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For Immediate Release

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The Center for Women in Transition and Missouri Women in Trades Work Together to Remodel Home for Justice-Involved Women

St. Louis, MO. -- Starting Sunday, March 7th until March 13th, Missouri Women in Trades (MOWIT) is partnering with the Center for Women in Transition (CWIT) on the **Big Baker Build**, an initiative to remodel two kitchens and two bathrooms at the Baker House. The Baker House is a supportive home for justice-involved women owned and managed by CWIT. The project not only provides an opportunity for clients and volunteers to learn valuable life skills in construction, but also works to empower and foster independence for women returning to their communities after interacting with the criminal justice system.

Beth Barton, President of Missouri Women in Trades, said, "MOWIT Workdays like The Baker Build are wonderful opportunities to expose women both at the Center for Women in Transition, as well as volunteers, to the construction industry who wouldn't normally realize the vast career advancement opportunities. These projects also allow us to provide networking and skill-building opportunities for current tradeswomen. It's a win-win-win!"

The Center for Women in Transition advocates for and assists women involved in the criminal justice system as they transition to their

communities and families. While in the program, many participants live in transitional homes. These homes allow for program participants to connect with each other and build a culture of support in a co-living environment. Women are offered a wide range of services, including counseling, vocational and life skills training, court advocacy, mentor partnerships, and much more. With a recidivism rate nearly a quarter of the national average, CWIT successfully gives participants the tools and resources to thrive so that they don't return to incarceration.

"We are incredibly grateful to the generous volunteers from MOWIT who are giving their time to the Big Baker Build," said **Laura Toledo, Executive Director of CWIT**. "It's truly inspiring to see justice-involved women being uplifted by women who are breaking barriers in a male-dominated profession. I believe it shows the women we serve that no matter their past, there are so many opportunities out there to build a better future for themselves and the community."

"The benefits of the project are two-fold: In partnering with women's trades organizations, the participants not only get updated kitchens and bathrooms, they also get to work beside successful, strong women who can open their eyes to the fields of construction, carpentry, and other trades," explained **Maggie Burke, the Client Services Manager at CWIT**. Several CWIT clients are planning on participating in the project.

Opportunities to get involved include volunteering and donating money or materials. Learn more here: www.cwitstl.org/events. Due to the pandemic, space is limited and masks are required.

Deborah Ogunti, Community Engagement Coordinator of CWIT, explained, "This is a big project we're trying to complete in under a week, and we will take all the help we can get."

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