



On The Rise: Women In Film Increases Membership And Expands Offerings

By Amy Wilschke
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Great things have been happening for Women in Film (WIF) Chicago this year – and for WIF in general. Membership numbers are up, according to WIF/Chicago president Jeanette Beauregard, and this is thanks in part to a group of men who have realized the importance of the organization and joined the ranks. Good job, guys!

“I’d like to think that it’s because more people are finding out about Women in Film and the word is getting around about the programming we do and the education we have for our members,” she says. “I’m also hoping that it’s showing that there’s more support for women in the industry...it’s showing the support for women.”

The mission statement for WIF reads as such: “Women in Film/Chicago is a not-for-profit organization aimed at providing an educational networking community promoting women in all levels in the media creation industry through internship programs, networking events, career development opportunities and community resources.”

With a total of 37 chapters worldwide – 18 in the U.S. – WIF is an international collective of about 10,000 members dedicated to promoting and serving women in the film industry. “I’d like to think that our programs for women are educating our members, giving people the opportunity to work from a place of knowledge, and giving them a chance to network and get to know other people in the industry so the opportunities for working can be there,” says Beauregard.

For the past three years, WIF has been teaming with General Motors to offer three unique grants for emerging filmmakers sponsored by GM. One is a film finishing fund, the second is an acceleration grant for filmmakers and the third is a grant for the benefit of new Latina filmmakers. There is a website specifically for the WIF/GM grant – www.women-in-film.com. Beauregard says it was Judith James and Erin Condon out of the Los Angeles office who orchestrated the GM alliance.

A tool that GM has helped provide for WIF is a magazine called “Traction,” which Beauregard says is full of great articles and information on various topics in the industry. “It’s nice because when people visit it and join it...GM sees how active our members are and how many people are actually interested in this information,” she says. “The more people that they see interested in Women in Film – it’s always a good thing.”

One thing that Beauregard says she would like to see happen with WIF/Chicago that other chapters are already a part of is acting as a resource for bringing more production into the city and state. She says the Toronto chapter is already doing this and she would like to see Chicago do it as well.

“I’d like WIF/Chicago to be something similar to that because...[as] a worldwide organization, we have an unbelievable network of contacts,” Beauregard says. “One of the things in ‘Traction’ magazine is [a resource of] areas that promote, say, how to shoot in China and the tax benefits of shooting in Ireland. I want to get some [information] up there about shooting in Chicago and I hope that WIF can bring more exposure [and more] opportunities here in Chicago [for] the talent.

“We have an unbelievable amount of talent in Chicago,” she adds, “from actors to post-production houses and just about everything. I’d like people throughout the world to actually know about that and we can serve as a conduit for that.