

nuts & bolts



FALL 2007

WORKSHOP FOR TRADESWOMEN OPENS THANKS TO GRANT FROM STATE OF ILLINOIS

In October, Chicago Women in Trades (CWIT) fulfilled one of its long time goals: opening a large and equipped Workshop for its formal training programs, where tradeswomen and aspiring tradeswomen can also drop in to practice and improve their skills in an informal and supportive skills-sharing environment.

The free Workshop, located at 4425 South West-

ern Avenue in Chicago, is open Tuesday through Friday from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m.; and from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday.

Initial funding of \$650,000 for the Workshop and training program was awarded through the Employment Opportunity Grant Program administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. The

program is a direct result of legislation drafted by CWIT at the urging of Senate President Emil Jones (D-14), and introduced by St. Rep. Marlow Colvin (D-33). The bill became a top item on the agenda of Illinois' Legislative Black Caucus. It called for a State funding stream for programs that assist organizations working to qualify women and minorities for apprenticeship programs in the building trades industry.

The new Workshop has more than 11,000 square feet of space, and is being equipped with everything needed to create a learning environment that can provide the hands-on opportunities to develop the skills

that women need to master for each of the apprenticeship programs that CWIT works with.

At the heart of the Workshop will be a prototype "building under construction" – now under construction – providing a working model on which tradeswomen can train. A large central area at the Workshop will be the staging area where most hands-on projects will be conducted, with storage space set aside for equipment not in use. Separate work bays are set-

up for equipment intensive skills training such as welding and sheet metal work.

"The new Workshop is giving us the flexibility and capacity we need to increase the number of women we can serve through our Technical Opportunities Program," said Jayne Vellinga, Director of Advocacy and Special Initiatives. CWIT's Technical Opportunities

Additional donations of tools and building supplies are welcome.

Program is a free pre-apprenticeship program with a comprehensive 170-hour curriculum that includes test preparation, basic technical skills, physical fitness, hands-on experience, and job readiness skill.

Tracey Bailey, formerly CWIT's Job Development Specialist, will be the on-site Manager of the Workshop and can be reached via email at tbailey@cwit2.org or via phone at 773-376-1450.



Rep. Marlow H. Colvin

Log onto CWIT's web site, www.chicagowomenintrades.org, for information about CWIT's programs and services, upcoming trainings and events, and to purchase CWIT products.



Building a "building under construction"



MISSION STATEMENT

Chicago Women in Trades is committed to improving women's economic equity by increasing the number of women in well-paid, skilled trade jobs and by eliminating the barriers that prohibit women and girls from entering and succeeding in those jobs.

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OUR NEXT QUARTER CENTURY STARTS

by Lauren Sugerman, Executive Director

A year ago, CWIT was celebrating our twenty-fifth anniversary. There was incredible excitement at how much a small support group of pioneering tradeswomen meeting over potluck dinners in the 1980's had grown and created change for many more women to enter, grow and become leaders in male-dominated fields. We couldn't have asked for a better way to shepherd in our next quarter century.

We've begun by making some major organizational strides forward. As you've read on page 1, we have launched a new workshop, benefiting from a state grant focused on helping underrepresented groups enter the construction trades. It is no twist of fate that made the grant money available to CWIT and 13 other groups. In fact, CWIT wrote the legislation at the urging of Senate President Emil Jones that established this new resource, so groups could offer job readiness and skills building programs, creating a pipeline for women and minorities to apprenticeship programs.

We were lucky to have great partners, including many union allies, in advocating for it and State Legislative Black Caucus Leader, Rep. Marlow Colvin as its key sponsor and champion.

And, it couldn't have come at a better time. The new grant gives us a seamless transition as we finish the final year of our landmark grant from the U.S. Department of Labor for our Women in the Skilled Trades (WIST) program.

Through the WIST program, CWIT was able to take our work to scale in six counties, publish new outreach material, and train workforce development staff within community colleges and employment services. With the help of an incredible array of partners, WIST reached over 7,100 women, trained, and placed 215 into trades so far. We also created a new video, built countless relationships, and brought this issue and the CWIT model to the attention of key policymakers across the country.

