

Young Women's Initiatives

Quarterly Report

December 2024 — February 2025



What are Skilled Trade and Tech Days?

Skilled Trade and Tech Days are a vital part of our efforts to introduce young women to the wide range of exciting careers available in skilled trades and technology. These events provide not only hands-on workshop experiences but also the chance to connect directly with professionals who are passionate about their work. They help students to understand, and get excited about, the pathways into these careers—whether through apprenticeships, college programs, or other training opportunities—empowering students to make informed choices about their futures. As the demand for these events grows, we're thrilled to see more industry partners stepping up to host and support them. With new businesses joining in, our Skilled Trade and Tech Day—Industry Events continue to grow, evolve, and inspire the next generation.

Parent/Guardian Information Event : Georgian College

Skills Ontario returned to Georgian College on December 7, for another incredible Skilled Trade and Tech Day! Parents and guardians joined their daughters for an inspiring event focused on skilled trade careers. The event featured an inspiring keynote from Electrician Stephanie McLean and a dynamic panel discussion with women thriving in the trades.

Participants also had the chance to roll up their sleeves and take part in hands-on workshops generously provided by Georgian College—always a highlight of the day!

With registration consistently at capacity, we're thrilled to be returning for a second time this school year on **May 31, 2025**. We can't wait to welcome another group of curious, motivated young women and their supporters!

Thank you to our host location and partner:





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Skilled Trade & Tech Days for Young Women

Ottawa • Brampton • Whitby • Convergent

The Young Women's Initiatives team wrapped up a quiet December by laying the groundwork for an exciting year ahead. We launched our spring event season with three successful Skilled Trade and Tech Days, hosted at Algonquin College, Durham College, and Sheridan College. Each event offered young women the chance to take part in three to four interactive, hands-on workshops, giving them a glimpse into the dynamic world of skilled trades and technology. At Algonquin and Sheridan, students also had the opportunity to hear directly from inspiring female apprentices and tradeswomen during expert panel discussions—an engaging highlight that brought real-world insight and encouragement. We are always grateful to be welcomed by our college hosts!

Young Women's Initiatives was excited to return to Convergent in Ottawa for another engaging industry Skilled Trade and Tech Day. Students took part in hands-on workshops focused on Access Control Systems, Intrusion Detection Systems, and Video Surveillance—gaining valuable insight into the cutting-edge technology that powers careers in security systems. Convergent, a global service-based systems integrator, partners with manufacturers and clients to design, install, and maintain integrated solutions in security, fire alarm, life safety, audio-visual, and building automation systems. This event offered students a unique opportunity to explore real-world applications and career possibilities in a growing and innovative industry.



Thank you to our Host Locations:

ALGONQUIN
COLLEGE

convergent[®]

DURHAM
COLLEGE
SUCCESS MATTERS

Sheridan

Cultivating Partnerships That Support Young Women in Skilled Trades

Much of the second quarter focused on building new connections and strengthening existing relationships with industry partners, supporters, and potential event hosts. Young Women's Initiatives relies heavily on the generosity of businesses and organizations that are eager to inspire the next generation and showcase the exciting possibilities available in skilled trades and technology careers. These partners play a crucial role in our annual events, including our flagship 'Try A Trade' Career Fair in Sault Ste. Marie and various celebration events throughout the year. Many organizations contribute in-kind support by bringing interactive, hands-on exhibits and providing exciting giveaways that leave a lasting impression on participants. These contributions—whether time, materials, or expertise—are essential to the success of our programs. What often begins as a simple exhibitor table can evolve into a long-term partnership, and in many cases, grow into ongoing collaboration or even financial support for Skills Ontario initiatives.

Young Women's Initiatives

Quarterly Report

March — May 2025



The third quarter of the school year is always a busy time across Skills Ontario, and the Young Women's Department was no exception. March kicked off with a week-long celebration of International Women's Day, followed by our 'Try-A-Trade' Career Fair in Sault Ste. Marie, and a French Industry Event in partnership with La Cité and T.P.H. Plumbing. April featured several Skilled Trade and Tech Days at college campuses and, for the first time, on-site at Barrick Hemlo Mine in Marathon, Ont. May began with the Young Women's Conference and will finish up strong with the Parent Guardian Event happening at Georgian College in Barrie.

Skilled Trade & Tech Days for Young Women

TPH Plumbing & Heating · Barrick Mine · Peterborough · Sault Ste. Marie



Plumbing Workshop,
TPH Plumbing & Heating

On Location Industry Event: TPH Plumbing & Heating

Skills Ontario, in partnership with both La Cité and TPH Plumbing & Heating, hosted a French Skilled Trade and Tech Day at T.P.H. Plumbing in Ottawa for girls in Grades 11 and 12. Participants explored careers in plumbing through hands-on activities and learned about the daily work of professionals in the field, guided by facilitators from La Cité and TPH.



Barrick Hemlo Mine
Marathon, Ontario

On Location Industry Event: Barrick Hemlo Mine

In partnership with Superior Greenstone District School Board, we hosted a Skilled Trade and Tech Day at Barrick Hemlo Gold Mine in Marathon, Ontario. Students explored the site through a Mill and Pit Tour, watched an exciting mine rescue demo, and got hands-on in a 'Wearable Tech' workshop led by Skills Ontario. The highlight was a panel discussion with mine professionals, where students asked questions over a pizza lunch provided by Barrick. It was a fantastic opportunity to learn how technology is transforming mining into a safer, more efficient industry—right in their own community.



