

# ♀ Union Sisters United ♀

## 2009 NEW YORK CITY TRADESWOMEN'S CONFERENCE



Sister Carpenters building strength and solidarity at the New York City Tradeswomen's Conference.



Speaker Quinn addresses the Sisters in support.



Far left and above: Sisters participate in the Job Professionalism and Career Advancement Workshop, which was led by Sister Carpenters Tamara Rivera, Liz Sgroi, and Femi Agana.

### Unions Support Their Sisters

**O**N SATURDAY, MAY 9TH Union Sisters from all trades gathered on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor of 395 Hudson Street for the 2009 New York City Tradeswomen's Conference. Sisters attended workshops, panel discussions and networking events in an effort to build strength and solidarity among Sisters and unions. "When we give, we get," said Elly Spicer, a 24-year member of Local 608 and one of the founders of our District Council Women's Committee. The conference showcases the positive message that Sisters who get involved in their unions make strides in helping their unions and in supporting women in unions and in leadership roles within the trades.

Our Sister Carpenters were strongly represented at the conference, both as workshop leaders and as supporters. Workshops included, "Getting Organized Within Your Union," "Jobsite Professionalism and Career Advancement," "Current Events in Building Trades" and "Workplace Rights." By attending two of the offered sessions, Sisters were able to utilize the strong support system that exists for women in the workplace.

Stephanie Lawal, a 5-year member of Local 157 had a great experience



Elly Spicer leads the "Getting Organized Within Your Union Workshop".

at the conference. "I came into the Union through Nontraditional Employment for Woman (NEW), which has been helpful to me in all kinds of ways. That's how I found out about this conference, which I think is a wonderful idea. It's always good to hear what other sisters' experiences have been, so I think this is immensely helpful."

Kathleen Klohe, a member of Local 608, was also thrilled to be in attendance. "Coming to something like this is really empowering," Kathleen said. "It really gives a sense of networking and a sense of support from others in the trade. It's a tough trade. You have to have a certain

personality and a certain sense of physicality and mental toughness, but at the end of the day you turn around and say, 'Hey I put that building up!' The sense of accomplishment and pride in being able show my children and my grandchildren is awesome." Kathleen's enthusiasm for carpentry has been passed on to her three children; one son is an apprentice and the other is on the list waiting to be called. "My daughter is still in high school so she has yet to make these decisions," Kathleen said. "But I like to know that it's there for her for the asking should she decide to do this as well."

Building this community of Sisters paves the way for girls to follow their mothers into carpentry, just as sons have followed their fathers! It can be difficult to be a minority on the job site, but women can draw a sense of strength, pride and confidence from the knowledge that they have a network of support in their Sisters as well as abiding loyalty and appreciation from their Union Brothers.

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