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Women in Construction: Skinner of Heat & Frost Insulators Local 6's apprenticeship program

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Colette Skinner and her father
Jack together on the job.

Boston, MA Colette Skinner grew up in Melrose, with a father and grandfather who were both insulators. So it wasn't that much of a stretch when she decided to enter the construction trade. As the first woman in her family to launch a career as a skilled insulator, Skinner's story captures the growing movement of women launching careers in the building trades. Drawn by family-sustaining wages, affordable healthcare, and a secure retirement, more women than ever before are entering the construction industry in Mass.

Skinner recommends a career in the construction trades to anyone who likes working with their hands, and says that women should not feel intimidated about pursuing a construction trade as a career.

"I would tell women I'd definitely consider the trades first before college. I'd highly recommend the trades for people as a career, because you can begin earning a paycheck on day 1, instead of being in debt," said Skinner. "Sometimes I am the only girl on a project, but I see more and more women out there."

Skinner is part of Heat & Frost Insulators Local 6's apprenticeship training program as a third-year apprentice. From day one, apprentices gain valuable, hands-on training inside the classroom and on a worksite, while also earning a living wage, fully paid healthcare and a retirement plan. Unlike traditional college education, apprentices do not accumulate thousands of dollars in educational debt.

Colette's father, Jack Skinner, said he's extremely proud of his daughter, and how well she's doing. "She's on her way. She's doing very well, it's really something to see her learning and coming along so well."

Women in Construction (WIC) Week celebrates the role of women in the construction industry. First recognized in 1998, it has grown in recognition yearly, with events held throughout the country, including presentations to high school classes, job site tours, luncheons, and virtual events.

This year's theme, 'Keys to the Future', celebrates the strength and knowledge of women and the vital role they play in shaping the future of the construction industry.

Insulators Local 6 represents specialists in mechanical insulation, firestopping, and hazardous waste remediation. Our members receive world-class training, DOL certification, and industry-leading wages and benefits. For more than 100 years, we've set the bar for certification and professional standards across the industry, delivering excellent results, on-time and on-budget. Through the Mechanical Insulation Solutions Network, our members and contractor partners help end users save money, reduce energy consumption, and avoid costly future mediations. Visit www.Insulators6.org.

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