

2018 MAFA Grant Report for Philadelphia Guild of Handweavers

Philadelphia Guild of Handweavers
3705 Main Street
Philadelphia, PA 19127
www.pghw.org

Submitted by:

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Description of the Project:

The Philadelphia Guild of Handweavers is a non-profit organization, founded in 1952, whose mission is to foster the art and craft of weaving and the fiber arts. In 1992 the owner of Wilde Yarns deeded the property at 3705 Main St. in Philadelphia to the Guild, which is now our permanent headquarters. This is where we meet, offer workshops and classes and house a substantial fiber arts library and equipment collection. The Guild motto is “We Learn by Doing and Grow by Sharing”. Membership in the Guild offers not only the chance to increase learning but to be part of a community of other fiber artists.

The “sharing” part of our mission involves doing outreach demonstrations of weaving and spinning at various locations in the Philadelphia area and its suburbs. Our outreach community includes historic events, festivals, community organizations and schools. Our grant idea began in 2017 when we noticed that members who volunteered for outreach events started bringing their own rigid heddle looms—as opposed to the usual small floor- or table looms that the Guild traditionally supplied to our outreach events. The reason for this was that many children who wanted to try weaving at our events were not tall enough to reach the loom treadles. The rigid heddle was the perfect solution to this barrier. The simplicity of the looms makes them more approachable and certainly less intimidating to those curious about weaving. The public response at outreach events to these little rigid heddle looms was very enthusiastic, and we were asked multiple times if the Guild offered workshops on rigid heddle weaving that are open to the public. Unfortunately, because of lack of equipment, we had to say that this wasn’t possible. We were even offered venues where we could teach rigid heddle weaving, but had to decline because of the equipment issue.

Our guild’s lack of equipment made it impossible to offer rigid heddle workshops, but we knew that it was a great opportunity to create and foster new weavers, and even new members to our guild.

Our MAFA grant, which we called “Gateway to Weaving” enabled us to purchase six (6) Schacht 15” Cricket looms plus six (6) additional 10 dent heddles. These were used in all of our outreach events (except for those that are historic period-correct), in workshops both at our Guild (our “Walk in and Weave” event for little looms) and at our community partner locations. We had a team of seven (7) Guild members who were willing to assist with the planned events. The rigid heddle looms were the perfect choice; they are more accessible for people with physical disabilities, and for those with learning differences, who would have difficulty dressing a standard floor loom. The cost of owning a rigid heddle loom is more within many peoples’ budget, and this would include school students as well as adults and seniors.

Evaluation Plan:

All groups that were taught in a classroom setting were encouraged to complete an evaluation form after the class (*attachment A*). We wanted to know what they liked most about weaving, whether they were likely to purchase a loom and continue to weave, and whether they wanted to learn more. At outreach events we had a contact information form (*attachment B*) available to enable us to reach out to potential new weavers. We maintained weaving class statistics as well as collected data on attendance at outreach events which included rigid heddle loom demonstrations.

Promotion Plan:

All publicity about the weaving classes stated that the funding was provided by MAFA and included MAFA’s logo. Publicity included announcements on our website and articles in the publications of our community partners. At outreach events, when demonstrating rigid heddle weaving we provided flyers about rigid heddle weaving (*attachment C*).

Sources of Matching and Additional Funds:

One of our members who owns a weaving supply business (*Pam Pawl Textiles*) offered us a 15% discount on the looms and heddles (*attachment D*). Two of our community partners provided space for classes, otherwise the PGHW guild house was used. Yarn, weaving supplies and instructional handouts were provided by the Guild. Our grant team of guild volunteers offered their time to teach the workshops.

Our Typical Customer Was:

- Someone who had never woven but is interested in learning.
- An experienced weaver who was looking for more portability for their craft.
- Someone who knits/crochets and wanted to try weaving to use up yarn or speed up craft output.

Learning Objectives:

1. Learn how to warp and weave a project on a rigid heddle loom, and in so doing create a desire in participants to continue weaving.
2. Raise awareness of what weaving is and its creative potential.
3. Introduce people to a user-friendly form of weaving through rigid heddle looms.

