

Women's Stories: Machining



Real Skills for Real Jobs Illinois Manufacturing Foundation

“Dimitra’s” Story

I was returning to Chicago as a 24-year-old woman and was considering re-enrolling in a community college and eventually completing a hospitality program that I had started years before. But I finally listened to myself and realized that my true desire was to learn a skill. The big question was, what skill and industry. I wanted to make something that I could see and feel so I looked into manufacturing programs at community colleges and was ready to enroll in one when I spontaneously saw a flyer for IMF.

I went to the IMF orientation, took an exam and a tour. While initially it seemed less inviting, I chose it because the director helped me to see the potential for getting greater individual instruction. Operating an automatic screw machine was all new to me and initially quite jarring. I knew nothing about tools, machine tools and computer programming language. The instructors made

the work intriguing, challenging and rewarding all at once. They met me where I was and encouraged me at every step. The tipping point for me was when I finished the basic course and shifted to operating machines to make piece parts. I started with a blueprint, made fine adjustments to the machine along the way to creating the perfect part and found it extremely satisfying.

I took my piece parts to an interview with a global manufacturing company located downstate and so impressed them with my work and training that I was offered a position on the spot, making tips for fuel injectors. At the three-month mark I was offered a full-time position with full benefits. I've even decided to study for the Quality Inspector exam as a way to broaden my knowledge base and expand my career possibilities. ###