

Maggie Hale  
1/22/25  
Ms. Roma's Capstone

### AAI CEL Tiny Tims Toys

The AAI CEL Project was to visit Tiny Tim's Foundation for Kids and help put together wooden toy cars. When we arrived, it was a pretty small building and there were a lot of us in the lobby. One of the employees gave us the whole story and mission. When Tim visited another country, he saw kids playing with garbage. He realized that many of us in the US take toys for granted. So many kids don't have any toys. In fact, 500 million children worldwide don't have access to toys, and children need to play with something when they're young. So, he created the non-profit.

Today Tiny Tim's makes and sends 125,000 toy cars every year to children who don't have any toys, delivering to countries like Iraq, Zimbabwe, Mexico, and Afghanistan, as well as to children in the states. They get their wood through donations, especially from wood that would be discarded, like from big wooden crates. They cut this recycled wood into the shape of cars. This was an issue I'd never really thought about before. As a child, I took my toys for granted. To me, it was just a thing that everybody had. After hearing the story of how the organization was founded, I realized that there are so many issues that exist that I don't know about.

We took a tour of the building and learned what they do at each station. I wasn't sure where I would end up and what I would be doing. We ended up in this big warehouse section full of woody smells and big machinery making loud noises. There was a lot going on, people already sitting at stations and working on the little cars. I even recognized someone there from my old school.

I went to a station where there was a bucket of plastic wheels, and we all had a screwdriver and would screw four wheels into each of the wooden, painted cars. I would have preferred to paint the cars, but I learned they had to be painted in an approved manner, because when they go throughout the world, even the eye colors had to be appropriate for their regions. The car faces were already painted, and I screwed the four wheels in.

Since I was in charge of doing one of the final steps of making these fun toy cars, I could see clearly what the finished result would be. I rolled around one of the finished cars and imagined a kid kind of like me playing with it. It's beautiful that kids can be entertained by anything, but they deserve to have nice toys that were built with love. It's beautiful that people from all over the world put their time and work into making stuff just for them.

The work was repetitive and mind-numbing, and I found that I'd always rather be on the more creative side of a project. But even so, it was still fun to make these toys with my friends, and I was glad to be part of something bigger than myself.