WCFM Social Event Recap: The Attic Ale House
August 28, 2019

The Attic Ale House in central Phoenix was the site of the latest Women of CFMA Happy Hour held August 28th. While it was still too hot to sit out on their patio and enjoy the mountain views, the view inside of these lovely and witty VoS ladies more than made up for it! Much laughter, sharing of travel adventures and comradery made the afternoon fly by much too quickly! We look forward to seeing you at the next event!

Lynne Pace
CFMA VoS Past President

Approximately $1,200.00 Raised!
Thank You to All Who Contributed to the UMOM Back to School Drive!!
Christine Kettlekamp and Diana Bujnovsky went shopping on a Saturday and picked up school supplies for UMOM with the $1200 that was raised.

They purchased and filled 20 backpacks with paper, pencils, colored pencils, pens, scissors, highlighters, erasers, note cards, rulers, notebooks, folders and water bottles.

Some of the backpacks even came with lunch bags as well. Using approximately $730 of the donations, they used the remaining funds to purchase items on UMOM's regular needs list like shampoo, conditioner, toothbrushes, toothpaste, diapers, wipes, etc.

Christine and Diana had a lot of fun putting it all together and all involved are delightfully overwhelmed by the generosity of the CFMA members.

Thank you CFMA VoS members and friends!
Program Recap: August's Workforce Talent Panel
August 15, 2019

This August luncheon program was an engaging conversation about the construction industry’s workforce talent issue.

Elise Thorpe, VP and Benefits Consultant with Lovitt & Touché, a Marsh and McLennan Agency, facilitated the discussion with our panelists: Mary Kelly, President and CEO, StataTech Education Group, Dr. Jackie Elliot, President, Central Arizona College, and Kimberly Kahl, Director of Workforce Development & Apprenticeship for Arizona Builders Alliance.

With the unemployment rate at the lowest in 50 years, all industries are having difficulties finding talent, but it seems to have hit the construction industry hardest for a number of reasons. It was estimated by National Association of Home Builders that there were 300,000 unfilled construction positions. This is exacerbated due to the economic boom and a projected $1.3T in construction spend for 2019, resulting in the need to hire an additional 400,000-500,000 over the next year or two.

Other factors have also contributed such as the younger generations being more interested in the technology sector, society encouraging young students to pursue a four year college degree rather than a vocational career, employers not investing in
employee training programs, and baby boomers not retiring thus not opening doors for leadership positions to the younger generations.

From the discussion, a number of key factors were identified, a few of which are:

- The need to change the way society views the construction industry and educate parents and children on the advantages and value of choosing a skilled profession vs. a four-year college degree. As young children, we all (boys and girls) start out loving construction toys like dump trucks, cranes, hammers and nails. Somewhere along the way, our these interests are pushed away and children's’ interest are redirected towards other things, leaving the industry short.

- To help change the negative stigma around pursuing a career in construction, we need to change the branding from terms like "Construction Job" to "Crafts Professional" which will improve the perception and prestige.

- It's critical for employers to partner with the various schools and apprenticeship programs to increase the funding and scholarships for these programs. In addition, by having actual employees of the construction organizations teach vs. the traditional faculty staff, this will provide the "real-life" training and experience of what it's truly like on the job.

- There are other demographics to focus on beyond the young, which include women, veterans and those with disabilities of various sorts. Special partnerships, scholarships and education on the craft professional's career path and wages can help to attract these populations. Oftentimes, these become your best employees!

- In today's competitive environment it's important to be an employer of choice. This includes everything from higher wages, bonuses and retirement contributions, to creating a culture of health and safety. Dan Puente, President and Owner of DP Electric stated "As employers in the construction industry, we have to change the employee experience to attract new talent, and that's on all of us in this room."
The discussion with the panelists and audience was lively. Some great points were brought to light. It's all about working together - partnering with the employers, trade schools and colleges, apprenticeship programs, K-12 schools and our community to help change the stigma and educate our children on the great profession and career path that is possible within the construction industry!