Raw Data:

- Number of classes taught: 11 (*attachment E*)
- Number of students taught in classes: 82
- Total number of outreach events using rigid heddle looms: 7 (*attachment F*)
- Feedback from evaluation sheets: 100% positive
- Number of new members via classes and outreach events: 9 members
- Invitations to teach rigid heddle outside of the Guild: 5
- Number of looms needing to be borrowed for classes larger than 6 students: 4
- Number of known students who bought rigid heddle looms: 4

An Analysis of Project Goals Versus Actual Outcomes

Our goal in general was to promote education in the fiber arts, specifically rigid heddle weaving. Other goals under this general umbrella were: creating new weavers and interest in weaving; expanding community partnerships; and benefitting our Guild in terms of new memberships and increasing our profile in the community. Rigid heddle weaving has been described as a “gateway tool” to weaving. Many people are intimidated by floor looms, either because of their size, complexity, cost, portability or perceived difficulty to use. Rigid heddle looms address all of those concerns and are extremely simple to use. Even those with physical or mental challenges/disabilities—can easily learn to successfully use a rigid heddle loom.

We feel we exceeded our stated goals. Our outcomes are summarized below.

Creating New Weavers and Interest in Weaving

Getting people interested in simple weaving expanded our weaving community and created new weavers, which is necessary to keep our craft going. We were looking to reach people of all ages and abilities who may find weaving to be a relaxing, fun and productive activity. In particular, we were hoping to reach people who have disabilities—physical, learning or intellectual—who may benefit from this activity. Not only were our classes full of enthusiastic students of all ages and capabilities, we were able to gear several to children and the elderly. A young woman who is mentally challenged joined our guild, and learned and mastered rigid heddle weaving under the guidance of some of our members. She is now our “warp mistress” for rigid heddle looms and is one of the volunteers who assisted with our workshops.

Our classes were so popular that we found it necessary to borrow looms due to demand. Our grant helped purchase 6 looms but it was not unusual for us to have classes with up to 10 students. Guild members stepped up and loaned us their own personal rigid heddle looms to accommodate the larger classes. At least 4 of our students bought looms and a center for senior living where we taught a class (Dunwoody Village) is planning on purchasing several. Nine (9) of our students became guild members. We also offered a follow-up warping class due to demand from students in the beginner sessions.

Expanding Community Partnerships

We established strong relationships with two community partners, The Mt. Airy Learning Tree, who has already scheduled two more workshops for 2019, and Awbury Arboretum where our dye garden is located. Awbury has engaged us to teach two rigid heddle workshops as part of their 2019 “Year of Natural Fibers” theme. They liked us so much that we are teaching 10 other fiber related classes as well as weaving. The Philadelphia American Swedish Museum has approached us to teach a rigid heddle workshop at their location in February 2019. Our grant activities are what lead them to discover our guild as a resource.

Benefits to our Guild

Our Rigid Heddle Special Interest Group—which has grown considerably since the start of the grant --now meets two times a month with one daytime meeting during the week and one weekend day meeting to accommodate members and prospective members who want to learn more about rigid heddle weaving.

As previously stated, we have added new and very active members to the guild because of the rigid heddle classes. Their enthusiasm is inspiring!

The publicity in print (newsletter and newspaper articles) and online about our workshops has increased awareness in the Philadelphia area about our guild and what we do.

Summary of Lessons Learned and Advice for Future Grantees:

Audience

- The most appropriate age group are 7 years through adult. Children younger than 7 usually need too much help to learn and often lack the attention span necessary. If they require parental help, it is difficult to teach.

Planning

- Figure out early the maximum number of students you can handle and how many teachers you need for that number.

- Design a project suitable for the time frame of the class and establish warp lengths/widths for each so you can easily assign warping to volunteers.

Class Content

- Stick to weaving only. Teach knotted fringe as finishing. We initially tried to teach hem stitching in the class but found there was simply not enough time, many students struggled with the concept. We do not recommend teaching this in a 5 hour class.
- “Free style” weaving techniques were enthusiastically welcomed. Once students got the hang of plain weaving and wanted to try more techniques, we taught clasped weft, inlays, surface loops, etc.

