

TWO gives career boost to women

SPRINGFIELD — Regina Friemoth wanted to pursue her dream job, but needed help getting there.

Last fall, the Northampton resident found a helping hand. She signed up with a program offered by Training & Workforce Options, a partnership between Springfield Technical and Holyoke Community College.

On Jan. 9, Friemoth was one of 14 graduates who received their certificate from TWO, which facilitated a workplace readiness training program called "Foot in the Door," provided by Dress for Success Western Massachusetts. Foot in the Door gave participants an opportunity to develop skills needed to succeed in the workforce.

Designed for unemployed or underemployed women, Foot in the Door is a nine-week program free to participants and funded by local companies. Women learned how to communicate effectively in the workplace. They explored careers, discovered how to prepare a strong resume and participated in mock interviews.

"It made me feel more confident and value myself more," Friemoth said. "I have a lot to offer. I feel like I've blossomed into the person I want to be, and they helped me do that."

Armed with a set of new skills, Friemoth said she hopes to find her dream job working in property management.

The women, part of the third Foot in the Door cohort to receive training from TWO, earned National Career Readiness Certificates and are ready to start interviewing.

Margaret Tantillo, executive director of Dress for Success Western Massachusetts, told graduates at the ceremony held at STCC that "the hardest part is about to begin, and that's your job search."

She encouraged the women to stay in touch with Dress for Success for support as they pursue opportunities.

Kermit Dunkelberg, assistant vice president of adult basic education and



Submitted photos

Above, foot in the Door graduates stand with representatives of Dress for Success Western Massachusetts after a graduation ceremony on Jan. 9. Right, Foot in the Door graduate Regina Friemoth, second from right, holds her certificate. Also pictured, from left, are Dawn Creighton, president of Dress for Success Western Massachusetts; Margaret Tantillo, executive director; and Jennifer Brown, vice president of business development with United Personnel.



workforce development at HCC, credited the Foot in the Door program with helping many area women advance in their careers.

"This is a known program, and it has some prestige in the community," Dunkelberg said. "So saying that you've been part of this program is going to be helpful. It's going to help open the doors."

"There really are opportunities out there right now," Dunkelberg added. "There are opportunities to get your foot in the door and keep moving up."

For more information about

Training & Workforce Options, contact Sharon Grundel, director of Healthcare Training Development for TWO, at 413-755-4396 or sgrundel@hcc.edu.

For more information about Foot in the Door or Dress for Success Western Mass., call Executive Director Margaret Tantillo at 413-732-8179.