

From the Director's Desk

This month we celebrate Women's History Month and in a special way, International Women's Day (March 8). We used the opportunity at TechPort UAS Business Incubator and Community Innovation Hub, to celebrate women by hosting a virtual event, Women In Innovation: Breaking the Glass Ceiling. It featured some amazing, powerhouse women in Science, Technology Engineering, the Arts and Math (STEAM) fields. See our related article in this month's newsletter for details about this fantastic session.

I think what especially strikes me as women continue to make up more and more of our workforce yet, continue to struggle with inequality in pay and leadership positions is where men need to be in all of this. You've heard of the global solidarity movement for gender equality: HeForShe. Men need to get onboard now and start learning how to work with women, talk with women, support women and be advocates for women.

I think over the next 20 years, there will be a major shift and women will finally attain more leadership positions in the workplace. During her keynote address, Dr. Laurie Locascio, vice president for research, division of research, University of Maryland, mentioned that only 17 percent of patents are issued to women. One reason, she explained, is that less women apply for patents. But as we see more women-owned businesses and women innovators emerge, surely we'll see those numbers rise, as well.

It's interesting that statistics show greater numbers of women are owners and founders in small and local businesses more than any other type of business. So when you hear support for shopping local businesses, the message is actually support female-founded businesses.

There were several men who participated in our event, but I'm hopeful next time there will be even more. If men want to keep pace with what is coming, we need to continue to engage with our female counterparts in the workplace. They are the best students, the most proactive and the most capable employees. For years there has been a great emphasis on encouraging women to pursue STEAM fields and now they are crushing it! There's still work to do, but not only do we need to start recognizing their value and worth, we need to celebrate it – and not only in March.

Stay healthy and safe, Tommy

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