Panel Discussion,
Fleming College

Skilled Trade & Tech Day: Fleming College

Skills Ontario partnered once again with Fleming College for an exciting day of hands-on workshops and learning about skilled trade and technology careers. Female apprentices who were currently completing their in-school learning at Fleming joined the participants over lunch for an impromptu panel discussion about their apprenticeship journeys.



Learning about brake pads at
the Try-A-Trade Career Fair

'Try A Trade' Career Fair

Skills Ontario returned to Sault Ste. Marie for our third career fair, proudly sponsored by Algoma Steel, Tenaris, and Sault College. The event featured keynote speaker Michelle Mulder, a roofer and business owner, and a dynamic panel of women in skilled trades and tech. Over 350 students attended, engaging with 19 local businesses, unions, and training facilities through hands-on, interactive exhibits.

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Quarterly Report

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Celebration Event: International Women's Day 2025

Young Women's Initiatives celebrated International Women's Day 2025 with a full week of inspiring events designed to empower young women and highlight the possibilities in skilled trades and technology careers.

We kicked off the week with engaging virtual programming open to classrooms across Ontario. Highlights included primary and secondary Skills Ontario presentations, the launch of the *Wearable Tech Challenge*, and *Design Horizons*—a dynamic workshop and design challenge led by educator and longtime Skills Ontario collaborator and his team.

We were thrilled to debut three new interviews in our ongoing *Sit Down Series*, featuring women in skilled trades. These, along with previous interviews, remain available on-demand. Virtual programming wrapped up with *Career Curious*, a live career exploration workshop for secondary students presented by Kings Trust Canada.

In-person events included two hands-on workshops at the Toronto District School Board's *Possibility Fair for Girls*, where students built cherry picker models while learning about skilled trades with UBC carpenter Rokhaya Gueye.

On Thursday, we welcomed 100 girls in grades 9–12 to the Linamar Manufacturing Centre in Guelph for an interactive day of learning, followed by an evening event for women in trades, students enrolled in experiential learning programs and their supporter. Both sessions featured a keynote speaker and exhibitor tables.

We wrapped up the week at Pearson Airport, where 20 senior students explored aviation-related skilled trades through panel talks and college exhibits—Skills Ontario's first major collaboration with the Greater Toronto Airport Authority (GTAA).

Thank you to our International Women's Day Sponsors:



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Event: Young Women's Conference 2025

On May 5 and 6, Skills Ontario hosted the 26th annual Young Women's Conferences, welcoming over 1,000 young women from across the province. Participants included 369 grade 7/8 girls for the elementary conference, 458 young women for the secondary, and 233 francophone students for the French conference.

Each conference featured an inspiring keynote: Dee Durant (309A Construction & Maintenance Electrical Apprentice) spoke to Elementary students on May 5; Brandi Ferenc (Red Seal 313A Refrigeration Mechanic and Gas Fitter 1) spoke to Secondary students on May 6; and Chloé Arsenault (Mining Engineering Technician), returning as a first-time keynote, for the Francophone Conference on May 6. All three also participated in the expanded *A Sit Down with...* virtual series, offering students a deeper look into their career paths.

For the third year, current Experiential Learning students from Sudbury Catholic DSB, Toronto DSB, and Halton DSB joined as panelists, sharing their perspectives and advice. Both the Secondary and French Panels featured four women in the trades, including a Skills Ontario competitor. ASL and Deaf interpretation was provided to ensure accessibility.

In partnership with the FNMI Department, the Young Women's Initiatives team hosted over 70 exhibitors, giving students the chance to explore hands-on activities and connect with professionals from diverse careers, education pathways, and communities.

A Special Thank you to our Young Women's Conference Sponsors:



An inspiring keynote from
Dee Durant



Keynote speaker Brandi Ferenc paid a visit to
Dirty Seahorse in the exhibitor area.



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We are proud of the growth and impact the Young Women's Initiatives maintained throughout the second and third quarter of the 2024/2025 school year. While we have faced some challenges—particularly around student transportation barriers—this appears to be a broader issue across Skills Ontario programming. We are optimistic that it will be addressed as we look ahead to the 2025/2026 school year.

As we add more in-person and virtual events across the province we are increasing student engagement particularly with young women. We remain committed to building on this positive momentum and ensuring these opportunities continue to be accessible, inclusive, and inspiring.

We would like to once again extend our heartfelt thanks to our Skills Ontario colleagues for their unwavering support and collaboration. Your dedication makes these initiatives possible, and we look forward to continuing this impactful and meaningful work together.

Andrea & Katie



UPCOMING EVENTS:

- May 31** *Parent/Guardian Information Event, co-hosted with Georgian College*
- June 3** *Girls In Aviation Day, London Airport*
- June 10** *Virtual Build: Excavator (French)*

NEW Sponsors Across the Province!

Algoma Region Partnership: Algoma Steel, Tenaris and Sault College

Algoma Workforce Investment Corporation (AWIC)

Greater Toronto Airport Authority



Hitting Targets one event at a time!

4625 young women reached

2773 Elementary Students (gr. 4-8)

1852 Secondary Students (gr. 9-12)

33 Events hosted across the province

4 NEW event partnerships:

EC Council

Kings Trust Canada

Greater Toronto Airport Authority

Barrick Hemlo Mine

We remain committed to growth, while working to identify and remove barriers that limit participation in our programs!



"It made my heart smile to see these initiatives happening here at Fleming. Skills Ontario is instrumental in making the skilled trades an accessible career route for women. Thanks so much for all of the amazing work you do!"

Teri-Anna Libby, 5th-term 309A Electrical Apprentice and Young Women's Initiatives Supporter