

# 'The real reason we're here'

## Residents tour Center for Metal Arts

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As an artist, Norman Ed has done what he described as "a tiny little bit of moving metal around" when making pieces.

But, on Sunday, he got to see metal working on an industrial scale.

And he was impressed.

Ed, a Westmont resident, was one of more than 120 people who, over two days, toured the Center for Metal Arts, a school located inside the former Bethlehem Steel Corp. pattern shop and blacksmith shop on Iron Street in Johnstown. The tours culminated with the center's Dan Neville, Patrick Quinn and Anna Koplik working together to make a seamless ring, using a nearly century-old, 3,000-pound industrial hammer.

"The idea to take a piece of steel that size and in that amount of time – those few hits – completely change its shape is outstanding," Ed said.

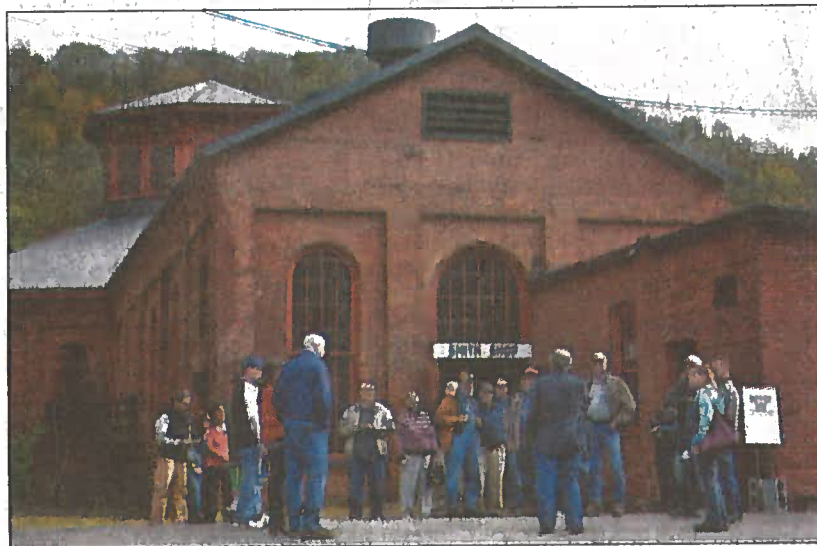
The hammer – located inside the blacksmith shop that was built in the 1860s – was recently refurbished after last being used when Bethlehem closed in 1992.

Jarrold Bunk said seeing the hammer working was "iconic and transformative."

"This 3,000-pound hammer is amazing," Bunk said. "It hits so hard that you can feel it in your bones."

Center for Metal Arts opened locally in early 2018 after the school relocated from New York state. Since then, the group has offered artistic metal working classes – from beginner to expert – while also fixing up the

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Above, Patrick Quinn (left), Center for Metal Arts program director, and Dan Neville, CMA associate director, pound out a piece of hot steel with a newly restored industrial hammer during a tour of their school located on Iron Street in Johnstown on Sunday. Looking on is former school intern Anna Koplik (center). At left, Richard Burkert, Johnstown Area Heritage Association president and CEO, leads the tour on Sunday and offers a history of the buildings which were once part of former Bethlehem Steel.

PHOTOS BY THOMAS SLUSSER/THE TRIBUNE-DEMOCRAT

## TOUR

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long-vacant workspaces that were preserved for years by the Johnstown Area Heritage Association.

"It's really cool to show the community what Center for Metal Arts is all about," said Neville, the center's associate director. "We've been here for a year and a half, but there's still maybe a lot of mystery about what we do. This year, being able to add the running of this power hammer is really an incredible experience because it shows the real reason we're here and potential that CMA has to grow."

Looking to the future, a master plan is being developed for the CMA campus.

"In five years, I think Johnstown's going to be nationally and even internationally known as a center for metal working arts and crafts and it will be attracting people," Richard Burkert, JAHA's president and chief executive officer, said. "It's really like a post-industrial skill now where people learn about these industrial crafts.

"They want something real. We have the place.

"We have the equipment. And now we have people who know how to do these tasks. Based on our heritage, we've created, I think, something really dynamic for Johnstown's future."

Dave Sutor is a reporter for The Tribune-Democrat. Follow him on Twitter @Dave\_Sutor.