

THE VOICE

**OF WOMEN IN MECHANICAL CONSTRUCTION
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER**



CELEBRATE ENDINGS - THEY LEAD TO NEW BEGINNINGS!

For the first time in three years, WiMC committee members met in person at MCA Canada's National Conference in September. A number of milestones were achieved by the committee between 2019 and 2022 under the leadership of Chair Julie Zulich, as outlined in the Committee's Update. Julie Zulich has now retired from her role as Chair after four years in the position, and has stepped into the role of Past Chair.

With autumn upon us, the Committee is preparing new initiatives focusing on mentoring, leadership, and training. The newly appointed Chair Judy-Lynn Mason of ServcoCanada, and Vice Chair Jane Gowing of Black & McDonald, will serve for the next two years.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE NEW 2023 CHAIR



First and foremost, I would like to thank Julie Zulich for the past 4 years of service as Chair of the WiMC board. I am truly honored to accept the torch moving forward and will continue to build on the momentum Julie and her board have created. As a female working in mechanical construction for the past 25 years, I have experienced firsthand some of the challenges women are forced to overcome on a day to day basis. My construction career started on a project site as one of two women working with 200+ men. I get it!

Although female participation within our industry has progressed tremendously over the last number of years, there is still much more that can be done to allow women and other under-represented groups to flourish and reach their potential. The MCAC has identified labour shortage as one of the biggest challenges facing our industry today. WiMC can and will help to fulfill this shortfall.

I believe our roll within WiMC is to develop strategies that introduce women to a career in mechanical construction and help erase any remaining gender bias that could affect their choice. We also need to work with our contractors to ensure that potential candidates have equal opportunity for employment and a safe environment to grow and hone their chosen craft. One major focus for 2023 will be to help facilitate a support program connecting women new to our industry with female mentors that have already forged a career in construction. More to come!

In closing, I would like to ask that all our MCA contractors and members continue to advocate and support women within our industry and make a conscious effort to promote female attendance at local career symposiums, job fairs, and other recruitment initiatives. Our win is your win! Show women and youth the infinite career possibilities in our industry.

Please reach out to us if you would like to join our membership, become an ambassador, know of a woman who needs our support, or just believe in the cause. I am excited and look forward to working with you all this year!

Judy-Lynn Mason

Judy-Lynn Mason
ServcoCanada Group of Companies | 2023 Chair, WIMC Committee

'THE VOICE'

podcast series

BROUGHT TO YOU BY
THE WOMEN IN MECHANICAL CONSTRUCTION
INITIATIVE COMMITTEE



ALANNA MARKLUND

Special Representative for Youth, Diversity and
Indigenous Relations - United Association -
Canada



BRANDI FERENC

313a Refrigeration Mechanic/Gas Fitter 1, HVAC
Instructor and Mentor for HVAC apprentices and Women
in Skilled Trades



EPISODE 1

ENCOURAGEMENT,
MENTORSHIP & RETENTION
OF WOMEN IN THE TRADES

<https://mcac.ca/wimc-podcast-and-newsletters>



COMMITTEE'S UPDATE: **THROUGH OUR EFFORTS, WE WERE ABLE TO ACHIEVE MILESTONES**

With WiMC's formal launch in 2019, Julie Zulich became the first female to hold a position on MCAC's board of directors. She has led the committee since that time with an incredible group of individuals who are dedicated to advancing change not just within the mechanical sector, but throughout the construction industry as a whole through education, mentorship, and collaboration.

Members of the committee from across Canada met in Nashville for the first in-person meeting to discuss the strategy for the initiative. This committee celebrated a lot of firsts in 2019, including hosting our first WiMC webinar "Being a Women in Construction: Alicia Woods' Story", sponsoring two (2) educational events at the MCAA Convention, and creating a scholarship within the MCAC's Richard McKeagan Scholarship Series for female apprentices.

By the end of the year, there was over 50 members that signed up for the initiative.





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Despite COVID striking the world in 2020, the initiative continued to support women in the trades. It was announced that the Richard McKeagan Scholarship for female apprentices would be offered for the 2nd year in a row. As the Platinum sponsor, WiMC helped make the Ontario Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Contractors Association Women Empowering Women in HVACR virtual event a success and the event's keynote speaker, featured Tania Johnston (MCAC's CEO), presented her session "Busting through the Glass Ceiling" (click link below to see presentation). Tania also spoke at a webinar hosted by the CIPH Women's Network & ending the year with a panel webinar session "Pathways to Success Series: Attracting and Keeping Talent".

