



Institute for Entrepreneurial Excellence
University of Pittsburgh
Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lawrenceville girls gain confidence through tools and art

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania- August 20, 2008 - An eight-year-old girl straps on her tool belt, adjusts her goggles and approaches the sanding block. Nearby, a 10-year-old girl navigates a power drill. The instructor looks on, assisting the girls when they need help with their screwdrivers, levels, pliers or power tools.

For the six girls participating in Pitt Small Business Development Center client Lindsay Woge's Give Girls Tools program, this is just another day of artful fun.

Woge, founder of Fresh Heirlooms on Butler Street in Lawrenceville, launched Give Girls Tools this summer to teach young women to use tools and hone practical art skills, with the greater goals of giving them more confidence in math, science and everyday living.

A group of six Lawrenceville girls, ranging in age from 8 to 11, meet at Fresh Heirlooms every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning throughout August to practice making art with power tools. Woge herself uses these skills to transform reclaimed materials into one-of-a-kind home furnishings, office furniture, handmade green gifts, and eco-friendly home décor.

"A lot of these skills are basic homeowner skills," Woge explained. "If these girls grow up to be able to repair their own faucets, that will be a benefit."

The idea for Give Girls Tools has been a long time coming. While working at the Chicago Children's Museum, Woge, who has a background in arts, found herself teaching simple machines and developing scientific curricula. Through this experience, she came to appreciate the "melding of science and art."

"I wanted to empower girls to do the things guys are traditionally trained to do," said Woge, an artist who admitted that she has sometimes found math and science to be a bit more intimidating than other subjects.

"The girls are not intimidated at all" by the tools, Woge added.

Woge has also organized visits with the girls to other women-owned businesses on Butler Street.

"I want to show them not only what women can do, but what other women are doing right down the street," she said.

Woge is working with the University of Pittsburgh Small Business Development Center to continue building her business in ways that empower and strengthen the members of her Lawrenceville community.

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The Institute for Entrepreneurial Excellence (IEE) at the University of Pittsburgh's Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business helps businesses grow and prosper in all stages of their lifecycle. From conceiving an idea to creating a legacy for future generations, the IEE provides education, advice, and services to entrepreneurs through PantherlabWorks, Agricultural Entrepreneurship Program, Small Business Development Center, Entrepreneurial Fellows Center, and Family Enterprise Center.

Our mission is to be the innovative leader of economic renewal and growth serving enterprising people and businesses in the Region.

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