

WIIT Charitable Trust
Annual Report
2007-2008

Now in its sixth year, the WIIT Charitable Trust has expanded its educational efforts at all levels and its partnerships with similarly oriented organizations, corporations and educational institutions. Under the direction of Michaela Platzter, the Trade Education Program increased publicity and reached out to educators. An announcement about the program appeared in the May/June 2007 edition of The Social Studies Professional newsletter, in the National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC) Trade Matters Alert, and in the American Montessori Society newsletter. Trade Education CDs were also distributed for potential use to the US Chamber of Commerce. The Trust re-applied for a grant from the Cafritz Foundation in May 2007, including a new emphasis on educating children in lower income school districts and reaching out to independent and charter schools. Although the Trust did not obtain the Cafritz grant, they received important guidance for future efforts. The Cafritz Foundation encouraged the Trust to seek corporate funding, to update and expand lesson plans, and to create a teacher advisory board to help connect further with the education community. The Trust is considering a possible partnership with the George Washington University School of Education and also wants to work to involve more WIIT members in activities.

In the fall of 2007, Lilia Navarrete, President and CEO of the Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT), expressed interest in coordinating with the Trust. She and Ms. Platzter discussed plans to put a link to the Trust on the OWIT website and a possible collaboration between the Room to Grow volunteer organization, OWIT & the Trust to make scholarships available to students from developing countries.

In January 2008, the WIIT Charitable Trust organized the first of several corporately sponsored programs to educate Capitol Hill staff about trade concepts. The Consumer Electronics Association-sponsored program, called "Understanding International Trade Concepts Regarding Trade Agreements," featured speakers I.M. "Mac" Destler, Professor of Economics at University of Maryland; Susan Aaronson, Professor of Economics at George Washington University; and William Cooper, Specialist in International Trade and Finance, Congressional Research Service. In March, a program entitled "Trade and Agriculture: Understanding the Basics" was held and sponsored by the Grocery Manufacturers Association and the National Pork Producers Council. The event featured speakers Remy Jurenas, Congressional Research Service; Paul Drazek, Former Special Assistant to the Secretary of Agriculture for International Affairs; and Jason Hafemeister, Former Deputy Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Agriculture. SunTrust Bank sponsored an event in April, titled "Financing Trade 101: The Nuts and Bolts" and featured speakers John Emens, Vice President, Trade, Finance & Insurance, Export-Import Bank of the U.S., Jean Fitzgibbons, Director, Short Term Trade Finance, Export-Import Bank of the U.S., and Scott Forster, Senior Vice President, Small Business, SunTrust Bank. The events were well attended in excess of 50 people at each one.

The WIIT Trust coordinated with Liesl Riddle at the George Washington University Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) to host a career opportunities

program called “Go Global To Get Ahead: Hear Practical Advice From Experts Who’ve Done It” on March 27th, 2008. The panel featured Stacie Berdan, the author of “Getting Ahead by Going Abroad: A Woman’s Guide to Fast-Track Career Success,” and two WIIT members as panelists. Several other WIIT members attended.

The WIIT Charitable Trust also has exciting plans for this summer with three upcoming educational programs. In June the Trust is partnering with the Port of Virginia in the Norfolk/Newport News/Portsmouth region to host a program on trade logistics and mechanics. There will also be a program in July on trade remedies and later in the summer on Africa. There are also plans to partner with the Washington International Trade Association (WITA) to host a debate between the trade advisors for the presidential candidates after the party conventions.

Submitted by:

Nicole Bivens Collinson