2004 / 2005 ANNUAL REPORT



25 YEARS CHICAGO WOMEN IN TRADES
. . . Building Equal Opportunity

Cover artwork is from a mural at the Pipe Fitters' Local Union 597 Training Center. The mural, entitled *What is a Pipe Fitter,* was created by a team of union members under the direction of apprentice Sarah Joy Liles. Team members included apprentices Joseph Gibbons, Howard Hall Jr., David Hanson, Tricia Montgomery, and Jessica Scott; journeyperson Theresa Armstrong; and Local 597 instructors Rich Groves and John Shue.

Dear Friends,

With pink hard hats bobbing, more than 60 young women from Chicago Public High Schools took over the workshop of the Bricklayers' training center on a Tradeswomen of Tomorrow field trip. They were busy laying block, adding the grout, checking their lines to ensure the walls were plumb and level, and exclaiming with surprise how cool it was to see their walls of block rising and how the work was challenging but satisfying. This field trip, like others throughout the year to various apprenticeship programs, reveals to the young women the career choices that can yield eye-popping paychecks as well as accomplishments of which they can be proud. Seeding the new crop of women pioneers in the trades not only helps to expand girls' choices and opportunities for self-sufficiency, but is key to transforming the gender segregation of the workplace, still pervasive in the 21st century.

Salaries double, muscles start to bulge, and skills are built as tradeswomen literally climb to new heights, often working on a bridge spanning a highway or at the top of a high rise surrounded by sky.

As Chicago Women in Trades (CWIT) expands its work to eleven Illinois counties via a major investment by the U.S. Department of Labor, women throughout northeast Illinois have similar opportunities to explore, prepare for and enter jobs in the construction industry. For many, struggling to support families on the low wages of traditional female dominated careers, it is a transformative opportunity. Salaries double, muscles start to bulge, and skills are built as they literally climb to new heights, often working on a bridge spanning a highway or at the top of a high rise surrounded by sky. Each of these pioneering tradeswomen's stories, some of which are featured in this report, reveals the critical importance of CWIT's efforts to build the pipeline for women to enter high-wage, high-skilled jobs.

On the eve of CWIT's 25th anniversary, we are thrilled to be taking our work to scale and appreciative of the receptivity of our partners in industry, community colleges and workforce boards who are working with us to help women to succeed in jobs that are traditionally male-dominated. We are pleased to have engendered understanding and awareness about the importance of nontraditional employment for women among policymakers at the local, state, and national level as we advocate for policy to embed our strategies and programs within the workforce development and vocational education system, and for a stream of funding to support women moving into nontraditional jobs. Critical to the success of our program and policy work is the growing leadership of tradeswomen who are translating their own successes into mentoring efforts for a new generation of tradeswomen, creating policy in their unions to support recruitment and retention, and advancing into leadership positions on the job and in their unions.

CWIT is also transforming. We are celebrating our move to a new space replete with an on-site classroom and hands-on workshop, expanding our visibility in new media venues, increasing our staff, and multiplying our partnerships. To our old and new partners, we extend our gratitude for the opportunity to grow and extend our reach. Together we are breaking down the barriers that prevent women and girls from entering and succeeding in nontraditional occupations and promoting equitable workplaces.



CWIT President











Kathy Kelly

"I can absolutely say that Chicago Women in Trades has totally, 100 percent turned my life around."

Kathy Kelly had worked at the same bank for 11 years. She was overseeing 23 branches and training people to do similar jobs, but, because she didn't have a college degree, she was only making $11.50 an hour without the possibility of getting a raise. "I have 3 children, and my ex-husband doesn't pay child support," she says. "It was hard to support myself and my kids on that." On a break one day she read an article in the newspaper about a woman in a similar situation who turned her life around by going to Chicago Women in Trades. "I remember saying 'wow, good for her,' and I tore the article out with the number." Kathy went to an information session at Chicago Women in Trades and decided to attend the program on nights and weekends. As graduation neared, she chose bricklaying as the trade she would specialize in and was accepted into the 12-week pre-job training program. It wasn't until after graduating from CWIT that the fear sank in. "All of a sudden I was faced with having to quit my job," she explains. "I knew it wasn't going anywhere, we were living hand to mouth, but it was a constant. I was going to be walking away from my insurance and my job and I didn't know how we would get by during that 12 weeks." Kathy decided to take the leap of faith. She discovered that she could apply for a no-interest loan through Chicago Women in Trades to help her with finances during the training. With this assitance, Kathy was able to focus on school and she finished the program at the top of her class. She started as a bricklayer making $16 an hour, and in just a year and a half, her salary has increased to $23.28 an hour. More importantly, Kathy loves the work. "It's very rewarding. I like putting up walls. I get a lot of satisfaction out of knowing that my children can tell their kids 'you're grandmother pulled some of that brick on that building.'" Kathy has also been able to do something she never thought would be possible: buying a house. "My kids are so excited. It's the American dream. I can absolutely say that Chicago Women in Trades has totally, 100 percent turned my life around."

