

Papitto Opportunity Connection

March 2024

Women Who Are Making A Difference

As we close out Women's History Month, a time to recognize the achievements and contributions made by many incredible women, we highlight [The Empowerment Factory](#) and [RI Women in the Trades](#). These women led POC funded non-profits are making a difference in Rhode Island.

The Empowerment Factory, Gail Ahlers, Executive Director

Dedicated to providing children with the skills they need to lead happier, healthier, more empowered lives, The Empowerment Factory is celebrating 10 years of service to the community.

The Empowerment Factory was founded by Gail Ahlers in 2014 when she saw a need in her community for high quality after-school programs that developed children's self-esteem, creativity, and civic-pride.

As the owner of a certified woman-owned business, Ahlers received invaluable mentorship from other professional women who gave her the support to bring her ideas to life. The Empowerment Factory has been continually led by a predominately female team with a proven track record of success.

Photo collage below: children with their parents show pride in their creativity.



"Always evolving and adapting to the changing needs of community members, the growth and success of The Empowerment Factory can be attributed to the hard work and leadership of women. This was particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, when (we) were able to pivot our programs to address the immediate needs of the community to provide safe and enriching programs for families. This ability to respond swiftly and effectively has been a testament to (our) success," said Ahlers.

Photo right: Gail with Andrew.



The Empowerment Factory continues to grow and expand its programming. Over the last decade, the organization has empowered more than 7,000 youth in underserved communities with the opportunity to explore their creativity, cultivate a love of literacy, and build their self-esteem and civic pride. The dedication of its many women volunteers and staff have been central to its impact.

RI Women in the Trades, Anita Bruno, Executive Director

Led by Anita Bruno, [RI Women in the Trades](#) was established in 2019 as a support organization for RI tradeswomen to encourage sisterhood, leadership, advocacy, and mentorship.

Its mission is to educate, organize and expand opportunities for RI's current and future tradeswomen and to become one voice advocating for fair and equal access to information, training, and opportunity for employment in the construction industry.

RI Women in the Trades began with an 8-week pre-apprenticeship program promoting sisterhood, offering guidance, and introducing women to the different trades along with providing practical trade skills. With the support from POC, more than 20 women participated and were able to improve their lives.



Photos above and logo image: RI Women in the Trades

The organization continues to expand its offerings and recently launched a hands-on workshop for girls ages 9-14. Bruno hopes the organization will continue to attract more girls and women towards a career they may not have thought of in the past.

"We hope to engage with girls, teens and women to introduce them to an industry most girls/women never have a chance to explore," said Bruno. "We hope that because the information is presented by girls and women already (in) the industry, it will have a lasting impression thereby increasing the number of women in the workforce. We also hope that we can continue to work collaboratively with public, private and community stakeholders to create healthy 'safe-from-hate' work environments."



Spread The Word: The Transform RI Scholarship Deadline is April 7!!!

We want every single high school student in Rhode Island to apply to the [Transform Rhode Island Scholarship](#) (TRIS).

So, for the last several weeks, community leader and educator Chachi Carvalho and former TRIS winners and finalists including Siya Singhal, Daisha Jackson, Zach Pinto, Izzy Mitchell and Adryonna Lockhart have been hosting TRIS workshops across the state at public, private, charter schools and non-profit organizations, to get the word out about this amazing opportunity.



Pictured above: Adryonna Lockhart (left) and Chachi Carvalho (right).

TRIS is a unique opportunity for RI's high school students to use their voice and share their ideas to create real change in their community. Papitto Opportunity Connection will invest **\$1 million** to make the winning idea become a reality and **TEN** TRIS finalists will be awarded scholarships worth between **\$5,000-\$25,000**.

