

# Women's Access To Trades Network REPORT

## “SUCCESS STRATEGIES FOR WOMEN & TRADES” FORUM

MARCH 6, 2012



*HOSTED BY CENTENNIAL COLLEGE*

**FUNDED BY:**



**In Collaboration With:**



Toronto Employment & Social Services



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On Track Career and Employment Services  
The Centre for Skills Development and Training  
YWCA Toronto, The Career Foundation, Skills for Change  
George Brown College, Centennial College  
Canadian Association of Women in Construction  
IBEW Local 353-Women's Committee, Toronto Employment and Social Services  
Wo-Built

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### ***Planning Committee – 2012 Success Strategies for Women in Trades Forum***

We would like to acknowledge the members of the Forum Planning Committee and their respective organizations for the long hours dedicated to the planning and execution of this event. They include:

Jane Wilson – Community MicroSkills Development Centre  
Rebecca Anderson – Community MicroSkills Development Centre  
Marie Heron – OnTrack Career and Employment Services  
Nancy Moore – The Centre for Skills Development and Training  
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Karen Pullen – IBEW Local 353-Women's Committee  
Martina Ernst – Wo-Built  
Elida Huignard – Wo-Built  
Sharon Cumberbatch – Beaches Employment and Social Services

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### ***Forum Host – Centennial College***

The Committee wishes to express its sincere appreciation to Centennial College for its generosity in hosting the "Success Strategies for Women in Trades Forum." We would like to specifically acknowledge President Ann Buller for her unflagging leadership on this issue, and the staff of Ashtonbee Campus who made the day such a success.

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### ***Skills Canada-Ontario***

A special thank you to Gail Smith and her staff for extending the reach of this year's forum to include the many young women, parents and family members who participated in the "**Skills Work!® for Women**" **Networking Dinner** sponsored by Skills Canada-Ontario as part of the Forum's evening program.

## REPORT ON THE ONE-DAY FORUM

### Success Strategies for Women in Trades

#### FORUM OVERVIEW

The 2012 Success Strategies for Women in Trades Forum was developed by the Women's Access to Trades Network, a collaboration of Ontario-based individuals and organizations dedicated to accelerating women's participation in the trades, to increase women's access to good jobs and decrease their risk of poverty.

Building on recommendations from the first Women in Trades forum held in 2010, the goal of the 2012 forum was to obtain more recommendations from knowledgeable and experienced participants about what needs to be done in Ontario to substantially increase the number of women participating in the skilled trades

The 2012 Forum was structured to elicit success strategies from an expanded group of experienced and knowledgeable individuals within the specific sectors that together make up the system or "pipeline" that recruits and prepares skilled workers for the trades.

- The planning committee invited representatives from sectors that operate and control gateways into trades – government, labour, employers, training and education.
- A strong group of tradeswomen were present to provide their valuable perspective on women's experiences and untapped potential within the trades sector.
- Also invited were representatives from organizations that support career pathways to trades and apprenticeship - such as boards of education and trades promotion organizations - along with those that provide employment, community and career services for women.

The consultation process for the Forum was designed to obtain more detailed recommendations from each sector regarding key actions that will be needed to accelerate women's participation into the trades; and to encourage all participants to share their views on system and policy changes that are needed to achieve women's participation in meaningful numbers within a meaningful timeframe. Consultations also asked participants to share examples of promising practices within their organizations and regions that are successful in attracting women into trades.

The planning committee designed a consultation process that allowed forum participants to meet in sector specific groups in the morning to focus on a vision for women's full participation within their own sector - in apprenticeships, in training, in employment.

In the afternoon the same individuals participated in cross-sectoral discussion groups and responded to the request to develop a combined vision of the system that would be needed if all sectors were collaborating to achieve women's equal representation in all new hires.

## FORUM PLANNING

The 2012 Women in Trades Forum had 5 objectives

- Introduce the **province-wide** Women's Access to Trades Network which has a mission to develop provincial capacity to increase women's awareness and participation in skilled trades
- Invite participants to consider joining this network as it expands provincially over the next two years
- Expand our consultation on how to accelerate women's participation to a broader audience
- Focus on success strategies: both current best practices and other practical steps that will be needed for achieving women's equitable participation in trades employment
- Include a special evening program dedicated to young women, by partnering with Skills Canada to deliver their award winning "**Skills Work!® for Women**" **Networking Dinner**, designed to introduce young women in high school to female mentors who are currently working, studying or teaching in a related career field

## TARGET AUDIENCE

The planning committee expanded the invitation list to a wider provincial audience that could also reach a broader group of representatives from all sectors that shared the common goal of wanting more women working in skilled trades:

- Employers seeking more women and skilled workers
- Labour groups looking to include more women in trades and apprenticeship
- Tradeswomen looking for more leadership opportunities and a more compatible workplace
- Groups accountable for equity, diversity, labour force development, productivity, poverty reduction
- Colleges, training centres looking to increase women in trades programs
- Secondary schools seeking more career options for girls
- Women looking for better paid jobs

The goal was to get a diverse cross-sector of knowledgeable individuals with the ability to offer practical strategies to increase the participation of women in the trades.

