

# WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

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## Vermont Works for Women launches first “Green” Step Up to Carpentry!

In late April 2009, Vermont Works for Women ran its first “green” Step Up to Carpentry class. The Step Up to Carpentry job-training program model began twenty-three years ago when the organization first began. Through the years it has morphed and adapted to fit with the changing tides of the needs of women, funding sources and world events! This year’s program was a six week training for women interested in careers in carpentry and construction which gave special focus to the sustainable building industry.

100% of our participants were unemployed at the time of enrollment. The eight enthusiastic participants from three VT counties maintained an excellent attendance record throughout the program. The new ‘green’ focus received highly favorable reviews in student evaluation forms and employer contractors gave us similarly encouraging feedback. New topics incorporated this year included a career ladder panel with five professionals from the green building industry discussing professional opportunities for varying levels of education, a presentation by Ward Smyth of Turtle Creek Builders on LEED (Leadership in Environmental & Energy Design) and other ‘green’ certifications during a field trip to a local LEED-certified building, field trips to Recycle North and Curtis Lumber to discuss shopping with a ‘green eye’ and a straw-bale presentation

and hands-on session with Missa Aloisi of Freeman French Freeman, Inc. Other highlights of the class included a blueprint reading workshop by Donna Miller of Studio Blue Architecture, two nutrition and upper/core body strength sessions taught by Hannah Rose, a certified trainer and



life coach, a hands-on, interactive workshop on dry walling, a self-employment panel and a 3-hour certification in adult, child and infant CPR.

The once-a-week hands-on building days allowed students to gain experience in a wide variety of basic hand and power tools, planning and design, framing, roofing, window installation and trim work through their work on an 8 x 10 garden shed. An important element of the class—job shadows with area contractors—went exceptionally well and the majority of students opted to volunteer many more hours than what was required, with some students contributing 40-70 hours of their time on job sites with our employer partners. This prompted one of those employers to hire one of our graduates for a day of temporary labor after the conclusion of the course and to tell her that her application to their company (which she had previously submitted) is “near the top” if and when they hire in the near future. Two other graduates were able to gain more experience while building a counter top for the Intervale Foundation in Burlington. One graduate has already been hired by a construction company in her home region of Franklin County.

Please feel free to contact us if you know of any entry-level carpentry, construction or weatherization jobs available. We have seven highly enthusiastic, reliable and talented workers to send your way!