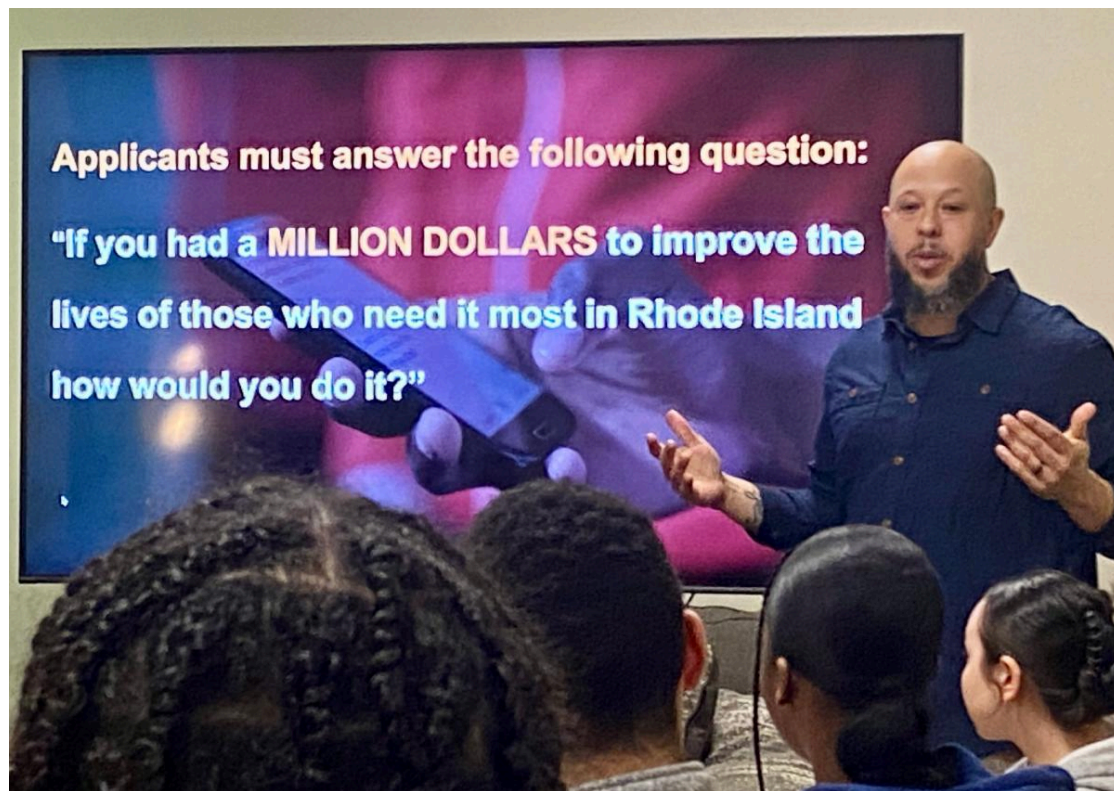


Pictured above: Siya Singhal (left), Chachi Carvalho (center with hoody), and Izzy Mitchell (right)

As an added incentive, the school with the most TRIS entries will receive \$5,000. \$2,500 will be designated for the students to be used for the Prom and \$2,500 will be awarded to the faculty. RI high school students must simply answer one question:

If you had a million dollars to improve the lives of those who need it most in Rhode Island, how would you do it?

TRIS is open to **ALL** high school students in RI. Students can submit an essay, video, or multimedia presentation.



Pictured above: Chachi Carvalho

Applications are now being accepted until APRIL 7, 2024 at 11:59.
To apply, visit: [here](#).

Follow @TransformRI on IG and spread the word about this amazing opportunity for all RI high school students.

Rhode Island's Day Of Giving Is Coming Up!

Mark your calendar! [401Gives](#), Rhode Island's statewide day of giving, is **April 1, 2024** – only a few days away. Powered by [United Way of Rhode Island](#) and presenting sponsor Papitto Opportunity Connection, 401 Gives is a 24-hour fundraising campaign designed to bring people together to make a difference for local nonprofits that deliver vital services to our communities throughout the state.

401Gives unites and offers everyone a safe, comfortable, and familiar virtual fundraising experience all while giving nonprofits unrestricted funds that strengthen Rhode Island.



Bridging The Gap With Industrial Arts

[The Steel Yard](#), the only community-accessible industrial arts organization in Rhode Island, is bridging the gap between traditional and arts-centered workforce development.

Located in the heart of Providence, The Steel Yard's historic complex features a wide-open space as a home for artists, aspiring artists, and makers to practice and learn the industrial arts. The nonprofit organization fosters creative and economic opportunities by providing workspace, tools, training, education, and a strong sense of community.



Steel Yard images provided by The Steel Yard

The Steel Yard's unique Workforce Program is working to break barriers by addressing the education and training needs of those living in Rhode Island's communities with the most need. This program provides the technical skills necessary to make participants more employable in livable-wage jobs in manufacturing and the industrial arts. Participants are paid for their on-the-job education and are taught to value their creativity and voice along with their labor contributions.



Additionally, The Steel Yard also offers several summer youth programs for teens. Open to all teens, 14-18, The [Steel Yard's Summer Youth Camps](#) are led by professional artists and offer educational workshops and studio time in a real working industrial shop.



The skills acquired extend far beyond the workshops. These students gain life skills.

“I gained a new love of metalworking, but also feel like I gained conceptual skills that can be applied to other aspects of life. Teaching patience and tenacity, and that even when you don’t get it right on the first try you just have to keep going,” said a teen who was a recent camp participant.



For those looking for an opportunity to unleash their creative talents and gain an unforgettable experience this summer, The Steel Yard is offering several hands-on camps to choose from.

- **Metalhead:** Students are introduced to the basics of metalworking, starting with small scale metals and jewelry fabrication, before moving onto larger welding and blacksmithing projects.
- **Mudhead:** Campers are shown the process of designing and making their own pottery. Students explore both hand-building and wheel-throwing processes in a 1-week program.
- **Sparkle:** This LGBTQIA+ focused camp provides training in jewelry and welding and provides a safe, identity-affirming space for young folks to express themselves, while focusing on the development of skills in both small- and large-scale metals fabrication. Space is limited for camp participation.

Click [here](#) for more info or to register.

[WEBSITE](#)

[MISSION](#)

[SIGN UP](#)

[CONTACT](#)

Papitto Opportunity Connection

100 Westminster Street Suite 105 | Providence, RI
02903 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Our Privacy Policy](#) |
[Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

