

## Comcast (WICT) & Oxygen help to bring along the Next Generation

Contributed by Rebecca Greiling

On the damp, crisp early morning of Friday, Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>, close to 200 women gathered in front of the World Trade Center in downtown Portland to participate in Oxygen's *Mentors Walk: Bringing Along the Next Generation*. And among those women were Comcast employees, representing WICT and there to serve as volunteers and participants in the event.

**Gerry Laybourne**, CEO and founder of Oxygen, the only television network owned & operated by women, is the brainchild behind the *Mentors Walk*, which originated in New York in 2005 and was inspired by Laybourne's own mentor walks that she started several years ago. **The goal? To inspire future generations of women to follow and achieve their professional dreams by allowing them time and access to prominent and notable women from around the community.** And that's exactly what the Portland *Mentors Walk* delivered.

The *Mentors Walk* gathered together some of Portland's top female business leaders that spanned a variety of fields. Among the mentors were **Peggy Fowler**, Portland General Electric's president and CEO; **Ann Sacks**, founder of Ann Sacks Tile & Stone and Amy Sacks Eyewear; **Cheryl Wakerhauser**, a 30-year-old who started Pix Patisserie several years ago; **Michele O'Hara**, a branding consultant and founder of BecomeX, a girls empowerment nonprofit; **Nancy Hamilton**, the Portland, OR mayor's chief of staff; and **Robin Doussard**, editor of Portland Business Magazine.

Comcast volunteers welcomed the participants and served as group leaders, helping the aspiring mentees locate their mentors and keeping the groups together as they walked and talked on the one-mile route along the Riverwalk Esplanade.

"There were many things that stand out from the Mentors walk to me," **Shannon Whipple-Anderson**, MIS Specialist at Nimbus recalled. "But two specific feelings were as a participant: my group's two Mentor's were so gracious with their information, they were smart, enthusiastic and really listened to the young women who had expressed an interest in their field. They gave us their undivided attention. As a volunteer: the genuine enthusiasm of the Oxygen Network staff (& the fact that they were super organized). I can't wait till next year!"

Afterwards, as everyone was gathered for a continental breakfast atop the World Trade Center, the overall assessment was an event well done, and by all involved.

"The inaugural Portland Mentor's Walk was a tremendous success, due in large part to the awesome teamwork between Oxygen and Comcast," comments **Valerie Grubb**, Vice President of Operations for Oxygen Media. "The enthusiasm and commitment shown by the Comcast volunteers really made both our organizations shine to the various high-powered women Mentors from throughout the Portland business community. Not only that, but the rain held off too! I don't think we can get much better than that - it was a wonderful event!"

