

## Kaiser Permanente awards \$3M to create jobs



By Joe Smith

PORTLAND, Ore. — March 11, 2010 — Kaiser Permanente is awarding \$3 million dollars in grants through out Oregon to organizations that create opportunities for better health and jobs. In Portland, one grant is being used to build careers in the construction trades, to break though the "glass ceiling."

"In the end I ended up choosing ironwork, which isn't the most common for women, but I'm definitely happy with it," said Kat Lakey, a member of the Iron Workers Union. Kat owes her success in part to the Oregon Tradeswomen.

The purpose of OTI is to encourage more women to enter the skilled trades in an industry director Connie Ashbrook calls "occupational segregation."

"The job training includes classroom learning, math and measuring skills, developing a trades resume, a career plan," said Ashbrook.

But, all this training cost time and money. This year OTI is getting a helping hand from Kaiser Permanente with a \$50,000 grant.

"We're willing to invest our money in supporting communities to be more healthy. Jobs are a critical factor, so is housing, so is education," said Dan Field, Director of External Affairs for Kaiser Permanente.

It means 148 women will be able to be trained this year. The seven-week courses are held several times a year.

Northwest Health Foundation is administering the grant for Kaiser Permanente. It's roll is to provide leadership beyond the construction site.

"So they can influence the public structures to ensure that more women get on construction sites," said David Rebanal, program officer with Northwest Health Foundation.

For Kat Lakey while her career path maybe the road less traveled, for her it's a healthy alternative.

"It's been nothing but support for me to learn the trade, to learn it right and be just as equal part as the next guy," said Lakey.