Although 2021 was branded as "The New Norm", the committee continued to support women in the industry in some way, for the third year, the committee continued to award scholarships to women apprentices, with Jill Stagg a 2nd year Steamfitter / Welder receiving the scholarship. For the second consecutive year, WiMC sponsored ORAC's WEW in HVACR event, where Tania Johnston met like-minded women who are passionate about empowering women and as well the WiMC Committee hosted a joint panel session with CIPH called "Pathways to Success Series: Your Own Path to Success"



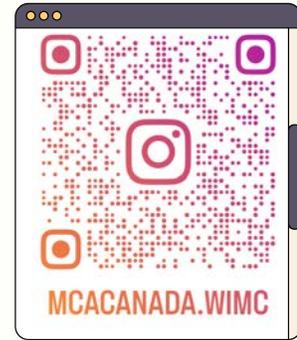
Jill Stagg, 2nd year Steamfitter / Welder

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqLP6HbP9a-x1refi_GRd1TfCt4lkuDeE



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2022 included an enhanced social media platform with additions such as Instagram account (more than 200 followers), 'The Voice' newsletter, and podcast. The newsletter and Podcast Episodes can all be found on the MCAC website. Check it out <https://mcac.ca/wimc-podcast-and-newsletters/>



In March, during Women in Construction Week, WiMC hosted the webinar "Coping Strategies" with speakers Jennie West-Correia, CPF, CEC, Senior Consultant, Stratford Managers & Breanna Pizzuto, Founder & Lead Trainer of Talk Tools. The on-line workshop was free of charge to attendees thanks to sponsors such as Aecon, Bradford White, and Black & McDonald, which attracted more than 100 participants to the webinar!

In October Arleen Kehler, Plumbing Apprentice, received the 2022 WiMC scholarship as well as scholarships from MCAC Associate Members and ServcoCanada. WiMC also sponsored ORAC's WEW event in Vaughan, Ontario for the third time. Our representatives at the event were Rachael Lolua (MCA Hamilton-Niagara), Tania Johnston & Jessica Shaver (MCA Canada). The program included a keynote address from Jamie McMillan (Ironworker and Boilermaker), and a panel discussion led by Brandi Ferenc featuring Shawna Peddle, Laura Grant & Jacqueline Chapple (all in HVACR industry).





MCA CANADA'S RICHARD MCKEAGAN SCHOLARSHIP SERIES 2022

MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC
HEATING AND COOLING |
UPONOR
SCHOLARSHIPS



MINA ARIANA
MASTER OF ENGINEERING IN
BUILDING SCIENCE

WATTS WATER TECHNOLOGIES
SCHOLARSHIP



BROOKE CARBINO
BUSINESS ACCOUNTING

UPONOR
SCHOLARSHIP



TANG GILBERT
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

MASCO / DELTA |
UPONOR
SCHOLARSHIPS



TATIANA HOWARD
CIVIL-ENVIRONMENTAL
ENGINEERING

MCAC ASSOCIATE MEMBERS |
WIMC | SERVOCANADA
SCHOLARSHIPS



ARLEEN KEHLER
PLUMBING APPRENTICE

TACO COMFORT SOLUTIONS
SCHOLARSHIP



TASNEEM KHAN
CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

UPONOR
SCHOLARSHIP



MEGHAN MCLAUGHLIN
COMMERCE CONCENTRATION
IN MANAGEMENT

EQUIPCO LTD.
MCA HAMILTON-NIAGARA |
RWC | UPONOR
SCHOLARSHIPS



EMMA POWELL
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING
& MANAGEMENT

RJ EVANS MEMORIAL
SCHOLARSHIP (OS&B)



JILL STAGG
STEAMFITTING AND
WELDING APPRENTICE



WOMEN INSPIRING THE INDUSTRY: **BRANDI FERENC ~ RED SEAL 313A REFRIGERATION** **MECHANIC/GAS FITTER 1 JOURNEYPERSON**

It is likely that some of you may have heard of Brandi Ferenc, Red Seal 313a Refrigeration mechanic/gas fitter 1 Journeyperson at Southlake Regional Health Centre and social media mogul with her catchphrase "Good Morning "Friends". If you don't follow her on [Instagram](#), click her picture and follow her. You won't be disappointed!

Through her influence, Brandi has encouraged women to make careers in the trades, break the bias and inspired women to achieve their goals. Representing 0.4% of her industry in Ontario, she is the first and only female journeyperson to join the facilities maintenance team. In addition, Brandi teaches part-time at Georgian College representing yet another 'first' as Georgian College's first female HVAC instructor.

Prior to this, she was the first female offered a 313a apprenticeship role at the London, On. branch of Johnson Controls and subsequently the first female mechanic at the London, Ontario branch. During her tenure at the company, she was the only female 313a mechanic at the company throughout Southwestern Ontario. She also works part-time for Support Ontario Youth as the first female journeyperson to join the team as a mentor for women in skilled trades and HVAC apprentices.



