

Summer Company 2017: Keegan Parker Fivestar Woodworking & Design



A duty that transformed into a profitable hobby.

"We live on a farm," Keegan says, "so everything has to be built. It was kind of my chore to build. You know: 'go build a chicken coop, go build a new shed, go build a tire rack for winter tires.' And then I just became pretty good at it and it was something I enjoyed doing. And it wasn't really a chore."

To improve his skills, Keegan says he worked as an apprentice for a carpenter a few years ago. Last summer he did some casual woodworking for some clients. And this year, he discovered the summer company program and has used it as a tool to turn his woodworking into a real business.

Now, part of his family's barn has become a workshop.

"It's in a loft of a barn we have on my property. So, there are always goats and chickens running through my shop here and there."

His business wasn't just a hit with the animals, though. Keegan made stellar connections in Sydenham, Ont., doing multiple jobs for the Trouse dales – who own several businesses in town. In total, he gained about 35 clients over the summer with one third of them repeat clients.

"It exceeded my expectations with how much business I had," Keegan says. "I was never really bored. I always had something to do. And also, the program was really great. I didn't know it had so much to offer."

He says some of the things he took away from the program include being more personable as opposed to being too formal and professional in his craft, as well as the importance of customer service.

Overall, he says: "Business was a success. I've had lots of fun. I learned a lot. I don't think I could've learned that much in school in two months to be honest. It was very good for me."

He says he plans on continuing his business through high school – on a smaller scale during the school year – until he goes off to post-secondary, where he thinks he may switch into engineering.

"I don't want to do woodworking for the rest of my life, but I definitely think being an entrepreneur – basically from this, has convinced me that it's something I want to do."

