

Skilled trades program helps women break barriers



RICHARD LYALL
RESCON

Tiffany Morin has a unique perspective on her new career after recently graduating from the Women in Skilled Trades program.

Sure every home is a challenge but Morin sees them as puzzles.

"If that door isn't closing right, you have to fix the puzzle — you have to find the missing piece," said the 22-year-old from Baden, Ont., near Kitchener. "You see something that's not working, you re-evaluate what's wrong and try the first solution, then the next solution."

Morin recently graduated from the program at the Centre for Skills Development in Burlington which trains and educates women so they can join the construction trades.

"We're chipping away every year to change the gender makeup of the trades," says instructor Lawrence Farrell.

Among last year's class of 19 women in the 22-week program, Morin was considered one of her class's top problem-solv-



Tiffany Morin (middle, left) and Nico Varkevisser (middle, right) take a moment after being awarded with RESCON bursaries after graduating from the Women In Skilled Trades program.

ers. After graduating, she took those skills and her new education with her to a job in Kitchener.

Morin — who comes from a family deeply involved in the trades — says she is taking everything in stride.

"I loved every moment of WIST; some moments were more challenging than others but it was a great experience.

"I just take everything job by job. Everything is different every time. I really like it!"

Farrell was not surprised to learn Morin was hired the week after her graduation.

"Tiffany is a very capable worker, and is an excellent problem solver with an eye for detail," Farrell says. "She

excelled in theory and was admired for her ability to grasp concepts quickly and apply what she learned for hands-on use. She is a leader, and that will shine through as she develops in her career in the trades."

Because she excelled in leadership skills, academics and technical ability, Morin joined classmate Nico Varkevisser of Hamilton in being awarded with a \$500 bursary from the Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON). Morin describes Varkevisser, a former day-care worker, as a quiet leader.

"She was always so patient. All of the students got frustrated at different points but we all understood where people needed to take a second to catch their breath; no one was good at everything," Morin says. "Nico was definitely the most patient and understanding of all of us. She was always level-headed and if she ever got frustrated, it didn't show."

While she has plenty of patience, Varkevisser says she's focused on improving her professional qualities: "I have a whole skill set that I didn't have six months earlier, and I have the confidence that I can learn different skills if I didn't learn them before."

Varkevisser, 25, says that while it's intimidating to be a woman stepping into construction, it shouldn't be: "I think it needs to be more normalized so that women can be seen as being just as efficient as men in the construction world."

Meanwhile, the very enthusiastic Drusilla Morgan of Hamilton was awarded with a \$500 bursary from the Residential Framing Contractors Association. "Dru consistently approached all tasks in the WIST program with a lot of enthusiasm," Farrell says.

Congratulations to Tiffany, Nico and Drusilla, three future leaders of the construction industry. We wish them all the best in pursuing their dreams.

— Richard Lyall, president of RESCON, has represented the building industry in Ontario since 1991. Reach him at media@rescon.com or @RESCONprez.

onthemarket

Despite the growing demand for condos and smaller townhome units, many prospective purchasers still highly value and desire space and luxury. Demand remains high in all regions for single-detached homes on wide lots. Tribute Communities, Fieldgate Homes, Treasure Hill Homes and Granite Homes offer a variety of elevation models, with luxury finishes in locations across the GTA.

The most highly sought residence is the single-detached home ranging in size from 1,500 to 2,500 sq. ft. on a 30' to 40' lot. Purchasers are often willing to pay extra or travel further to obtain this type of home.

Examples of notable sites are Westney Place in Nottingham by Tribute Communities; Whitby Meadows by Fieldgate Homes; Georgina Heights in Keswick by Treasure Hill Homes; Cobblestones South in Brampton by Fieldgate Homes; and, Gallery in Guelph by Granite Homes.



Keswick

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Ajax

Westney Place in Nottingham
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Brampton

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Guelph

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