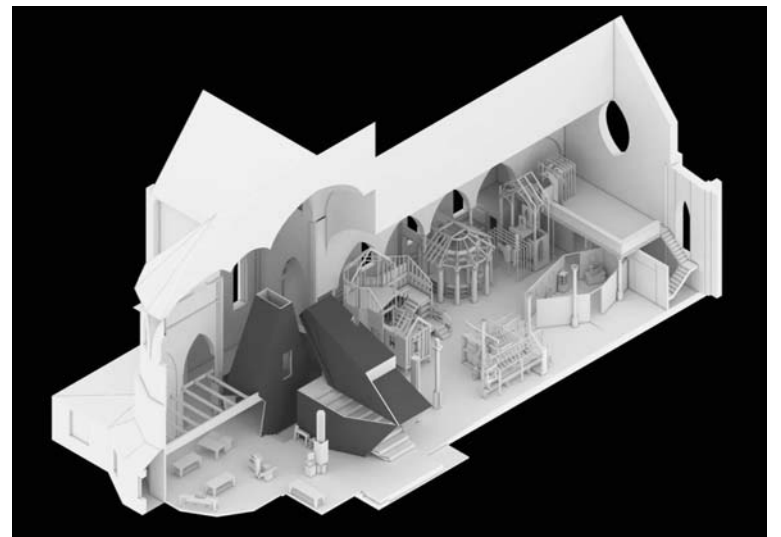




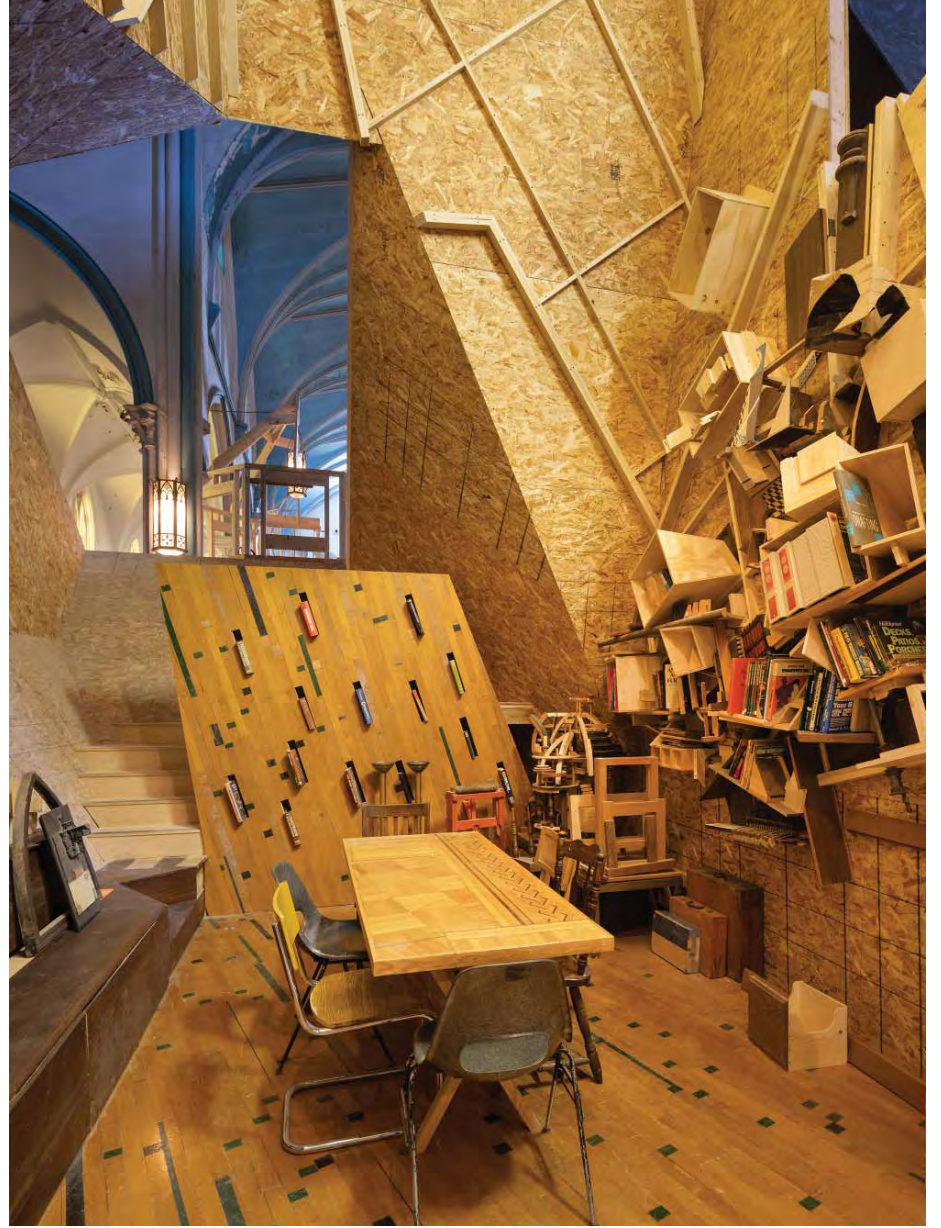
Assembly House (former Immaculate Conception Church)
150 Edward Street, Buffalo, NY



The Living Workspace. The interior of Assembly House is continuously remade by students in collaboration with tradespeople, artists, designers, architects and others, in order to build a new model for living and working together in a city.