BRANDI R. FERENC





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IN MAY 2007, BRANDI WAS THE FIRST FEMALE EVER TO COMPETE AT THE SKILLS ONTARIO COMPETITION, PLACING 3RD OVERALL TAKING HOME A BRONZE MEDAL

In 2022, Brandi was recognized as an Alumna of Distinction at Conestoga College, the highest award bestowed on Conestoga College graduates. Prior to this, she was recognized at the inaugural International Women’s Night by the Toronto Raptors 905 in Mississauga.

A sought-out speaker, Brandi speaks to media outlets including radio, newspapers, magazines, and podcasts including but not limited to; Mechanical Business, The Hvac know it all podcast, TradeMasters podcast and Blue is the New White podcast, to share her journey and discuss the barriers women face trying to secure an apprenticeship in the skilled trades, and to bring visibility to the issues within her industry.

For the duration of her 17-year career, Brandi has shared her experience speaking at various women in skilled trades events to educate and inspire young people about the career paths available within skilled trades.

Her vision is to continue to break the bias for women in skilled trades, and to be the voice of advocacy for the inclusion of women and other minorities in this industry.



MENTORSHIP, LEADERSHIP & TRAINING: LEADHERTRADES MENTORING PROGRAM PROVIDES A NETWORK FOR WOMEN IN SKILLED TRADES WHO ARE INVESTED IN EACH OTHER'S CAREER SUCCESS.

The projection is that, in the province of Ontario alone, there is a need for 100,000 more skilled trades workers in construction over the next decade or sooner. That is the good news. The disappointing news is that women today represent only 5% of those skilled trades workers.



LeadHERtrades

Awareness is a key factor in attracting women into a career in skilled trades, which we know gives them unlimited opportunities for independence, an above-average income, extended health and welfare benefits, and a career to be proud of! Awareness is also key in knowing what supports are available to women once they enter the skilled trades path, to retain them and assist them in succeeding in a male-populated industry.

Enter LeadHERtrades, a division of LeadHERalliance, a mentoring program founded in 2021 by Cynthia O'Neill, a passionate supporter of mentoring, and someone dedicated to providing opportunities for women to succeed and empower themselves. O'Neill saw, in industries that are traditionally male-populated such as trucking and construction skilled trades, a gap in ways to address the retention of females, an underrepresented but extremely necessary growing population of workers in these fields. O'Neill reached out to Julie Zulich, co-owner of TESC construction and together, at the start of 2022, they launched LeadHERtrades.



**Cynthia O'Neill,
Founder**

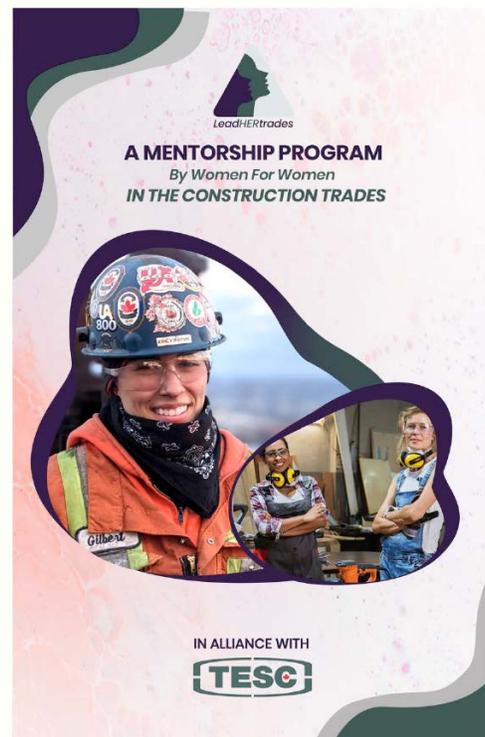


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This virtual, 5-month long formalized program, matches female apprentices with experienced women in the construction trades. The program covers professional and personal development and growth. The goal of LeadHERtrades is to increase the strength and confidence of the Mentee, giving her the tools to overcome challenges and ensuring she stays with this career. The operative word is retention!

Once the Mentee is matched with her personal Mentor, they attend monthly 1 hour Zoom presentations, hosted by women who are experts in topics such as leadership, taking care of your physical and mental health, financial independence, time management skills, and much more. Additionally, Mentors and Mentees attend bi-monthly sessions around industry-specific skills and learning, such as job site safety. The Mentee-Mentor matches then meet monthly, or however often they themselves decide, to discuss issues and challenges and anything they need to.

