

iVAC partners with Almonte and District High School to improve workshop safety.

Lanark County, the maple syrup capital of Ontario, is home to Almonte, a charming town of approximately 5,000 people featuring stunning 19th century architecture. Thomas Fuller, architect of the Parliament buildings designed the original Almonte Post Office in 1889 and this edifice, along with the Rosamond Woollen Mill—the largest 19th century textile mill in the country—are both designated as national historic sites. The Mississippi river, of no relation to its American sibling, snakes through the downtown core. On a sunny day you may wish to take a seat alongside the sculpture of Dr. James Naismith, the inventor of basketball, who was born nearby in what was then Ramsay township, in 1861. Indeed, throughout Almonte you will experience a uniquely creative flair, with several boutiques, mills and artisans. But creativity in Almonte extends well beyond business and architecture.



Downtown Almonte, courtesy Saffron Blaze

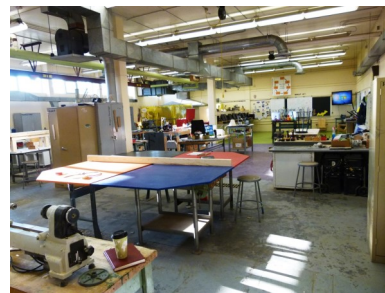


James Naismith sculpture
courtesy D. Gordon E. Robertson

Over at Almonte and District High School (ADHS) the Maker Space Workshop allows students to conceive art to their heart's content. The lab features a variety of woodworking and metalworking tools, computer aided design workstations, 3-D printers and several media with which students can design and build. It is the brainchild of Andy Carruthers, the ADHS staff and the Upper Canada District School Board (UCDSB). The team's vision is to provide students with tools to help them explore their creative genius. The object is not to tell a student what to do but to let them generate their own ideas with assistance from Andy.

Several studies have shown the benefits of providing creative outlets within the school curriculum. Such programs help students with:

- Motor Skills
- Language Development
- Decision Making
- Visual Learning
- Inventiveness
- Cultural Awareness
- Improved Academic Performance



Almonte and District High School Maker Space Workshop and 3-D Printing stations

UCDSB has been at the forefront of creative education for several years. In 2007 for example, its students built one of only 3 Envirohomes in Canada. The Envirohome standard is one of the most exacting benchmarks in terms of sustainability, performance and resource management and serves as a blueprint for building better, greener homes. Serving over 30,000 students across one of the largest geographic areas in Ontario, UCDSB programs are recognized for their innovativeness.

In 2015, iVAC partnered with the ADHS to provide iVAC dust control switches to automate dust collection in the Maker Space Workshop. The area features a variety of power tools including band saws, scrolling stations, chop saws, sanding drums and jointing machinery. All of these power tools generate hazardous wood dust that can impair a student's health for years to come. Unfortunately the student is not always aware of this. The iVAC System automatically provides protection. Each power tool connects to a central dust collector, which is automatically activated when a tool is turned on. The use of iVAC switches provides added safety and convenience, and provides for a healthier working environment. It also allows students to focus on the task at hand without interruption, and without sacrificing shop safety.



iVAC Inventor Graham Neathway and Andy Carruthers, Head of the Maker Space Workshop



ADHS Maker Space woodworking shop

Graham Neathway, Chief Designer of iVAC, looks forward to standardizing iVAC throughout the UCDSB territory in 2016. "Our focus is to help improve our students' health and safety in today's workshops in a transparent manner. I was a child once, and I sometimes wonder how I made it this far when you consider the risks I took, the hazards I was exposed to, and the fact that as a young boy my focus certainly was not safety. Let us use our experience to the benefit of our youth. I think we've all been there, so we can all relate"

If you've educational or institutional requirements for improved control of your dust collection system, contact us and let us know how we can help.