

Story of IUPAT Job Corps Instructor Inspires Women to Join Building Trades

In March 2009, IUPAT representatives from Sierra, Nevada, Job Corps Center participated in the Fifth Annual Building Women Exploration Fair. Held in Reno, Nevada, this fair offers women the opportunity to learn about and apply for local Building Trades apprenticeship programs. Under the leadership of Harry Mowrey, apprenticeship coordinator for District Council 16/Local Union 567 in Reno, the IUPAT and its local Job Corps program have been a part of this popular event since its inception.

One of the IUPAT Job Corps instructors at the event this year was Lyudmila Caselli. Originally from the Ukraine, she has been an instructor at the Sierra Job Corps Center for the last three years. In her home country, Caselli knew that life in the office wasn't for her and, instead, chose to pursue work on a job-site. First a crane operator, then a welder, she eventually concentrated on working in the Finishing Trades. Accomplished in taping, plastering, wallpapering, faux finishing, wood graining, and general decorating, she decided to emigrate from the Ukraine to the United States eight years ago. Upon arriving here, she immediately joined IUPAT Local Union 567 in Reno to work as a journeyman painter.

Three years ago, she became a painting instructor for the IUPAT Job Corps program at Sierra, Nevada. It's there that Caselli says she enjoys the "opportunity to pass on my experiences and trade knowledge to my students."

Yet, at the Building Women Exploration Fair this year, it was her life experience that she enjoyed sharing. "Throughout my career in the construction industry, one of the biggest hurdles I faced was that most jobs I had were believed to be only for men, not women. I have found that, through hard work, determination, and initiative, most women can compete very well in a 'man's' world." It's that message Caselli wants to pass on to all women considering a life in the Building Trades.

"One of the main components of being a great instructor in the Job Corps program is having the ability to inspire students," said Andrew Larson, national project coordinator for the IUPAT Job Corps program. "Lyudmila's story is definitely an inspiration for us all. I'm certain she convinced a lot of the women at the fair that a life in the Building Trades can be a good one for them."



Harry Mowrey (left), apprenticeship coordinator for District Council 16/Local Union 567 in Reno, gives attendees of the Fifth Annual Building Women Exploration Fair a demonstration in drywall finishing. Lyudmila Caselli (second from left), an instructor with the IUPAT Job Corps program in Sierra, Nevada, also participated in the event held to recruit women into the Building Trades by sharing her unique story as an IUPAT member and construction worker.