



RHODE ISLAND COMMISSION ON WOMEN

Second Annual Girls Non-Traditional Trades Forum

Saturday, March 28, 2009, 9:00 AM – 2:30 PM

Construction Career Academy

4 Sharpe Drive

Cranston, RI 02920

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POST EVENT REPORT

Background:

In 2008, the Rhode Island Commission on Women's (RICW) Education Committee initiated the First Annual Girls Non-Traditional Trades Forum. Held at The Community College of Rhode Island's Flannigan Campus in Lincoln, Rhode Island, the event provided four hands-on work stations in Carpentry, Electrical, Bricklaying and Lead Abatement. Approximately 40 girls and women attended the event. While the turn-out was modest, the exit evaluations indicated that attendees enjoyed the event and experienced a profound paradigm shift regarding a career in the trades. Emboldened by this modest success, the RICW proposed to expand the event in 2009.

2009 Program Partners:

The RICW was fortunate to collaborate with the following organizations on the 2009 Girls Non-Traditional Trades Forum:

The New England Laborers Union
The New England Laborers Construction Career Academy
Carpenters Union Local 94
Union of Operating Engineers Local 57
The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 99
Di Prete Engineering
General Environmental Services
Dimeo Construction
Gilbane Construction
University of Rhode Island Transportation Center
The Rhode Island Department of Transportation
Women in Transportation
National Association of Women in Construction
The Rhode Island Trades Women's Association
U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau, Department of Apprenticeship, OSHA
YWCA Northern Rhode Island
Big Sisters of Rhode Island
The College Crusade
Community College of Rhode Island
New England Institute of Technology
Davies Career and Technical Center
The Steelyard
Recycle-A-Bike

Collaborating partners supplied materials, equipment, staff, transportation, venue space, food and technical assistance in the planning and execution of the event. Given that the RICW has one full-time staff member with a very modest operating budget, this event would not have been possible without the generous support from the program partners.

The Program:

The schedule for the day was as follows:

- 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM Registration/Distribution of Safety Equipment/Welcome/Safety information
- 10:00 AM – 1:45 PM Work Shops and Lunch
- 1:45 PM – 2:30 PM Completion of Evaluations/Panel Discussion

Eight workshops were provided:

- Carpentry – Build a small shed structure.
- Electrical – Measure and bend conduit to a 90 degree angle.
- Lead Abatement – Properly attire in safety equipment. Determine if lead is present.
- Oxy-Acetylene Torch – Burn a name onto a steel plate.
- Tapping a Water Main – Correctly tap a water main without getting wet!
- Reading Blueprints – Understand the purpose of blueprints and how to read them.
- Crane Simulator – Practice operating large machinery.
- Educational/Apprenticeship Expo – Find out about enrollment in Union Apprenticeship Programs, Career and Technical Centers and Schools.

Program participants were divided into eight groups, and rotated through each of the work stations at 20 minute intervals. A hot lunch was provided to all participants and staff.

Program Participant Demographic Data:

A total of 129 girls participated in the event. Exit evaluations were distributed to all attendees still present at 1:45 PM. A total of 94 evaluations were collected, 6 of which were completed by adults. The following data was culled from the 88 evaluations completed by the girls.

Age (N = 88):

AGE (in years)	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
11 - 13	69	78.5%
14 - 16	9	10.3%
8 - 10	8	9.0%
17 - 18	2	2.2%

Race (N = 88):

RACE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Caucasian	40	45.4%
Hispanic Non-White	22	25.0%
African American	9	10.2%
Hispanic White	7	8.0%
Other*	7	8.0%
Native American	3	3.4%

* Other – self identified as:

- 2 Cape Verdean
- 1 Hispanic (checked both Hispanic White and Non-White boxes)
- 1 Haitian/Dominican

- 1 African American/Caucasian
- 1 African American/Cape Verdean
- 1 did not identify her race.

City/Town (N = 88):

CITY/TOWN	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Providence	28	31.9%
Coventry	14	15.9%
Pawtucket	13	14.8%
West Warwick	9	10.3%
Bristol	5	5.7%
North Scituate	5	5.7%
Scituate	4	4.5%
Woonsocket	3	3.5%
Barrington	1	1.1%
Central Falls	1	1.1%
Smithfield	1	1.1%
Stonington, CT	1	1.1%
Wakefield	1	1.1%
Warwick	1	1.1%
Unidentified	1	1.1%

Paradigm Shift Questions:

The RICW's *raison d'être* for hosting this event was to show girls that high-wage jobs are available in a variety of fields – fields they may never have considered before. Research shows that girls who never try non-traditional trades or do not know or see women in non-traditional trades, are unlikely to consider the trades as a viable option for them when they consider future employment. To that end, two questions on the exit evaluation were asked to ascertain whether the girls in attendance could make that mental leap, and perceive non-traditional trades as an option for them.

Before today's event, did you ever consider entering a non-traditional trade? (N = 88)

ANSWER	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
No	72	81.8%
Yes	16	18.2%

Since attending today's event, would you consider entering a non-traditional trade? (N = 88)

ANSWER	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	71	80.7%
No	14	15.9%
Maybe	2	2.3%
Don't Know	1	1.1%

If you could change anything about today's event, what would it be? (N = 92)

Though asked for one response, program participants provided multiple answers.

ANSWER	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
I would not change anything.	27	29.4%
I wanted more time at each station or a	23	25.0%
I did not like the food/more/different	8	8.7%
Get rid of non-hands on stations/less	6	6.1%
More work stations	4	4.4%
Smaller group size	4	4.4%
Not getting wet at the Water Main Sta-	4	4.4%
Shorten the event all together	3	3.3%
More chairs/less standing	3	3.3%
The event was boring/make the event	3	3.3%
Lengthen the event all together	2	2.2%
More stickers	1	1.1%
More lunch time	1	1.1%
Do not allow Brownie-age girls to at-	1	1.1%
I would like to build something I could	1	1.1%
Start at 9:00 as advertised, not 9:45	1	1.1%

Briefly state one or two things that you learned or found interesting.

Girls provided multiple answers to this question. Overwhelmingly, the girls found the Oxy-Acetylene Torch and Carpentry Workstations interesting, with conduit bending at the Electrical Workstation next in interest. However, all the Workstations were mentioned positively, as was the kindness of all the staff engaged in the event. Some notable comments related to paradigm shift included:

- I would like to do torching when I grow up.
- Not only boys can do construction. Girls can do anything boys can do.
- Not only men work.
- Women can do men's jobs.
- There are a lot of muscle jobs around.
- There are different jobs for girls.

Comments:

The comments were overwhelmingly positive. Below are some statements that reflect the girl's general consensus:

- I like this place a lot and hope I can come back.
- When I grow up, I will consider a man's job.
- I had fun and it changed my mind about a lot of things.
- The booths were informative and opened my eyes to other fun trades.
- I learned new experiences and found new interests.
- I thought it would be boring but I was proved wrong. Good job.