Preparation

- Enlist guild volunteers to warp looms. Specify the length and width of warp along with what should be used for warp spreading. Some guild members have never done direct warping, so it’s a fun learning experience as well.

Outreach Events

- At outreach events we found that adults do not like to learn on the same looms that children are playing on. We found it best to set up special looms with an established color-and-weave pattern on it for adults only—this attracted more interested adults to our booth. The pattern was attractive and not just a ‘free weave’ style of weaving. We kept separate looms for the children to weave on.
- Outreach events were usually too busy to take time for photos, signatures or evaluations. A sign-up sheet collecting emails and names is easiest if you want to notify people about upcoming rigid heddle classes.
- Have your guild’s brochures and/or business cards available at the booth.

Workshop Tips

- For students to be comfortable at the looms we found that using multiple stacking chairs helped make weaving ergonomically better. Encouraging students to put the looms in their laps is also helpful. We were using standard height tables. *This option is something that should be told to students in the beginning of class.*
- After about 30 minutes in every workshop, students were pretty independent about weaving. Don’t hover over them but be alert for those who have questions or need help choosing the next weft yarn.

- Remind students to take breaks and stretch several times during class. They often get so caught up in what they are doing they lose track of time.
- Don't push people to finish. Sometimes all they are looking for is a chance to try something new and not necessarily finish a project. This should be mentioned at the beginning of class: it's okay *not* to finish, just have fun.
- Ask your students at the start of class about their expectations and weaving experience and why they registered.
- Name tags are helpful for the instructor and for students so they know the names of their fellow classmates.
- Follow up your workshops with a warping day for students (at no charge) for who are interested. See how many students want to attend and on what day, then notify them once you have the event scheduled.
- A scarf can be finished by some in five (5) hours. Be aware that five hours of continuous weaving is too taxing for some students. Classes sometimes run overtime since students work at different paces.
- The looms for scarves were warped at 6" x 76".
- The most efficient projects for half day (4 hour) classes are wall hangings. Looms were warped with 8" x 36". Everyone finished wall hangings in the time allotted.
- We offered roving, feathers, sticks, shells, beads and other natural items for embellishments for wall hangings.
- We found that acrylic yarns were ideal for warps in that they were smooth, non-stretchy and didn't break as easily as natural fibers.
- Having a table loom or floor loom in the classroom is extremely helpful in explaining weaving technology. The concept of "shafts" vs "heddles" is easier to explain with a floor loom in the room.
- Budget for warp and weft yarns in case you run out of donated yarn. We ran out of warp yarn; weft was plentiful.
- If possible, offer free refreshments—coffee, tea, water. This helps combat fatigue and is very welcoming and much appreciated.

Observations

- People with arthritis, tremors or carpal tunnel syndrome find that rigid heddle weaving is easier and more comfortable than knitting or crocheting. This can be a selling point for getting people interested in trying weaving.
- Rigid heddle classes grow your guild membership with YOUNGER MEMBERS. We acquired 8 more active members as a result of this grant. Several more plan on joining.
- Students did not care about the color of the warps. We learned this later in the grant when we ran out of one color (black) and simply used what we had left.
- If you have the option, consider purchasing several different brands of rigid heddle looms so students could be exposed to a variety. We got many questions about what kinds of looms are available and what they cost.

Registration Tips

- Ask in the class announcement about wool allergies or dietary choices (like veganism) so looms can be warped with acrylic.
- Remind students to bring lunch! Do not let students leave the workshop for lunch. They lose track of time, miss chunks of the workshop and are disappointed when they don't finish.
- Advertise to other fiber guilds and community organizations. We had a lot of knitters take the class so it's a good idea to market your rigid heddle weaving classes to a wider array of groups.

CRITIQUE OF CRICKET LOOMS

We purchased 6 Schacht cricket looms for this grant from a member who is a Schacht dealer and offered us a discount.

