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Turner Construction launches tradeswomen's luncheons

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Boston, MA Turner Construction Company launched its first series of Tradeswomen Luncheons to celebrate women in the construction industry. Four Turner Construction Co. jobsites hosted socially distanced luncheons for tradeswomen in 2021. These events took place at the WS Development's Seaport Block L4 Tower, MITIMCO's projects in Kendall Sq., and Wellesley College's Science Center renovation and expansion. Each luncheon event focused on understanding and promoting physical, psychological and emotional safety for tradeswomen within the industry.

"During the luncheon, it was apparent to me that we have come a long way in our industry but we still have a long way to go," said Maureen Kirkpatrick, Turner vice president and operations manager. "My biggest takeaway is that the women really want to have an inclusive environment where they are given opportunities to learn their trade and be treated fairly. The issues facing women in this industry are different than those of men, they have additional obstacles to overcome. It's important that we make sure there is an advocate and a safe place for women to go on-site, and that they know who or where that is at all times."

Tradeswomen were appreciative for the luncheon events, as it provided an opportunity to get to know each other and have a safe place to share experiences and concerns. The Turner team is encouraged by the discussions and is continuing efforts to take more intentional and actionable steps and offer specific training to the workforce to ensure a safe and equitable work environment.

The luncheons were hosted by Turner project managers Carrie Borges Patricio and Ali Callahan, and project safety manager Meghan Petruzzello.

"The event felt like an important first step in building a community of support amongst the women on our project, said Patricio. "The feedback since that lunch has been overwhelmingly positive from both men and women on the project. Some women have approached me separately about ideas for continuing to meet. They feel the spirit on the job between women has been positively changed as they feel supported by each other and by Turner."

"It was greatly appreciated by all, and I definitely think we should encourage projects to hold these lunches each year to celebrate and appreciate the tradeswomen, and other women on the project," said Callahan.

"Getting everyone together and creating an open dialogue allowed us all to feel like one team," said assistant superintendent Lily Clancy after attending the luncheon at a Turner/MITIMCO site. "I came

out of this lunch knowing that I could go to any of these women for support or help.”

“What I loved most about the Tradeswomen Luncheon at Wellesley College was the diversity of experience and trades in the room,” said Turner vice president and general manager Meaghan Hooper-Berdik. “There were senior crew leaders with 25+ years in the business, women who had made later career changes into the trades, and young apprentices, eager to grow in their trades. Carpenters, laborers, plumbers, pipefitters and electricians were all sharing their experiences and offering support to one another. The energy was very positive, and I’m certain this group will stay connected to help one another thrive in the construction industry.”

The importance of these events is echoed by all those who hosted and attended the event as Turner continues to strive for a safe and supportive community for staff and tradeswomen not only on our sites, but across the industry. As a result of the positive feedback, Turner looks forward to expanding on the series and planning other similar events in collaboration with their clients.

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