## THE FORUM

On March 6, 2012 the forum brought together over 100 individuals from the identified sectors to:

- Review the progress made to date on expanding women's access to skilled trades
- Learn about success strategies being used in recruiting, training and employment
- Provide updates on status of College of Trades
- Seek emerging opportunities for change – a provincial women's access to trades network
- Develop, through focused discussion, strategies that need to be implemented in order for change to take place

## **Program**

The day consisted of the following elements:

- Welcome from Kay Blair, Executive Director, MicroSkills and Karen Webb, Chair, MicroSkills Board of Directors, and opening remarks from Anne Buller, President, Centennial College
- Keynote by Gail Smith, Skills Canada-Ontario
- Sector Specific Small Group Discussions – Sector based groups met to discuss current successes, challenges and their vision for changes needed within their respective sectors to achieve women’s full participation.
- Update of the College of Trades by Catherine Poultney and Jennifer Moon, members of the College’s Board of Governors
- Cross-sector Panel of Representatives sharing promising practices that achieved success in increasing and retaining women in the skilled trades
  - *Social Services* - Sharon Cumberbatch, Ontario Works Liaison, Beaches Employment and Social Services emphasized the importance of training social workers and career counsellors about the trades to increase their confidence and expertise to attract and inform women about trades opportunities
  - *Tradeswoman* - Elise Jovkovic, HVAC Technician, Direct Energy summarized the value of women’s pre-apprenticeship programs with holistic supports in linking women to well paid trades jobs
  - *Employer: Transportation* - Jayne Gunn, Recruiting Manager, Caravan Logistics Inc. described how the **Women in Transportation** program that trains women truck drivers succeeds as a community-college-industry partnership in strengthening women’s employment and leadership within a male dominated sector
  - *Employer: Horticulture* –Sally Harvey, Manager for Education, Training and Development, Landscape Ontario, in absentia, sent a summary of the strong focus on women and girls in Landscape Ontario’s recruitment strategies that address acute skills shortages
  - *Employment Services* - Mike Harwood, Employment Consultant, Skilled Trades, The Centre for Skills Development and Training described the importance of preparing both women for employers’ realities, and employers for women apprentices as complementary strategies that result in women’s successful placement in internships and employment
  - *Tradeswoman* - Kirsten Meyer, Journey electrician, IBEW 353 highlighted the need for young women to learn practical trades skills at an earlier age to develop an acceptance of trades
  - *Womens Programs Developer* – Jane Wilson, Director for Women’s Services at MicroSkills, described initiatives of the Provincial Women’s Access to Trades Network that will increase awareness and opportunities for women: Annual Women in Trades Forum; Women in Trades Web Portal, Tradeswoman Advisors and Mentors Program, and Liaison with Trades Stakeholders
- Cross-Sector Small Group Discussions - Groups comprised of representatives from each sector met to develop a vision for an integrated system that would create a trades labour force consisting of women as 50% of new hires by 2025.
- Plenary Report out from Cross Sector Discussions

## SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The consultation conducted in the 2012 Forum was in two parts:

- Morning Discussions : Envisioning women succeeding in trades within your organization or sector: School boards; Colleges; Labour and Employers; Community; Tradeswomen
- Afternoon Discussions: Recommending changes that will be needed in all Ontario systems that create access to trades, so they can achieve 50% women as new hires by 2025

### AM Discussions

In the morning, individuals were registered into discussion groups based on their sectors. Each discussion group was comprised of individuals working in the same sector. Each group was asked to discuss 4 questions from the perspective of their specific sector i.e. The Colleges group examined the questions from the perspective of the College sector.

1. Let's envision that women are participating in trades activities in substantial numbers within your organization- What would this transformation look like?
2. What current systems, structure and processes have proved to be success strategies?
3. How do current systems, structures and processes need to be enhanced within your organization or sector to secure women's access and sustain their participation?
4. What role do some of your key stakeholders need to play, what changes do they need to make to facilitate changes you envision within your own organization towards accelerating women's participation?