Now with the new workshop space providing equipment, room for multiple classes, mentoring, tutoring and hands-on workshops and practice sessions, and a place where your ideas and input are vital, CWIT has fulfilled a dream of many years. But even more wonderful is that the workshop is also serving as a clubhouse for aspiring and current trades-

women. While it represents growth for the organization, it also takes us back to our origins, days when getting together informally to support one another, trade and share skills, gossip about our work lives, share war stories, offer encouragement and support was the only function of the organization. The workshop space is about what tradeswomen, you, will make it. So do please come visit and join us there, we can use your expertise, we can offer help and we all can get together to meet and support one another. And I'm not just talking to tradeswomen, we encourage all our partners and allies to join us in helping to complete the workshop set up and get it running. And thanks to many of the tradeswomen, unions, and apprenticeship programs that have already done so.

But, we still have a lot of work to do to ensure women have full equal status in our still male-dominated workplaces. Our agenda ahead is just forming, but we know that the issues of micro-inequities and work/family have to be addressed so that individual

tradeswomen do not have to work these out on their own. And we need you to get involved. It is our unity that has always made answers possible, given us strength and sometimes even a little power to change things.

This power doesn't come easy. In our first years we had a major ally, Chicago Mayor Harold Washington. It was through his vision, commitment and leadership that small organizations like CWIT got a seat at the table. He opened the doors, changed the playing field and the players, and took our issues and organization seriously. This November marks the twentieth anniversary of his death. More than just Chicago lost a great leader when he passed, but CWIT lost a true friend. He will always be in our hearts and memories and a part of his legacy is reflected in our work.

Speaking of superheroes, I want to thank CWIT's wonderful Staff and Board whose exceptional efforts, commitment and passion have made our work and these achievements possible, while also managing to advance the work of CWIT, end our debt, and open a new workshop/clubhouse for our students, members and partners. And to all my tradeswomen sisters from back then and today, I salute your courage, bravery, resilience and efforts to push open these heavy doors. You are my superheroines!

You are my
superheroines!

FOR JERRY BEAN HARD WORK AND ENDURANCE PAY OFF

by Sarah Letson, Projects Coordinator

While a participant in CWIT's 12-week pre-apprenticeship Technical Opportunities Program (TOP) Geraldine Bean, who goes by Jerry, worked hard, especially on her math skills. She entered the program with a math score of only 54, though a 77 is required for eligibility by the apprenticeship program she was seeking. But she kept at it, and eventually was even able to help out her classmates with their math problems.

Late last year Jerry got the opportunity to apply to the apprenticeship program of her dreams, with Plumbers' Local 130. When she got her test results in March, Jerry had scored an 82.5, high enough to get into the program. She was elated at her score, and started calling herself a plumber as soon as she heard.

Her celebration was a bit premature though, she subsequently failed to pass the strenuous physical endurance test newly insti-

tuted by the Plumbers' program.

Yet the TOP program helped Jerry cultivate more than just her math skills; she also learned how to become an advocate for herself. When Jerry discovered she did not pass the physical test, she contacted the apprenticeship coordinator directly to express how much she wanted to be in the program and her willingness to do whatever it takes to be accepted. The coordinator ultimately allowed her to reschedule her physical endurance test within 48 hours and at her own cost.

The second time around, Jerry successfully passed the physical endurance test and is now a proud member of the



Plumbers Union, Local 130.

Jerry went to work in June 2007 and is now at the Thomas Litvin Company, making union scale for an apprentice of \$13.50 an hour. She can expect a \$1.19 per hour raise, as well as health benefits and a pension beginning in December.

TRADESWOMEN AND APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS CONTRIBUTE TO CWIT'S SUCCESS

CWIT's programs and activities would not be possible without the work of dedicated tradeswomen and the participation of union apprenticeship programs. We salute their commitment to CWIT's mission.

