

Erin O'Brien-Hofmann

Tradeswomen Heroes Award

Winner - September 2021



Level of Experience: Journeyworker

Years in Trade: 13

Union: IUPAT

Local: 2011

Bio

Erin began her career as an apprentice in 2007. Her strong work ethic was recognized when named President of her apprenticeship class and Apprentice of the Year in 2011. Earning her Associates Degree with high honors from Mount West Community College in 2012, Erin's career continued with Schnoll Painting for 9 years, eventually running work as a Foreman. Erin is a union advocate and maintains strong union activism within Local 2011 as Delegate of DC21, President of the DC21 Young Lions, and Delegate to the AFL-CIO's Young People's Group. That activism landed her the post of Political Action Campaign Director for DC21's efforts on the Obama Campaign in 2012. In 2016 Erin's passion for helping women in the trades was noticed; she directed her attention toward future tradeswomen taking the post of Education Specialist for G.I.F.T. (Girls In the Finishing Trades), a new initiative of FTI-MAR. In 2017 Erin joined the staff of FTI-MAR as a full time Painting Instructor and continues to coordinate Local 2011's Community Outreach projects.

Erin devotes much of her time to community service. A member of NAWIC's Philadelphia Chapter Board of Directors (National Association of Women in Construction), Erin is heavily involved in their annual MAGIC Camp



(Mentoring a Girl in Construction). She was the Team Leader for the first Trades team of the ACE Mentoring Program of the Greater Philadelphia Area, which also was one of only three all girl teams in the 2019 – 2020 school year. Erin is active with CLUW (Coalition of Labor Union Women) and works closely with DC21 on their Blood Drive initiatives.

Erin's activism also extends to the International Union as she is a member of the IUPAT Women's Committee and Helping Hand Committee.

Why Erin Was Nominated

Throughout Erin's career she has not only worked to better herself, but she's been dedicated to helping others succeed. From the beginning as an apprentice, she was recognized for exemplifying everything a union stands for – skill, leadership, honor and integrity. It was not by chance that her employer noticed as well – she worked her entire career in the field for the same employer and rose through the ranks until becoming a Foreman. That is not an easy accomplishment for a woman, not even in today's world.

Erin didn't stop there. It was not just about opening doors for herself; she turned her focus to creating opportunities for others. She understood the challenges of being not only a woman in the trades, but a working mother in the trades. Erin's work with young girls took the form of mentorship which set a foundation and, more importantly, a support system for those entering the trade. Conversations with young adults about career paths, specifically with girls, is not just about what the job is like to do. Girls think about their futures. They want to know how they can progress in a career and how they can achieve financial security and provide for a family. Female tradeswomen face many challenges on and off the jobsite and they recognize that mentoring goes beyond the construction site.

Erin sees the overlap of challenges faced by those in the trades. Her work with the IUPAT Helping Hand initiative is very personal to her. It too embodies all the values of unionism, creating awareness of and helping those who need resources and assistance for depression, drug and alcohol issues. Erin has proven herself an invaluable peer advocate to members in need, whether it be a ride to a meeting or someone to lend an open ear.