

## MAKERSPACE INTERNS HELP BRING DREAMS TO LIFE

**ABOUT GIZMO-CDA, INC.** Gizmo-CDA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit community makerspace in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Housed on the campus of North Idaho College, Gizmo hosts more than 10,000 square feet of fabrication and manufacturing tools, ranging from a pottery studio and woodshop to 3d printers and vacuum formers. Gizmo's mission is to build creative confidence and curiosity through programs that give all people - "pre-K to gray" - access to tools, technologies, and mentors. They accomplish this work by offering a membership program, artist workshops, tools training, youth camps and classes, student work programs, product development support, community events, and more.

**THE CHALLENGE.** Gizmo frequently receives inquiries from community members seeking prototyping services - but as a small non-profit, the organization has historically lacked the capacity to meet this need. With limited local options, companies in Coeur d'Alene began soliciting product prototyping from Boise State University's New Product Development (NPD) Lab, seven hours away.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** Upon learning about these challenges, Gene Hamacher, a client manager for TechHelp, part of the MEP National Network™, and a member of Gizmo's board of directors, approached Gizmo about a partnership with the Boise State NPD Lab. The implementation included franchising Boise State's NPD Lab to Gizmo on the North Idaho College Campus to give them access to prototyping, design, and student resources. The first cohort of student interns in the summer and fall of 2022 helped make critical improvements to Gizmo's infrastructure, including prototyping and manufacturing the terminals that now control access to over a dozen of Gizmo's major machines. When not working on prototyping projects, the interns supported makerspace staff with machine maintenance and repair, shop organization, tools training, and developing projects for classes. This allowed Gizmo to meet a greater demand for classes and other training opportunities and reduced the amount of time machines were down for maintenance.

With dedicated part-time support, staff could invest more time in makerspace projects, such as improving machine documentation and developing new classes. In total, since the inception of the project, TechHelp student interns have worked over 1600 hours at Gizmo, helping Gizmo save over \$20,000 in labor costs and creating a new revenue stream through product development. By investing directly in student apprenticeships, partners like TechHelp play a critical role in expanding staff capacity and increasing both the efficacy and accessibility of Gizmo's programs. TechHelp student interns have also brought value to Gizmo's youth programs, from building guitars with teenagers at summer camp to helping Girl Scouts complete their first woodworking project.

**"What I really appreciate about this program is how the skills that the student engineers learn while working on projects for Gizmo can be directly applied to the designs requested by clients and vice versa."**

-Erik Satren, Lead Gizmologist

## RESULTS



4 student interns



\$24,000 in new investment

## CONTACT US



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