

EC network undertakes projects of special interest to women



Members of WIST collect clothing, food and personal items at Downsview to be donated to local women's shelters.

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A Science and Technology Branch employee hard at work in a laboratory at EC's River Road location in Ottawa, Ontario.

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Environment Canada's (EC) Women in Science and Technology Committee (WIST) is a departmental network that undertakes projects of special interest to women with the hopes of inspiring them to pursue careers in science and technology.

"The committee's mandate is to reach out to women within the Department, locally and internationally. Everyone at EC is welcome to participate," says Diane Johnston, Chair of WIST.

WIST activities include specialized training programs, participation in International Women's Week activities and information sharing—particularly in the area of weather sciences and climate change.

Published four times a year, ECHO is constantly looking for topics and themes to cover. Send your suggestions, comments and photos to ECHO@ec.gc.ca. For more information, check us out online at <http://intranet.ec.gc.ca/echo/>.

Dialogue and discussion

Committee meetings provide members with an open forum to discuss issues related to women in the workplace. The network also hosts several guest speakers throughout the year.

"This spring, Dr. Pierrette Blanchard and Heather Auld spoke about their career experiences with EC to an audience of over 50 employees from across the country. The event was a great success," explains Diane.

International Women's Week

For the past six years, WIST has held a national donation drive during International Women's Week. Laundry baskets and storage bins are placed at key locations in select EC office buildings to solicit donations of clothing, food and personal items, which are then donated to local women's shelters.

"The generosity of my colleagues always astounds me. From those who take the time to organize the basket drives to those who purchased and donated items; their contributions make a difference in someone's life," says Diane.

Citation of excellence

Presented each year by the Deputy Minister, the Nancy Cutler Citation of Excellence departmental award honours a woman who has distinguished herself in research, technology, hydrology or meteorology. WIST is proud to support the award by providing nominations annually.

International file

Earlier this year, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) met in Geneva on the subject of gender equality. Ann McMillan, a former senior EC science policy advisor, participated in the conference and shared her experience with WIST members upon her return. The meeting produced such a flood of ideas that the committee presented the WMO with a document of suggestions to help promote the study of meteorological sciences among women.

To find out how you can join the WIST Committee, please contact Diane Johnston, Chair of WIST.