

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Jen Netherwood and I am an Education Volunteer for Portland Community College, a graduate of Oregon Tradeswomen Inc. pre-apprenticeship class, and I am a proud Journeyman carpenter with Local Union 1503. I am writing today to tell you about a pre-apprenticeship program proposal I have been working on at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility for the past year and a half.

From October 2012 to August 2013 I was the vocational instructor with Oregon Corrections Enterprises teaching a BOLI certified pre-apprenticeship program in the medium security wing of Coffee Creek. In that time 40 women successfully completed the program and I had established solid relationships with union apprenticeship coordinators from the carpenters, electricians, roofers, painters and laborers, as well as with BOLI, Oregon Tradeswomen Inc., and Representative Barbara Smith Warner.

The most amazing thing I saw happen in the short life of the program was the sense of pride that grew within so many of the women. They began to see that they could lift 3/4" plywood, handle a circular saw, roof a house, and install Sheetrock. They started to tell me about conversations they had with their kids, how impressed their kids were that their moms knew how to build a saw horse and use a table saw.

One woman told me that her mom sent her an article about how she was one of the first female low voltage electricians for Pac Bell. This inmate had not spoken to her mom in years and they connected through her participation in the pre-apprenticeship class. Now that inmate is a material handler for IBEW and completing the steps to becoming an apprentice.

Another woman told me her 17 year old son was so inspired by her that he decided to enter the carpenters' job core program. She was able to send him the toolbelt she earned at CC to get him started. She has worked with the courts while she's still at Coffee Creek to develop a payment plan to get her driver's license back when she paroles so she can pursue a career as an Ironworker.

In August of 2013, just 8 months after the program had started, Oregon Corrections Enterprises decided to cancel the program because it was not "profitable". They did so despite its impact on the women and clear potential for a path to family wage jobs.

I have been working with Portland Community College Corrections Education since Aug. of 2013 to build a brand new pre-apprenticeship program for Coffee Creek called C.R.E.W. (Construction Related Employment for Women). The new program would be a work based education program under PCC Corrections Education. I have built the framework for partnerships with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and the Oregon Food Bank so the hands on portion of the new pre-apprenticeship has direct ties to the community, a component that I know is critical in motivating people to make changes in their lives. For our partnership with Habitat for Humanity the women participating in the C.R.E.W program would build a line of furniture made from reclaimed

materials donated to us by Habitat for Humanity. C.R.E.W would donate completed furniture back to Habitat that they would then sell in their ReStore. Each piece furniture would include a story about the inmate who made the piece and information about the program.

C.R.E.W. has already been approved by the Oregon State Apprenticeship and Training Council and BOLI as a construction trades pre-apprenticeship program. Inmates who successfully complete the pre-apprenticeship would earn 1,000 hours of hands on and classroom related training.

I have been able to build my Tradeswoman career over the past 11 years because of my pre-apprenticeship training. I whole-heartedly believe that access to the skills and knowledge about how to become a Tradeswoman and earn a family living wage will be life changing for women who complete the program.

The Department of Corrections and PCC will negotiate the contract that will decide the fate of C.R.E.W this fiscal year. PCC submitted a proposal and budget to the DOC in spring of 2014. There has been significant verbal support for the C.R.E.W program but no funds have been allocated as of this date.

Heidi Stewart, currently the Assistant Director of Offender Management and Rehabilitation, was the former superintendent at Coffee Creek. Ms. Stewart was able to observe the previous pre-apprenticeship program at Coffee Creek and has been a supporter of C.R.E.W.

I worked with Representative Smith Warner's office last Spring and she sent a letter of support for C.R.E.W to Director Colette Peters at the DOC in August of 2014. Director Peters responded with enthusiasm for the program.

I continue to receive positive feed back and a willingness to work with the C.R.E.W program from Apprenticeship Coordinators for the building trades, re-entry programs, and community organizations. I know I can build a program that extends far beyond the walls of Coffee Creek and adds significant value to our communities.

For the incarcerated women at Coffee Creek a construction trades pre-apprenticeship program can set them on a path to a family wage career, increase their self-esteem, motivate them to become a positive contributor to society, give them a tangible connection to their family, and break the cycle of incarceration.

I sincerely appreciate your time and consideration. I hope you will support this project.

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