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2004 & 2005

In pursuit of its mission to improve women's economic equity by increasing the number of women working in well-paid, skilled trade jobs traditionally held by men, Chicago Women in Trades engaged in a variety of program and policy initiatives.

Technical Opportunities Program

CWIT's free training and career development class, the Technical Opportunities Program (TOP), orients, prepares, and trains low-income women for union apprenticeship programs and other high-wage, nontraditional occupations. Over the course of 12 weeks, the class meets three times a week, tackling a rigorous curriculum that includes math, physical conditioning, basic construction skills, test preparation, and job readiness. The students also receive hands-on experience, both in the CWIT workshop and through field trips to apprenticeship programs. Led by experienced tradeswomen, the workshops provide opportunities to explore a variety of trades and build both skill and confidence in preparation for the job site.



Kicking off the Women in Skilled Trades Initative in McHenry County

During FY 2004 and FY 2005, 199 women enrolled in TOP and 134 graduated. In addition, 182 women were accepted into apprenticeship programs and/or entered nontraditional employment, to train or work as bricklayers, sheet metal workers, iron workers, plumbers, electricians, ceramic tile layers, carpenters, manufacturing, and transportation industry workers. The average wage of these placements was $13 per hour.

Women in Skilled Trades Initiative

With a $2.1 million, three-year investment from the U.S. Department of Labor, Chicago Women in Trades launched the Women in Skilled Trades Initiative in 2004. In collaboration with industry and public agency partners, CWIT is taking its work to scale in 11 Illinois counties. CWIT's status as one of only six national DOL grantees focused on the construction sector is a recognition of the agency's groundbreaking work in opening the doors of high-wage, high-skilled jobs in male-dominated industries. Through WIST, we are building an outreach and training network with a strong group of community and industry partners. In addition to this capacity building, WIST is creating a set of tools and materials such as participant handbooks, staff manuals, curricula, and mentorship guides to support the implementation of these demonstration program models. The overwhelming response to these outreach efforts prompted us to launch a case management system to help all women interested in pursuing careers in the trades, regardless of their current skill level.



CWIT's board, staff, and U.S. Department of Labor partners celebrate the launch of the Women in Skilled Trades Initiative

Policy

CWIT's advocacy and policy initiatives complement the agency's direct service work. The agency's advocacy for tradeswomen was spotlighted in FY 2004 when a CWIT member received a Chicago Foundation for Women Ripple Effect award for her courageous and successful battle against sexual discrimination, harassment, and retaliation on the job.
Other important policy activities included:

- Drafting, building support for, and advancing legislation through two committees to secure state funding for pre-apprenticeship training programs statewide. The agency also led the coalition effort to support the legislation.

- Conducting training for the Apprenticeship Information Center of the Illinois Department of Economic Security to build the staff's capacity to encourage and support women entering skilled trade apprenticeships.

- Helping to found the first Women's Committee of the Building and Construction Trades Department of the AFL-CIO.

- Led the work of the Statewide Nontraditional Leadership Team to promote gender equity in state workforce and educational institutions.

(continued)

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2004 & 2005

Tradeswomen of Tomorrow (TOT)

The Tradeswomen of Tomorrow programs create awareness among girls and young women about non-traditional career opportunities, provide them with the knowledge and skills to succeed in those careers, and support their entry and retention in vocational education programs and construction careers. Through TOT, students engage in trades-related hands-on activities and meet tradeswomen mentors. Female high school students enrolled in the seven CPS Career Academies' nontraditional vocational career program are invited to attend CWIT's four annual Aspiring Tradeswomen summits. During FY 2004 and FY 2005, 93 high school students and 257 elementary school students participated in the TOT programs. Summit sites included the Chicago Regional Council of Carpenters Apprentice & Training Program, Dawson Technical Institute, IBEW Apprenticeship Training Program, DePaul University Department of Women's Studies, and the Center for Green Technology. In 2004, NBC's *Today Show* taped the Carpenters Training Center summit and aired the segment on February 19 of that year.



CWIT's outreach activities include participating in the annual Bud Billiken Parade

The Young Women's Advisory Group (YWAG) provides leadership opportunities and a platform for girls' voices. YWAG published *We:Zine/women with power* in 2004 in which young women shared their experiences in shop class and explored their ideas about safe spaces, success and other topics through prose, poetry, interviews, and art. In 2005, YWAG collaborated with Beyondmedia Inc. to create a video documenting two of the four summits.

