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Training & Workforce Options Program Gives a Boost to Area Women



SPRINGFIELD, MA – Regina Friemoth wanted to pursue her dream job, but needed help getting there.

Last fall, the Northampton resident found a helping hand. She signed up with a program offered by Training & Workforce Options, a partnership between Springfield Technical and Holyoke Community College.

On Jan. 9, Friemoth was one of 14 graduates who received their certificate from TWO, which facilitated a workplace readiness training program called “Foot in the Door,” provided by Dress for Success Western Massachusetts. Foot in the Door gave participants an opportunity to develop skills needed to succeed in the workforce.

Designed for unemployed or underemployed women, Foot in the Door is a nine-week program free to participants and funded by local companies. Women learned how to communicate effectively in the workplace. They explored careers, discovered how to prepare a strong resume and participated in mock interviews.

“It made me feel more confident and value myself more,” Friemoth said. “I have a lot to offer. I feel like I’ve blossomed into the person I want to be, and they helped me do that.”

Armed with a set of new skills, Friemoth said she hopes to find her dream job working in property management.

The women, part of the third Foot in the Door cohort to receive training from TWO, earned National Career Readiness Certificates and are ready to start interviewing.

Margaret Tantillo, executive director of Dress for Success Western Massachusetts, told graduates at the ceremony held at STCC that “the hardest part is about to begin, and that’s your job search.”



Foot in the Door graduates stand with representatives of Dress for Success Western Massachusetts after a graduation ceremony on January 9.



Foot in the Door graduate Regina Friemoth, second from right, holds her certificate. From left to right: Dawn Creighton, president of Dress for Success Western Massachusetts; Margaret Tantillo, executive director; Friemoth; and Jennifer Brown, vice president of business development with United Personnel.

She encouraged the women to stay in touch with Dress for Success for support as they pursue opportunities.

Kermit Dunkelberg, assistant vice president of adult basic education and workforce development at HCC, credited the Foot in the Door program with helping many area women advance in their careers.

“This is a known program, and it has some prestige in the community,”

Dunkelberg said. “So saying that you’ve been part of this program is going to be helpful. It’s going to help open the doors.

“There really are opportunities out there right now,” Dunkelberg added. “There are opportunities to get your foot in the door and keep moving up.”

For more information about Training & Workforce Options, please contact Sharon Grundel, direc-

tor of Healthcare Training Development for TWO. Call (413) 755-4396 or email sgrundel@hcc.edu.

For more information about Foot in the Door or Dress for Success Western Mass., please contact Executive Director Margaret Tantillo at (413) 732-8179.

About Training and Workforce Options (TWO)

Training and Workforce Options (TWO) is a formal workforce development collaborative of Springfield Technical and Holyoke Community College, designed to optimize employer access to high quality training and education at affordable rates. TWO offers customized employee training, organizational planning, workforce needs assessments and assistance with Workforce Training Fund applications.

Between the two colleges there are dozens of training disciplines offered that complement and strengthen one another. TWO is capable of designing and customizing any curriculum to meet employer needs, and will train on-site or at either of the colleges.