### PM Discussion

In the afternoon, discussion groups were made up of individuals from across the sectors present at the forum. Each discussion group had representatives from school boards, colleges, labour, employer, tradeswomen, and community groups. Each group was asked to develop a vision for an integrated system that would create a trades labour force consisting of 50% women by 2025. Each group was asked the following three questions

1. How should Ontario systems evolve to achieve 50% women as new hires by 2025?

What is needed from the leaders of key sectors, what do they need to prioritize and do in collaboration to achieve this target?

2. What steps should be taken between 2012 and 2025 to make this happen?

***Vision for a future where women are in the trades in substantial numbers***

**EMPLOYER/ LABOUR**

- Legislation regarding human rights, Bill 168-Violence etc. enforced
- No ageism, or sexual harassment; women are the norm; soft skills valued as technical skills
- Women applying for jobs; half of all applicants are women
- Respectful work environment for women
- Industry has up to date HR policy/skills in areas of training, recruiting and promotion policies

**COMMUNITY**

- All women are educated about trades careers (immigrant, older, low income etc)
- Lots of trades preparation, pre-employment supports , pre-apprenticeship programs for women
- All vocational, employment and career counsellors have tools to help women determine fit for trades
- Extensive private sector collaboration; employers connecting to community based sources of labour

**COLLEGES**

- Colleges are sending strong messages to girls/women that they are valued and belong in trades
- 30-40% of trades trainees are women
- Recruiters collaborating with high schools to achieve female enrollments
- Supports are in place such as childcare, training subsidies, income supplements, housing
- Parents are supporting their children's choices to pursue trades
- More incentives leading women into the trades: bursaries, pre-apprenticeship programs for women
- Colleges are working with employers with mandates to hire women
- Partnerships at all levels are coordinated – government, community, stakeholders
- MTCU leads employers to promote opportunities to women and take on women apprentices

**TRADESWOMEN**

- A critical mass of women in trades; women seek trades to get critical thinking and problem solving skills, along with technical skills and survival skills for life
- Women see trades as route to independence with financial rewards
- More women promoted to leadership roles (right now women apprentices go to trades school with men, and men end up in leadership roles with more money; women are not being promoted regardless of skills)
- Room for growth and career progression for women in trades
- Women are speaking up, and pushing for what they need
- Regulations in place requiring employers to hire women; obligatory for large companies to hire women

**SCHOOL BOARDS**

- Parents are engaged; parent information sessions include strong focus on trades
- School administration, parent councils and immigrant parents are on board supporting trades careers for youth
- Outstanding guidance departments reaching out to feeder schools promoting trades

## ***Current success strategies***

### **EMPLOYERS/LABOUR**

- Women's groups putting more pressure on corporations to become diverse
- Funding of specialized women's pre-apprenticeship programs with specialized outreach to recruit women
- On the job training partnerships with colleges, paid hands-on training (corporate and college partnerships)
- Job promotion stating that women are strongly encouraged to apply and that diversity is supported
- Designated leadership role on employer site who can create and maintain respectful job site

### **COMMUNITY**

- Pre-apprenticeship programs have been the most successful
- Development projects that link community members to employment opportunities

### **COLLEGE SECTOR**

- Promotions that feature female success stories in the trades
- Female role models and mentors to guide women's path
- Preparing women to adapt to a male culture
- Preparing employers and employees for women in the workplace
- Strong screening and assessment to select the women with the right fit for the job
- Including site tours, fostering team building skills

### **TRADESWOMEN**

- Tips from male colleagues; speaking up when men demean women
- Teaching male colleagues how to treat women appropriately; teaching men appropriate behaviour
- "As women we need to speak out without making a big deal; People can't change when they don't know"
- Pre-apprenticeships – they give women a way in and an edge as women go in with the skills
- Having confidence in your accomplishments, not minimizing them; not being silent in front of men
- Being willing to move to work in your field – get your hands dirty

### **SCHOOL BOARDS**

- Embracing feeder schools at a younger age- grade 6 initiatives exposing kids to programs in high school
- Breaking into female and male sessions to give focus to girls; doing tech days right before course selections
- Partnerships with local unions, i.e. Carpentry union – work boots available for tours etc.
- QR Bar codes on all banners/handouts to engage and provide more information
- Partnerships with local colleges for college tours, practical workshops, for 7/8's
- Media: OYAP promotions supported by several boards across province on Rogers/Shaw/Cogeco-video on YouTube; apps on smart phones; posters with real people not stock photos; diversity portrayed in media
- Ministry reps talking to classes; Advanced Qualification in Guidance available to tech teachers