Outreach

A comprehensive outreach plan that addresses women's lack of awareness about opportunities in high-wage, high-skill trade jobs is critical to the success of CWIT programs. In 2004, the full-time position of Outreach Coordinator was created to meet the increased demand for CWIT training. As a result of this program expansion, 1,500 women attended information sessions and 1,079 women attended orientation/career fairs. CWIT hosted information booths at 18 career fairs, reaching more than 700 individuals. Speeches and/or presentations were made to national groups including Electrical Minority Workers Conference, IBEW Women's Conference, California Building and Construction Trades Women's Conference, National Building Trades and Construction Legislative Conference, and Oregon Department of Transportation Western Diversity Summit.

A New Home

In March 2005, Chicago Women in Trades relocated to a larger facility in the booming South Loop neighborhood. For the first time in its 25 year history, the agency's program and administrative staff as well as the classroom and workshop space are housed under one roof. The move was facilitated with leadership and support from the CWIT Board of Directors and with a minimal disruption of service. Industry partners donated materials and labor to build out the new space to meet the agency's needs. With all functions at one location, program capacity is greatly enhanced and CWIT is able to convene a variety of forums and activities for students, tradeswomen, community groups, and industry partners.



Chicago Public School students attend a CWIT Aspiring Tradeswomen Summit at the Bricklayers' District Council Training Center in Addison

"Chicago Women in Trades is the best lifeline I've ever gotten. They are always there for me when I have questions or need advice."



Lucy Loza truly was a 'Jill of all trades.' In the 1980s, she worked making wallpaper. Her next job was at an aluminum company where she was a roll operator. Later, she worked for one of the biggest chemical companies in North America as both a chemical operator and a fire brigade member. When the branch she worked for shut down, she decided to take a risk and open her own bar and grill, but she says she always dreamed about getting into construction. "I was running the bar all by myself," she explains, "and I was burned out, so I sold the business and took a couple of months off. That's when I decided to go for my dream and get into the trades." Lucy heard about Chicago Women in Trades when she applied for a job with the plumber's union. "They recommended I give them a call, and, believe me, it's the best advice I've gotten in my whole life." Lucy was accepted into the Chicago Women in Trades training program, and, after getting a taste of all the trades, she decided she wanted to become a carpenter. In 2005, 46 year-old Lucy graduated from the program, completed her apprentice training program in carpentry, and realized a life-long dream. "Chicago Women in Trades is the best lifeline I've ever gotten. They are always there for me when I have questions or need advice. I'm a very resourceful person," she says, "but I don't think I would be where I am today if it wasn't for Chicago Women in Trades."

Lucy Loza

"I was really inspired at work the other day. There were five women in my vicinity working and they each represented a different trade. It was wonderful just to see that."



Alicia Backus

Alicia Backus was working two jobs as a server at two different restaurants when she walked past a number of construction sites in downtown Chicago. "I had been thinking about switching careers. I wanted something that would give me some financial stability, a pension and benefits. I saw the tradespeople working there, but I didn't know what avenue to take to get into the field," says Alicia. It wasn't until later when she overheard some people talking about Chicago Women in Trades on a bus that she decided to really give it a try. "I was eavesdropping," she laughs, "and I wrote the information down about the program. Later a good friend of mine told me she was going to a CWIT information session, and I was like, 'wow, I need to do this.'" The program prepared Alicia so well that when she decided to take the aptitude test to become an ironworker, she ranked 77th out of 1,300 entrants. "CWIT absolutely prepares you for success," says Alicia, who has worked building additions to McCormick Place. "Right now I'm really enjoying what I do. I feel confident and strong, and I'm able to pay my bills. In the past, it was just more of scraping by. I had more of a feeling of barely keeping my head above water. And now it's like, okay, the water is to my knees now!" Alicia hopes to have enough money within the next year to put a down payment on a home in Jamaica, but is clear that her new career is about more than just the money. "I was really inspired at work the other day," she says. "There were five women in my vicinity working and they each represented a different trade. It was wonderful just to see that."

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- Workforce Board of Northern Cook County
- Workforce Board of Will County
- Workforce Investment Board for McHenry County

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2005 & JUNE 30, 2004

	2005	2004
INCOME		
Public Support & Revenue:		
Foundation & Corporate Grants	$ 152,856	296,150
Contributions	13,432	5,490
Government Agencies	733,778	562,155
In-Kind	86,630	2,800
Other Income	2,057	4,807
Public Support & Revenue	$ 988,753	871,402
EXPENSES		
Program Expenses	$ 854,606	726,151
Management and General	103,542	136,923
Fundraising	59,569	34,486
Total Expenses	$ 1,017,717	897,560
Change in Net Assets	$ (28,964)	(26,158)
Beginning Net Assests	202,418	228,576
Ending Net Assests	$ 173,454	202,418









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1455 S. Michigan, #210 / Chicago, IL 60605

phone: (312) 942-1444 / fax: (312) 942-0802 / www.chicagowomenintrades.org

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