Positives:

1. Easy to warp.
2. Lightweight and portable.
3. Competitively priced.
4. Sturdy (they were dropped and survived well).
5. Easy to learn and are intuitive.

6. Looms take up little space so can be easily stored in large shopping bags. We have our own building, but guilds that don't have their own space could ask a member to store the looms.

Negatives:

1. The heddle isn't particularly stable and doesn't lock in place, either up or down.
2. Some people found it was awkward to weave on a table; when you wove with the loom in your lap the heddle would fall forward when in the down position.
3. The texsolv strings that hold the tying rods have a complicated crochet-type loop that comes undone easily and is not simple to re-attach.
4. The looms don't clamp securely to most portable tables that we tried.

Actual vs. proposed project budget, and an explanation of any differences.

We stayed within budget (*attachment D*). However:

We planned to use all donated fibers for this grant and so didn't include a yarn budget. Due to the popularity of our workshops we found that we needed more warp yarn and teachers had to contribute their own yarns for some of the workshops. **Lesson here: budget for warp.** Weft yarns are plentiful and go far.

Members loaned us additional rigid heddle looms for this grant when the class size exceeded 6. **Lesson: either budget for more looms or make sure your guild has willing volunteers to lend their personal looms.**



Creativity on the Rigid Heddle Loom



Weavers Way, June 3, 2018



August 2018



November 10, 2018



November 3, 2018



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Attachment A: Evaluation Form



We want to ensure that the rigid heddle classes we offer meet our students' needs and expectations. Grant money from MAFA (Mid Atlantic Fiber Association) was generously provided so that we may continue our rigid heddle educational programs. Therefore, your feedback is important to us. Please answer the following questions. Thank you!

Class Title: _____

Date: _____

Your Name and Contact Information (optional): PGHW does not share your information with anyone.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

1.) How did you learn about this class (please check)?

- ☐ PGHW Newsletter
- ☐ Friend
- ☐ PGHW Web Site
- ☐ PGHW Facebook
- ☐ Outreach Event
- ☐ Recommended by a friend
- ☐ Other _____

2). Why did you decide to take this class:

- ☐ I need a hobby
- ☐ I wanted a portable hobby
- ☐ Always wanted to learn to weave
- ☐ Other: _____

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3.) What do you like about the rigid heddle loom? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Easy to use
- ☐ Portable
- ☐ Easy to warp
- ☐ Cost effective
- ☐ Doesn't take up too much room
- ☐ Other: _____

4). This class was:

- ☐ Too long
- ☐ Too short to cover the material
- ☐ Just the right length
- ☐ Easy to understand
- ☐ Other: _____

5). Would you recommend this class to others?

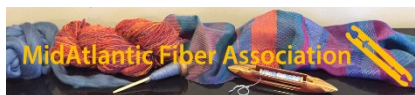
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe
- ☐ Comment: _____

7.) Would you like to learn more about weaving and classes offered by the Guild?

- ☐ Yes (please complete contact information above)
- ☐ No thanks
- ☐ Comment: _____

8). Additional Comments:

Attachment B: Contact Form for Outreach



I WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WEAVING!
Please contact me when you will be holding workshops

Name	Email	Zip Code	Adult or Child	Weaving Experience?

Attachment C: Event Flyer



Supported by the Philadelphia Cultural Fund

Introduction to Weaving

Weaving on the Rigid Heddle Loom



**For information on the rigid heddle loom enter the words
“rigid heddle loom” into the search box on your
computer/smartphone/tablet**

***Workshops and outreach with the rigid heddle looms are
supported by the***



www.mafafiber.org

**For information about rigid heddle weaving workshops and the
Philadelphia Guild of Handweavers**

Contact

The Philadelphia Guild of Handweavers

3705 Main Street (Manayunk)

Philadelphia, PA 19127

www.pghw.org (215) 487-9690

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Attachment D: Projected vs Actual Expenses

Grant Budget

Equipment:

6-15" cricket looms with 8 dent heddle, warping peg,		
2 stick shuttles, table clamps	\$195 x 6 =	\$1,170
6 10-dent rigid heddles	\$42 x 6 =	\$252
15% vendor equipment discount		(\$202)
Shipping		<u>\$44</u>
Total for looms including discount & shipping		\$1,264

