

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Hiram Walker & Sons and Build a Dream diversifying the workforce together
Windsor bottling facility makes history hiring first-ever Red Seal Tradeswoman**

(October 14, 2021 -- Ontario) Sometimes it takes an introduction and a bit of encouragement to bring two parties together. That is just what happened when Build a Dream president, Nour Hachem-Fawaz encouraged Rebecca Chenier, a Red Seal Machinist, to apply to Hiram Walker & Sons. The company was searching for a Bottling Mechanic for their Bottling Division and Chenier had the right qualifications – as a Red Seal Machinist. Angelo DeMarco, Senior Director, Human Resources North American Operations, was eager to include Chenier in the interviews and after a rigorous application process, Chenier was hired for the job.

Hachem-Fawaz met Chenier six years ago when Chenier applied for the Industrial Mechanic Millwright pre-apprenticeship program at Women's Enterprise Skills Training of Windsor (WEST). "I interviewed Rebecca for the position as a pre-apprentice and she volunteered at Build a Dream's early Career Discovery Expos. I knew she had a passion for the trades and more importantly I knew she had the skills and talent to do a fabulous job for Hiram Walker."

From Hiram Walker's perspective, they have a strong commitment to diversify their workforce as evidenced by their leadership in other areas of the company, specifically in the distillery division. "Five of the six leadership roles in this division are held by women," says DeMarco. "This is the first in our company's history to have a majority of women in senior roles in our distillery division and I am excited to employ that same strategy in a skilled trades division that has historically been male-dominated. Rebecca has already become a valued member of the team in her new role."

As a single mother of three, Chenier graduated from the WEST program and immediately found an employer to sponsor her General Machinist apprenticeship. Four years later, she earned her Red Seal.

"I was attracted to Hiram Walker because it is such a big part of our city's history," says Chenier. "This position provides me with the chance to not only be a general machinist but to learn and expand my skills." As a Bottling Mechanic, Chenier is responsible for preventative maintenance, equipment repair and overall bottling efficiencies within the plant. While there are several women on the floor as technicians, Chenier is the first woman in the maintenance department, and she knows she won't be the last. "The team here is wonderful. They are welcoming and happy to share their knowledge of the processes and systems specific to this industry," says Chenier.

DeMarco says that Hiram Walker knows the benefits of a diverse workforce as it creates a balance to decision making, brings a unique set of skills and opinions to the table, and fosters innovation.

Finding qualified women for any skilled trades position can be a challenge. According to Brendan Sweeney, Managing Director of the Trillium Network for Advanced Manufacturing, only 3.8% of General Machinists in Canada are women with Ontario coming in at 4%, and Windsor falling below the Ontario average at **2.7%**.

Through Build a Dream's Workforce Initiative Network (WIN) and partnership with Hiram Walker the organization is working directly with industry to help attract, recruit, retain and advance women. "WIN was

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developed by our organization specifically to support industry as they look for strategies to diversify their workforce,” says Hachem-Fawaz. “We are launching a new series of diversity and inclusion events called **Stir It Up** which are designed to help human resource professionals explore best practices in this space. We anticipate a lot of interest in this quarterly event series”.

To reach a more diverse and inclusive workforce, stakeholders must work together to ensure women have access to training, jobs and a network of professionals that promote a safe and supportive environment within the skilled trades. From the skilled tradeswomen’s perspective, using their voice to tell other women about the opportunities is key. Chenier has agreed to continue her support of Build a Dream by being a Brand Ambassador.

“Rebecca’s success is a perfect example of the need for more financial investment explicitly targeting attraction and recruitment efforts within the skilled trades,” says Hachem-Fawaz. “With funding from the provincial government, Women’s Enterprise Skills Training of Windsor and St. Clair College, Build a Dream and industry have played a pivotal role in ensuring women have access to job opportunities.”

According to Hachem-Fawaz, these low representation statistics are exactly why Build a Dream exists:

“For many industries, particularly those facing skills gaps, it’s time to show young women the opportunities that are out there. We are working to bring awareness and inspiration to students and educate parents that there are multiple careers available to reach your dreams.”

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For more information about **Build a Dream**, please contact:

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About Build a Dream

Build a Dream is an organization with a powerful initiative that attracts, encourages, and empowers young women to explore careers in skilled trades, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math), emergency response, leadership, and entrepreneurship. Through specialized, data-driven programming, the organization works to connect industry, education, government, and families to amplify young women, highlight careers in fields under-represented by women, and spotlight strong role models. They are a catalyst for workforce development, driving to create diverse, inclusive, & equal opportunities for all girls and women. www.webuildadream.com

About Hiram Walker & Sons Limited

Established nearly 160 years ago, Hiram Walker & Sons Limited's tradition of blending quality ingredients, processes and highly skilled people continues at the Windsor, Ontario based production facility. Hiram Walker produces brands such as J.P. Wiser's®, Lot No. 40®, Pike Creek®, Gooderham & Worts® and Royal Reserve® Canadian whiskies, Polar Ice® vodka, Malibu® and Lamb's® rums, and McGuinness® liqueurs for Canadian distribution by its affiliate, Corby Spirit and Wine Limited. Hiram Walker is a subsidiary of Pernod Ricard S.A., a leading global spirits and wine company with premium international brands such as ABSOLUT® vodka, Chivas®, The Glenlivet® and Ballantine's® Scotch whiskies, Jameson® Irish whiskey, Beefeater® gin, Kahlúa® liqueur, Mumm® champagne, and Jacob's Creek®, Wyndham Estate®, Stoneleigh®, Campo Viejo®, and Kenwood® wines.

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