

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 3, 2014

### **The PROVINCIAL WOMEN IN TRADES FORUM - Why women...why trades...why now?**

March 5, 2014 from 8:45am – 3:00pm  
at Collège Boréal

Everywhere you turn, you hear about the skilled trades' crisis that Canada will be facing over the next 8-10 years. While various reasons have been cited, what we do know is that women are significantly underrepresented in non-traditional and high-demand trades such as: carpentry, electrical, welding, millwright, heavy equipment technician, automotive service technician and other trades in northern Ontario - all jobs where shortages have been projected.

"The low numbers of women entering these trades is not new" says Jane Wilson, Director of Women Services, Community MicroSkills Development Centre and founding member of the Women in Trades Network. With support from the Ontario Government, the Canadian Women's Foundation, and various provincial and local partners, this network has held forums across Ontario to highlight the importance of women entering the trades. The Sudbury forum is the third in this regional series and will focus on many of the successful and innovative solutions that are already addressing long identified key challenges.

"While women have successfully entered the labour market on a number of fronts, they still fall behind in many trades." Wilson adds that "it is of benefit to all of us to provide more opportunities for women to enter the trades, using the many best practices that are now available. For employers, it will help them meet the growing needs of their future workforce. For women it will give them access to good paying jobs and reduce their risk of poverty. It is a win-win situation."

Industry leaders, employers, educators, trainers, employment service providers, unions, government and other key stakeholders are being invited to learn about how trade jobs are changing in the north; how to counsel female students and jobseekers on a career in the trades; gender-specific best practices; the experiences of tradeswomen; Aboriginal women in trades initiatives, and the role of the Ontario College of Trades. A highlight of this year's event will include a tour of the College's trade shops and a preview of the new web portal to support women in trades sponsored by the Women in Trades Network. But it doesn't end there.

Women 18 years of age and older are also being invited to explore a new career through the "try on a trade" sessions. Women who register for this segment will experience firsthand what it is like to work in 2 of 6 of the high demand trades. Each workshop will be led by bilingual Collège Boréal instructors.

Wilson hopes that "events like these will showcase for women the value of a career in trades and encourage more employers and others to pave the way to make this to happen."

All media are invited to attend.

For more information or to arrange an interview with speakers or conference organizers, please contact:

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**Attachment:** Provincial Women in Trades forum flyer and agenda

**FORUM PARTNERS & SPONSORS:**

- Collège Boréal
- Workforce Planning for Sudbury & Manitoulin
- Cambrian College
- City of Greater Sudbury
- Gezhtoojig Employment and Training
- N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre
- Toromont
- Wii-ni n'guch-tood LDM Employment & Training
- Skills Ontario/Canada
- Local Immigration Partnership

**FUNDED BY:**

The Government of Ontario and the Canadian Women's Foundation

**ABOUT THE WOMEN IN TRADES NETWORK:**

The Women in Trades Network (WiTN) is a collaboration of Ontario-based individuals and organizations committed to accelerating women's participation in the trades, to increase women's access to good jobs and decrease their risk of poverty. The network began in 2010, initiated by a group of women-serving organizations concerned about the low rates of women in many well-paid trades. Three of the organizations: Community MicroSkills Development Centre, in partnership with The Centre for Skills Development and Training and On Track Career and Employment Services, accessed a grant from the *Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration* to build this provincial network

**ABOUT COMMUNITY MICROSKILLS DEVELOPMENT CENTRE:**

MicroSkills is a multicultural, non-profit, community-based organization and United Way member agency providing settlement, training, employment and self employment services in the Greater Toronto Area. For over twenty-five years, MicroSkills has empowered women, youth and newcomers to build better lives and careers. With an innovative and holistic approach unique in its sector, MicroSkills trains, guides and mentors up to 20,000 adults and youth annually – one life at a time.