***Changes needed to secure women's access and sustain their participation  
in trades in meaningful numbers***

**EMPLOYER/LABOUR**

- More contractors and employers at the table committed to hiring women
- More employers reaching out to women and being ready for them on their worksites
- Greater leadership role for women and more focus on women's access within the College of Trades
- Government legislated responsibility and role in advocating more women in trades jobs
- Improved policies and systems in workplaces to accommodate women
- Unions taking leadership in accommodating women's needs
- Flexible working conditions and supporting transitions to sectors in demand
- Promoting lifelong learning , cross training, professional development, promoting from within
- Entry level positions are often entry level wages; top up wages for a period of time
- Creating incentives for employers and private companies to hire women
- Subsidized education costs for women

**COMMUNITY SECTOR**

- More flexibility in the development of programming for women
- More funding for women's programs; and more childcare services
- More information for women in shelters and other community venues, geared to diverse women
- Creating more women focused trades fairs , public education campaigns, mentorship programs
- Government support for strategies that promote awareness and collaboration
- More of these kinds of discussion and workshops for community members

**TRADESWOMEN**

- Legislation is required to ensure employers' compliance in supporting women's access and sustained participation in trades workplaces in meaningful numbers

**SCHOOL BOARDS**

- Women centred training – all girl tech classes at the beginning and integrated ones later on
- Tools designed for women's bodies/hands
- More female instructors in technology /trades classes
- More math for girls
- More co-op opportunities for women to meet employers and strengthen their awareness about the trades
- Math /science Heads need greater awareness about the trades in order to apply assignments to trades
- Elementary teachers need to be trained to incorporate trades opportunities into their curriculums
- Linking girl's aptitudes and interests to opportunities in the trades
- Promoting young girls in OYAP to other girls

***How can labour, training, education and business make the changes that will accelerate women's participation?***

- There is an urgent need for unions, employers and government to do the following:
  - Create clearer policies in MTCU that promote the importance of women in skilled trades, women's value to a skills development strategy, the role of gender specific programming; and communicate these policies broadly
  - Publish where women's pre-apprenticeship programs are available; this information, which is so important for women and agencies assisting women, is hard to find; better, more open communication will lead to better recruitment and equal opportunity
  - Take a role in creating stronger incentive programs focused on women and commit to a certain volume of training and jobs for women
  - Hold Employers/Unions accountable for improving recruitment strategies – create targets
  - Require Colleges, employers and labour groups to modify their processes, systems and structures to increase participation of women – create targets
  - Federal government can subsidize wages for women in summer positions related to trades
- Businesses need to partner and invest in recruiting women, creating awareness within their sectors of business proposition in hiring women
- Employers/Unions need to commit to improving recruitment strategies and workplace practices – such as create targets, greater commitment to hiring youth/young women, so exposure can influence training choices, use of appropriate language, inclusive practices
- Colleges need to focus on more balanced courses that bring groups of women together with groups of men in training
- School boards need to reinstate shop classes in elementary and high schools, focus on parent engagement and buy-in
- Government needs to do studies to document cross-sector best practices to support women's continued access

***How should Ontario systems evolve to achieve 50% women as new hires by 2025?  
What do leaders of key sectors need to prioritize and do in collaboration to achieve this target?***

**TARGETS AND TIMELINES**

- All leaders in Ontario systems involved in the trades facilitate hiring 50% women – Labour, Employers, Colleges, School boards, Community and Women’s groups
- Legislation needed to support this - obligate hiring women apprentices, particularly employers with large investment from government
- Collaborate to achieve targets and timelines; be champions and role models
- Put in place tracking mechanisms to evaluate progress towards achieving targets
- Government, industry to provide incentives, funds to support gender recruitment strategies
- Employers step up to sponsor trades programs and hire graduates
- Employers promote and participate in pre-apprenticeship programs

**WORKING CONDITIONS**

Lack of protection in employment is a disincentive for women. A lot of industries not well regulated – Government should address the gap for those who access trades in unregulated workplaces.