Other:

Printing and promotion costs	\$36
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Total grant request **\$1300**

Actual Expenses

Equipment:

6-15" cricket looms with 8 dent heddle, warping peg,		
2 stick shuttles, table clamps	\$195 x 6 =	\$1,170
6 10-dent rigid heddles	\$42 X 6 =	\$252
15% teaching equipment discount		(\$202)
Shipping		<u>\$44</u>
Total for looms including discount & shipping		\$1,264

Other:

Printing and promotional costs*	0
Additional yarn for warp**	\$40

Total spent on project **\$ 1,304**

*Printing used guild equipment and supplies

**Donated yarn supplies were not sufficient for warping

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Attachment E:

Rigid Heddle Classes for MAFA Grant updated 12/20/19

Date	Location	Instructors
July 21 st , Saturday 10am to 3pm for PGHW members and others	PGHW COMPLETED	Christine Sara Judy
Aug. 18 th Saturday 10am to 3pm with Tulpehocken Exchange class for adults	PGHW COMPLETED	Judy- lead Sara & Kate assisting
Aug, 26 th Saturday 10am to 3pm for PGHW members and others	PGHW COMPLETED	Christine – lead Peggy & Kate assisting
Sept, 22 nd Saturday 10am to 3pm with Tulpehocken Exchange class for kids and adults adults will make a scarf and kids a small tapestry	Tulpehocken Exchange 47 East High Street Phila, PA COMPLETED	Kate-lead Sara
Oct, 12 th . Friday 1pm to 3pm adults	Dunwoody Village Senior Living 3500 West Chester Pike, Newtown Square, PA 19073 COMPLETED	Kate- lead Sara assisting
Nov. 3 10am to 3pm with the Mt. Airy Learning Tree class for adults	PGHW COMPLETED	Judy- lead Sara & Kate assisting
Nov. 10 10am to 3pm with the Mt. Airy Learning Tree class for adults	New Light Church 127 Green Lane Phila, PA COMPLETED	Judy-lead Sara & Peggy assisting
Dec. 1 st Saturday Liberty Bell Knitters and others adults	PGHW COMPLETED	Christine-lead Peggy. Kate & Sara assisting
Dec. 15 th 10am to 1pm with Weavers Way Adults	PGHW COMPLETED	Judy-lead Sara & Kate assisting

Attachment E, Continued

Date	Location	Instructors
Dec. 30, 2018 Noon to 3pm Learn how to warp your rigid heddle	PGHW COMPLETED	Kate Judy and Sara assisting
Date TBD Revisit Dunwoody Senior Living for warping lesson	Dunwoody Village Senior Living 3500 West Chester Pike, Newtown Square, PA 19073	Kate Sara assisting

Attachment F: Outreach 2018 for PGHW Calendar

(rigid heddle loom demos are in **red**)

Sheep to School, Rigid Heddle Demo, Tuesday, May 8th

Art is Life, Saturday, April 21st

Fox Chase Farm, Sheep and Wood Day, Saturday, April 28th

Saul School Day, Saturday, May 12th

Bethel Township Preservation Society Open House, Sunday, May 20th, period attire

Fete Day Elfreh's Alley, Saturday, June 2nd, period attire.

Ft. Mifflin, Saturday, Saturday, Sept. 15th, period attire.

Evan's Mill Old Fashion Mill Day, Sunday, Sept. 16th, period attire

28th Annual Harriton Farmstead Fair, Saturday, September 29th

Chestnut Hill Fall for the Arts, Sunday, September 30th

Philadelphia International Airport, Thursday, October 4th.

Battlefield Bash at Grumblethorpe, October 6th, period attire

Awbury Arboretum Fall Festival, Saturday, October 13th

Viking Village, Saturday, October 13th

Bethel Township Founders Day, Saturday, October 13th, period attire

Bloomfield Farm Day, Sunday, Oct. 21st

Elfreh's Alley Deck the Alley, Saturday, Dec. 1st, period attire