Tradition and Innovation. The SACRA Quarter House Project (above) demonstrates building techniques common to Victorian-era architecture within the city of Buffalo while the SACRA Building Arts Library (left) features contemporary design approaches, including the use of structural insulated panels and reclaimed materials.



Workshops with Specialists. Assembly House workshops focus upon providing skills in carpentry and woodworking (left). Ancillary workshops provide introductions to a variety of other trades, such as the above stained glass demonstration with a local stained glass artist.



Scale. Projects range from the scale of a simple box to that of entire rooms. The SACRA curriculum includes exercises in basic woodworking and cabinetmaking, as well as basic framing.



The Building as Teacher. Assembly House workshops often utilize the building to introduce and develop skills, such as in the plaster workshops conducted by the Plasterers Local. (above)

Other lessons borrow features from the building and interpret them in new ways, such as in the column turning workshops. (right)

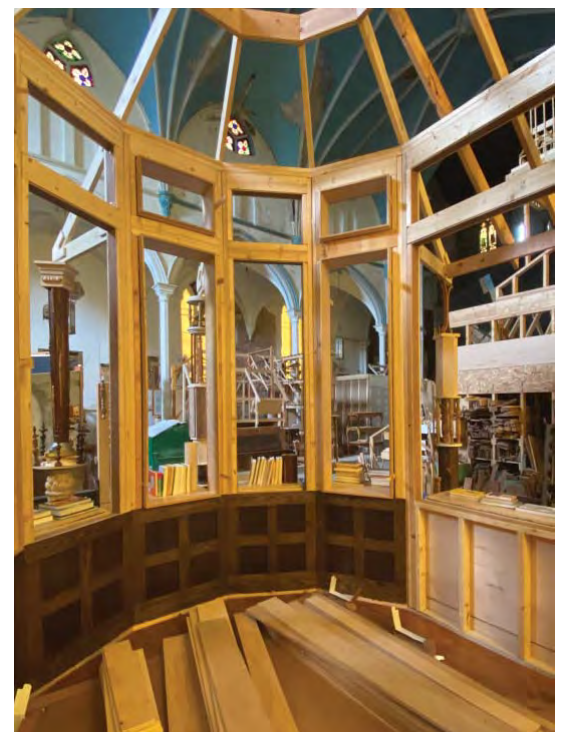




Modeling and Drafting. At Assembly House, students build scale models and learn to draw by hand in order to develop and strengthen basic math skills and understand the principles of construction.



Cultivating Wonder. Projects built at Assembly House (above and right) often frame the surrounding building in unexpected ways, providing windows into other worlds. The environment encourages forms of discovery and delight that are often lacking in traditional classrooms.





Graduation and Jobs. The successful completion of SACRA's 12-week program is a milestone achievement for program participants and all involved. (above)
The SACRA program has a job placement rate of 80% through its first 3 years.

The graduation event is also an opportunity to celebrate and present each term's hands-on project, such as the cabinet room at right.





Assemblage. Public events at Assembly House are artistic spectacles that showcase the projects under construction and the total environment of the reformed church. These events are opportunities to build community connection and to celebrate the art of building together.

Selected SACRA Stories

Ernst

Born in Haiti, Ernst moved to Buffalo in 2018 and learned about the SACRA program while meeting the Assembly House 150 coordinator at a job fair. Ernst enjoyed fiddling around with home repair projects while watching tutorial videos but wanted to know much more. "I owned tools, some of which I didn't even know what to call them, but I had limited experience using them," laughs Ernst. "This program was great. I learned a lot about tools, woodwork and construction. I now know what I'm doing, I like what I'm doing." During the period of time when the program was paused because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ernst purchased a used lathe and began using his newly acquired skills to turn wooden bowls and vessels in his backyard. He characterizes his instructor as a good person and excellent teacher with a lot of patience. "I've learned a lot working with him and hope to learn much more." Ernst hopes his future includes working on a large-scale construction project.