- Labour based hiring should integrate Pre-apprenticeship programs as a recruitment process
- More options needed for women to complete their apprenticeship programs, possibly online courses, continuum of learning for women on maternity leave, options for women to complete Red Seal programs; possibly change EI legislation
- Construction industry needs change to support workers at every stage in their lives
- Employers need to do more to make the jobs appealing to women

**Labour Groups**

- Develop policies regarding # of women, role of women in unions, and leadership positions
- Commit to recruit women, - younger as well as older women
- Improve intake programs to ensure women well-represented in all new intakes
- Create strong pathways into well paid unionized jobs that can sustain women
- Participate in pre-apprenticeship programs and offer internships/paid placements for women
- Create strong relationships with community groups with access to diverse groups of women

**PUBLIC EDUCATION AND PROMOTION**

- Gender specific marketing to girls and women, position trades as strong option for employment
- Demonstrate all the paths, and career transitions that can come out of any trades career
- Hold free conferences for women interested in trades with tradeswomen present to build community understanding and involvement
- Market to mature women requiring career transition who need better paid jobs

**SCHOOL INITIATIVES**

- Change the curriculum to incorporate practical learning objectives in the classroom at a very early age – introduce skilled trades in elementary school followed by technical classes in high school
- Use trades facilities in high schools and colleges for after school programs
- Narrow the gap in promotion within the high school and girls’ course selections
- Educate parents, access the huge numbers of parents, with parent's nights
- Design a resource package, professional development days to educate all levels/ employees in the school system to help more people to get the message out to the parents and community

**WHAT STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN BETWEEN 2012 AND 2015 TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN?**

**GOVERNMENT**

- Hold elected representatives accountable for integrating women into trades
- Require elected representatives to develop an Ontario model for accelerating women, including immigrant women into trades employment
- College of Trades should mandate hiring women as a priority
- Government contractors must ensure that employers with public contracts have hiring targets for women, strategies in place to achieve them, along with strategies to monitor employers' results
- Governments as employers should also commit targets and timelines for hiring women apprentices within government institutions
- All systems such as EO, Pre-Apprenticeship should develop strategies to prioritize and ensure women's access

**EMPLOYERS**

- Employers with public investments should commit to hiring women with stated targets and timelines
- Employers should increase access to apprenticeship trades for young women and offer financial incentives to eliminate barriers to participation
- Employers should develop more paid coop programs for young women through OYAP, and for adult women through Pre-apprenticeship training
- Employers should work closely with other stakeholders to identify and eliminate barriers to women's access

**COLLEGES**

- Market programs to women directly with strategies that will fill seats

## EVALUATION SUMMARY

Of the **107** attendees, 41 Individuals, (**38%**) completed evaluations. The majority of the attendees felt that the event was successful, stated that both the Sector and Cross–Sector Discussions were valuable components of the forum, and expressed an interest in having more time to develop strategies to push the initiative forward.

**97 percent** of the attendees expressed satisfaction with the event, (**75% very satisfied; 22% satisfied**). Their Feedback included the following comments:

When asked what they had gained from the Forum:

- *“Information, updates, and Insight into different stakeholder perspectives”*
- *“Perspective from women working in trades; Awareness of need about women in trades”*
- *“Ideas that I can put into action to promote skilled trades as a valid destination for families”*
- *“Cross sector concerns with representations of women in trades. Possible strategies that can be implemented locally & across the board. “*
- *“Much better sense of what is going on in Ontario to get more women into trades.”*
- *“A better understanding of what my company can do to better enhance women in our trade.”*
- *“The variety of strategies used by different schools/boards to involve women in skills trades.”*
- *“Networking with others working toward common goals.”*
- *“Putting emphasis on employers’, parents’, and educators’ roles”*

**100% of the respondents stated that they would attend another “Women in Trades” forum:** They felt that although the event was very successful, there needed to be more representation and participation from Employers, Government, Labour Unions, and Tradeswomen

Participants recommended that the future Women in Trades Forum should include the following:

- *“To share any success that was accomplished together through the discussions and communication at this forum”*
- *“To have someone entering a trade to speak about her fears, passion, drive, hurdles etc”*
- *“Would like to have an update from MTCU and OWD on what is being done with increasing women into the skilled trades”*
- *“Concrete plans for actions we can take in between Forums”*
- *“Wanted to know what other countries/regions are doing which have found success in increasing the number of women in the skilled trades.”*
- *“Provide resources to take back to school to educate students, teachers, administration, parents and the community on how to inform girls about these opportunities available to them.”*

