



Completed: Stephanie Yurkus shows off a reindeer tree ornament that was hand-made for the craft show.



Assembly line: Justin Tattershall, LaMauriea Coleman and Tomoko Larkin bag the finished product: milk chocolate Santa Claus suckers.



Careful, careful: Talmage Robinson and Leighia Murphy carefully fill the Santa molds with melted chocolate. Skills Center students used teamwork to accomplish their goals in time for their craft show this weekend.



Working hard: Janette Baker paints a red sleigh for this week's craft sale.

Teamwork

Skills center students create for the holiday season

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There's a lot more going on in the East Middle School Skills Center than youngsters baking cookies, making reindeer ornaments or building wooden sleighs or baseball caps — all to be available at this week's holiday craft sale.

Under the eyes of East teachers Greg Pazo, Ruth McCoy, Bernie Buller and Sue Filbin, 34 special education students in grades six-eight (culled from all over the Farmington district) are

also developing important life skills such as communication with others and work ethic.

"The students learn a great deal by doing this," said McCoy, assisting kids make holiday goodies in the home economics station, one of three rooms that make up the skills center. "They do a lot of preparation; there's a lot of thought required to do those different jobs."

Add to the list teamwork, using English skills to write and read recipes and parlaying mathematics skills to measure ingredients such as flour and

sugar. That all dovetails with the official goal of the center; it's a special education program with the goal to "pair academics with hands-on learning experiences to build skills for the world of work."

Nearby, seventh-grade student Leighia Murphy poured raisins into a bowl to be mixed into the batter for hermit cookies ("My husband's favorite cookie," said McCoy.) Seventh grader Tomoko Larkin slipped tiny cellophane covers over chocolate suckers.

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