The following tradeswomen have volunteered in CWIT programs and activities during the last six months:

Terri Armstrong	Tracy Lopez
Alicia Backus	Janette Maldonado
Jerry Bean	Lisa Maria
Lillian Calderon	Tasha Matsumoto
Vanessa Casillas	Karen McCallum
Jennifer Certa	Elizabeth Mills
Rebecca Cook	Shamell Owens
Michelle Davis	Nicole Owens
Andrina Delgado	Rosa Pedroza
Colleen Erickson	Dawn Saidat
Briana Erickson	Sarah Shelton
Erin Fields	Carolyn Shoaf
Malaundja Gayles	Andrea Smith
Quiana Harper	Sarah Stigler
Tira Hill	Natasha Thomas
Dawn Iversen	Jacqueline Townsend
Maria Johnson	Princess Washington
Shayla Jones	Shelly Wells
Katie Jones	Denise Williams
Anne Kahle	Sirmerl Young
Deborah Karim	

The following Union Apprenticeship Programs hosted field trips for students in the Technical Opportunities Program and the Women in Skilled Trades program:

- Bricklayers' and Allied Craftworkers' District Council Training Center
- Chicago Area Drywall Finishers Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee
- Chicago Area Painting and Decorating Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee
- Chicago and Northeast Illinois District Council of Carpenters Apprentice and Training Program
- Chicagoland Laborers Joint Training and Apprentice Fund
 - IBEW-NECA Local 117 Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee
 - IBEW-NECA Technical Institute
- Painters and Allied Trades District Council #30 Joint Apprenticeship and Training Fund
- Sheet Metal Workers Local 73 JATC
 - Tuckpointers Local 52 Illinois Apprenticeship Trust

FREE SCREENING AND TREATMENT FOR BREAST AND CERVICAL CANCER NOW AVAILABLE FOR ALL UNINSURED WOMEN

Effective October 1, 2007 – The State of Illinois' program to provide free screening and treatment for Breast and Cervical Cancer has been expanded to cover all women without health insurance, regardless of their income level.

The Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program offers:

- free pelvic exams and Pap tests to any uninsured women over the age of 35
- free mammograms & breast exams to any uninsured women over the age of 40
 - women under the age of 35 are eligible if they have symptoms

Call 1-888-522-1282 for more information or go to www.cancerscreening.illinois.gov

Breast cancer will claim the lives of 1,700 women in Illinois this year. When it is diagnosed early, the five-year survival rate is 96%. Early detection means finding the cancer before you see symptoms.

2007-08
CALENDAR



November 26, 2007
CWIT Holiday Appeal Mails

December 20, 2007
Graduation Ceremony
Fall Class of 2007

December 22, 2007
through January 2, 2008
CWIT Offices Closed
For Holidays

January 10, 2008
Orientation for
Technical Opportunities Program
(TOP) Spring Class of 2008
For information, call: 312-942-1444
Or email: jjohnson@cwit2.org

January 12-19, 2008
Assessment & Interviewing for
TOP Spring Class

January Date
to-be-announced
Grand Opening Reception at
Workshop

February 5, 2008
First Day of TOP Class

April Date
to-be-announced
Chicago Women in Trades
Gallery Exhibit
& Reception

May 8, 2008
Graduation Ceremony
Spring TOP Class of 2008

“HOMEMAKER” GALLERY EXHIBIT WITH ART & POSTER CONTEST ANNOUNCED FOR SPRING 2008

– CALLING ALL ARTISTS & PHOTOGRAPHERS –

With an eye on artfully educating the general public, Chicago Women in Trades is announcing plans for a gallery exhibit for the Spring of 2008 with the event theme being a modern-day play on the term “homemaker.”

CWIT plans to redefine the meaning of “homemaker,” expanding it to include not only the traditional stay-at-home Mom, but also to encompass the career choice of contemporary women working in the construction industry.

Artists and photographers are being invited to submit works with the modern “homemaker” theme for the gallery exhibit. All works selected for the exhibit will be on public display for two weeks next spring, and published in an exhibit program. Separate gold, silver and bronze award winners will be selected for artwork and photography, by a jury panel of local celebrities.

The gallery exhibit will commence

with an opening reception to benefit Chicago Women in Trades. At the reception the award winning selections will be sold through a live-auction and all other selections will be silent-auctioned. CWIT and the individual artist may split the sale price of their work 50/50. Buyers will be able to collect their purchase once the full run of the exhibit is complete.

A companion “poster” design contest also will be held. The winning poster entry will receive a cash prize of \$250, and their design will be used to promote the event and serve as the main piece in the formal invitation packet.

Deadlines for all exhibit and poster contest entries will be February 1, 2008.

For details on submitting a work of art, contact Tim Drake, Chicago Women in Trades’ Director of Development, at tdrake@cwit2.org or phone 312-942-1444, extension 219.



The Summer Class of 2007 held its graduation ceremony on November 2 in front of family and friends.

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