Matthew

Matthew is a testament to resilience and the power to persevere in the face of hardship. A graduate of Hutch Tech, he went to West Virginia to play college football. Struggling to maintain a balance between work, school and football, Matthew eventually fell into some trouble. Upon returning to Buffalo, more brushes with the law ultimately led to him spending time in a state correctional facility. Once released, a family friend referred Matthew to SACRA program as a fresh start. He credits the program as "the best thing that has happened for me this year." His instructors and classmates provided him with more than just technical skills while offering consistent support and comfort during challenging personal times. "Different people need different things," he said. "They gave me my space, they were really supportive during some tough times. This time last year I was locked up." His goal after completion is to become a unionized worker. He credits SACRA for "helping me move forward and get to my next step," he said. "This has been a very important steppingstone."

Tova

Tova recently returned to Buffalo after volunteering five months in Washington state with WWOOF (Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms) which provides opportunities to learn about organic food, agriculture, and sustainable living. "I volunteered at a point where life was a little weird, I questioned what I really wanted to do," said Tova. She considered carpentry to earn a living to bridge the transition. A highlight of the program was hearing stories from talented craftsmen and tradespeople who opened up about their early hardships and hiccups. "Some days I leave **here so full of gratitude I almost want to cry** because I see the love, care, time and effort put in not only helping me but every classmate to better their lives." She says her instructor is a patient, gentle, understanding teacher who supports the class by listening, at times to some difficult, personal situations. "When I first walked into the building it was a shocking atmosphere, like walking in a dream and it feels like that every day," describes Tova. "It's magical and surreal, you're within someone else's dream to work on your own."

Malissa

Malissa humbly says her only prior experience in the trades was, "maybe picking up a drill to hang a picture the wrong way," she laughed. Comfortable, confident, and achievable are key words she used to depict her first day in the program. "One of SACRA's greatest strengths is the time the instructor takes to explain how things work. For the first four weeks, we went through every machine step by step," remembers Malissa. "I gained a greater understanding of how things operate, and most importantly, safety." The training has exceeded her expectations. "Over the course we had multiple guest instructors that come from many backgrounds. Building the dining room on-site has been cool, I enjoyed working on fine carpentry, I like attention to detail." After graduating, Malissa begins a training position with Northwood Historic Restoration specializing in the custom replication of historic wood windows and millwork. In addition to this milestone, Malissa accomplished a second significant goal as a female role model to her nine-year-old son. "While his dad is a woodworker, I wanted to go to school to show my son a woman can achieve the same skills," she proudly said.



SACRA is a 15-week paid career training program in the construction trades.

We prepare participants for careers in construction-related fields by providing hands-on instruction with talented industry professionals in Western New York.

SACRA students work on **real, creative, hands-on projects in the community**, visit worksites and landmarks in the city, and gain exposure to career paths through field trips and workshops with invited experts. The SACRA program is geared towards people who enjoy working with their hands, creative problem solving, learning about the history of buildings in Buffalo, and working collaboratively as a team.

Join Our Team at Assembly House

Hands-on training takes place at Assembly House—an historic, 1870s-era church in downtown Buffalo—that provides a unique and inspiring learning environment. At Assembly House, participants are surrounded by examples of design and construction excellence.

Assembly House is not a classroom.

We are an innovative, interactive, experiential-learning center.

Learn construction skills with some of WNY's most talented builders and craftspeople.

Workshops with professionals include basic framing, basic cabinet making, stair building, wood window building, stained glass, plaster repair, painting and many other skills. All participants learn proper use of hand and power tools, math and construction-document reading, and material identification and selection. SACRA facilitates job placement for all program graduates.

There is **no cost to participate** and **all trainees earn a stipend** over the 15 weeks. No prior experience in construction is necessary.

Get Paid to Learn Construction Skills in a creative, hands-on environment



Past employers of SACRA graduates include:

- Hadley Exhibits
- Cortese Construction
- BRD Construction
- Rigidized Metals
- Gypsum Systems / Conley Caseworks
- Habitat for Humanity
- Rodriguez Construction Group
- Little Wheel Restoration Co.
- Sinatra and Co.
- Lamparelli Construction
- Koehler Gibson

Additional industry collaborators include:

- Carpenters Local 276
- Plasterers Local 9
- The Finishing Trades Institute of Western and Central NY

Major Support for the SACRA program is provided by:

- The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation
- The John R. Oishei Foundation
- Cameron and Jane Baird Foundation
- Talis Equity
- The D-B Trust
- The MAK Fund
- Tim and Alexandra Johnston
- Baillie Lumber

“I plan to use my skills and the lessons I have learned at SACRA in my day-to-day life and carpentry and woodworking career.”

– Danyelle M.

“The most valuable lesson I learned at SACRA is how to engage with co-workers. I would like to use my framing skills to be able to repair my own house and work for a house-building company.”

– Mohammed A.

“SACRA has given me a chance to explore and grow as a person and learn a new skill in life.”

– Coco P.