## APPENDIX A

### Attendees

107 Attendees participated in the forum and contributed to the discussion and recommendations:

- Government (5):  
Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, Ontario Women's Directorate, and Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, City of Toronto – Toronto Employment and Social Services
- Foundation (1):  
The Canadian Women's Foundation
- Associations (5):  
Canadian Association of Women in Construction( CAWIC), Ontario Council of Alternative Businesses-Working for Change, Durham Region Local Training Board - Tradeability.ca, and Halton Industry Education Council – apprenticesearch.com
- Employers (12):  
Process Advantage Inc., Hydro One, Toromont CAT, Canada Post, Fourth Pig Worker Co-op Inc., Mobile Computing Corp. Inc., Automotive Aftermarket Retailers of Ontario (AARO), Strong Co, and Dovewood Construction
- Labour/Unions (5):  
IBEW Local 353, Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), IATSE Local 411, and The Canadian Auto Workers' Union (CAW)
- Colleges/Training Institutions (23):  
Centennial College, George Brown College, College Boreal, Humber College, Conestoga College, Durham College, Learning Enrichment Foundation, Pre-Apprenticeship Training Institute, Ontario Truck Training Academy, and The Centre for Skills Development and Training
- School Boards (18):  
Upper Grand and Wellington Catholic District School Boards, Durham District School Board, Toronto District School Board, Peel District School Board, Toronto Catholic District School Board, and Halton District School Board
- Tradeswomen (16)  
from the following Skilled Trades: Construction Sector- Electrician, Industrial electrician, Construction & Maintenance Electrician, HVAC Technician, Carpenter; Service Sector - Horticulture Technician
- Community Organizations (14): (The City of Toronto - Community and Labour Market??), WoodGreen Community Services, Elizabeth Fry Toronto, National Capital Region YMCA-YWCA, Malvern Family Resource Centre, The Career Foundation, PCPI, and COSTI
- Students/Women Interested in Trades (8)

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Special Evening Program for Young Women – Skills Canada Networking Dinner**

As part of our 2012 Forum, with support from Centennial College, Skills Canada hosted “**Skills Work!® for Women” Networking Dinner**, an award-winning program designed to introduce young women in high school, who are interested in the skilled trades and technologies, to female mentors currently working, studying or teaching in a related career field.

150 guests attended, 81 young women between 11 and 18 years of age from the Toronto District School Board, 14 tradeswomen mentors, 11 educators, 20 parents, and 24 additional family and community members.

The evening consisted of the following elements:

- *Introduction to Skills Canada – Ontario* and the purpose of the evening - Gail Smyth, Executive Director
- *Presentation on Opportunities in the Skilled Trades and Technologies* – delivered by Brianna Holm, Liaison Officer, Skills Canada - Ontario
- *On Track Special Bursaries Awards* – Hermie Abraham, Board Member of On Track Career and Employment Services presented Bursaries to a successful graduate from two Women’s Pre-Apprenticeship Programs delivered in partnerships between community based women’s organizations and community colleges.
- Award Recipients
- Laura Van Rooy, an apprentice Horticulture Technician, graduated from MicroSkills’ Horticulture Pre-Apprenticeship program, a partnership between MicroSkills, Humber College and Landscape Ontario.
- Odette Doyle – Marshal, an apprentice Automotive Service Technician, graduated from the On Track Career and Employment Services Automotive Technician pre-apprenticeship program, a partnership between On Track Career and Employment Services and Centennial College.
- Both award recipients shared their struggles and barriers that they had to overcome as well as how rewarding the Skills Trades have been to both their personal and professional lives.
- *Dinner* - A mentor was placed at each table so the young women were given the opportunity to learn more about their skilled trade. The 14 mentors came from the following skilled trade and technology backgrounds: general electricians and electrical inspectors, general carpentry (apprentices, journeypersons and instructors), construction, gasfitter, mechanical technician (machinist/millwright training), auto service technician, avionics technician, horticultural technician/landscaping, information technologist (software developer), and engineering technician/technologist.
- *Networking Sector Rotation* - After dinner, the Networking Sector Rotation Activity begun, in which students and educators had the opportunity to meet and interact with each of the mentors in the room. Mentors were grouped and divided by sector, and this timed networking exercise consisted of three 20-minute intervals that gave the students a chance to rotate through and ask questions of each group.

#### *Parent Engagement*

At the conclusion of the event the parents who attended stated that they were inspired by the tradeswomen and had changed their views towards skilled trades. Before the event they thought skilled trades were inaccessible to girls and young women and were only for men who were under-educated. Now that they had a more realistic picture of the trades and were able to hear directly from the tradeswomen about their experiences, knowledge and education they realized that skilled trades are a viable career option for their daughters.