During the virtual essential skills sessions, the topics discussed center around the unique challenges that women bring to the skilled trades industry. Childcare and the challenge of working long and varied hours is a major concern to women. Maternity benefits and managing on the job while pregnant are unique to women in the trades. Personal safety is another concern, especially when you are one of the only women, if not the only woman, on a job site. The lack of appropriate bathroom facilities can't be overlooked, as well as having PPPE and work gear, such as gloves and safety boots, made to fit women's sizes and shapes too. Yes, sisters, the struggle is real!





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Conflict resolution and how to interact in a non-confrontational manner are important skills to needed amplify HER voice. With input from everyone in our sessions, the learning is from real-life experiences shared with women who have walked this path already. After the formal program concludes, participants become members of LeadHERnetwork, a lifelong sisterhood of women supporting women, all invested in each other's career success.

Through a grant from the Ontario Construction Secretariat, LeadHERtrades produced a video with Mentors and Mentees of the program sharing in their own voices some of the challenges they have faced in their careers. They also explain what they are the proudest of, for having chosen a career in the construction trades. The video can be found here: <https://youtu.be/TeT4bae2fis>

We encourage prospective Mentees to find success by belonging to a wide network of women in the construction trades. Let your personal Mentor offer her advice and experience to help you grow your career. Applications are being accepted currently. All program fees are covered by generous sponsoring partners.

Considering becoming a Mentor? Are you ready to help retain and support female apprentices by sharing your valuable experience with her? We are seeking volunteer Mentors ongoing, with the next team starting in Jan. 2023. We would welcome your participation. Website: <http://www.leadheralliance.com/leadhertrades>





WIMC RECEPTION 2022 ~ HALIFAX, NS

SPONSORED BY



ABOVE (L-R)

NADINE FULLERTON, RACHAEL LOLUA, DAWN ERMEN
CORMIER, JUDY-LYNN MASON, JANE GOWING, TANIA
JOHNSTON, JULIE ZULICH, JASON CAMPBELL



ABOVE (L-R)

BRENDAN NOBES, ANNIK FORRISTAL, DEREK ERMEN,
BETH JACOME, BRANDI FERENC

OUR 'VOICE' ON SOCIAL MEDIA



SOCIAL MEDIA STATISTICS (2022)



WIMC INITIATIVE SIGN UPS
TOTAL FOLLOWERS = 132

<https://mcac.ca/our-programs/women-in-mechanical-construction/>



LINKEDIN

TOTAL FOLLOWERS = 549

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/mcac-women-in-mechanical-construction>



FACEBOOK

TOTAL FOLLOWERS = 159

<https://www.facebook.com/WomenInMechanicalConstruction>



INSTAGRAM

TOTAL FOLLOWERS = 210

https://www.instagram.com/mcacan_ada.wimc/



WOMEN IN MECHANICAL CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE 2023



ServcoCanada



Black&McDonald



TESC



**Ermen
PLUMBING & HEATING**



**LOWE
MECHANICAL SERVICES**



AECON



**CANB Moncton
Northeast**



**MCAHN
MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION
NEW BRUNSWICK**



**MCA
Mechanical Contractors Association of Canada
BUILDING SMARTER TOGETHER**



**MCA
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BUILDING SMARTER TOGETHER**

**CHAIR
VICE CHAIR
PAST CHAIR**

**JUDY-LYNN MASON
JANE GOWING
JULIE ZULICH**

**SERVOCANADA GROUP OF COMPANIES
BLACK & MCDONALD
TESC MECHANICAL CONTRACTING**

**COMMITTEE MEMBER
COMMITTEE MEMBER**

**DAWN ERMEN-CORMIER
JENNIFER LOWE
JASON CAMPBELL
NADINE FULLARTON
RACHAEL LOLUA
TANIA JOHNSTON
VACANT
VACANT
VACANT**

**ERMEN PLUMBING & HEATING
LOWE MECHANICAL
AECON INDUSTRIAL
MCA NEW BRUNSWICK
MCA HAMILTON - NIAGARA
MCA CANADA
VACANT
VACANT
VACANT**

STAFF LIAISON

JESSICA SHAVER

MCA CANADA



Committee Members Needed!



WIMC MISSION

MCA Canada's Women in Mechanical Construction is a forum through which women who work in mechanical construction share experiences, seize opportunities and learn skills that will help them advance their careers. It provides networking, education, mentoring and professional-development programs specifically dedicated to helping women in mechanical construction build long and productive careers in the industry.

[Click HERE](#)
[to fill out our](#)
[application](#)
[today!](#)

CONTACT US!

Jessica Shaver, MCAC's Membership Engagement Coordinator

jessica@mcac.ca | 613.232.1056

Committee Application Link <https://forms.office.com/r/V9FNNPYsVe>