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TOP NEWS STORY SKATE & CREATE

Although the "skate & destroy" ethos has always been embedded in skate culture, "skate & create" is what skateboarding is all about, and it doesn't just begin with a kid on the street practicing a new trick. As you make your way from the skatepark to the vert ramp through the Dew Tour's Festival Village, look for skate legend Paul Schmitt, holding it down in a white lab coat in the Create A Skate booth and showing the world what skateboarding roots are all about - literally.

"Create A Skate is a national educational curriculum where kids make skateboards in school," says Schmitt. "They learn about the relevance of forestry, ecology, math, science, engineering, vocabulary, geography, and how all of this stuff comes together in the making of a skateboard."

Schmitt started his first skateboard company – the legendary Schmitt Stix label – when he was just 14 years old, and the idea of bringing such a program into schools has been in his mind ever since.

"We're such a consumer society that kids just go buy something and they don't realize what it takes for it to get there, they have no idea where anything in their life actually comes from," says Schmitt. "Through the Create a Skate program, we show them everything from how a tree gets selected and gets cut down in the forest to how it gets turned into veneer, gets pressed into a skateboard, and ends up on a shelf in a skateshop."

Create a Skate provides curriculum materials, videos, and uncut pressed decks for schools participating in the program. The rest is up to the students.

"We have it set up so that students who want to bring this program to their school have steps they can take to convince their school, raise money to buy the materials, and then actually make skateboards with their hands," says Schmitt. "When they're done, they are going to understand the satisfaction of achievement. I'm not trying to teach them how to make skateboards, I'm trying to teach them powerful tools so that they can go out and achieve whatever they want in life."

Schmitt's company – now known as PS Stix – builds boards for many of the top companies in the industry, including Element, Black Label, Alien Workshop, Habitat, Popwar, and Bueno. He is especially proud to note that two-time Dew Tour champ Bucky Lasek rides an Element board his company manufactured every time he drops in on Skate Vert.

"The Create A Skate boards are the real deal," says Schmitt, supervising from under the Fuel TV/Create A Skate tent. "This wood is the best you can get in terms of lamination and quality construction. Ultimately it's up to each kid to shape it well enough, sand it well enough, and paint it well enough to truly match the product somebody like Bucky Lasek is riding, but the potential in each board is there. If just one kid from each stop who came to the Dew Tour and made a skateboard goes back to his school and gets this program going for his friends, it will all have been worth it."



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