

## **GlobaLinks Learning Abroad**

### **CWCC Company of the Year Award Finalist, Small**

Nothing creates a work environment more encouraging of excellence in women than one in which female leaders are guiding the company to new heights of service, performance and growth – even during one of the most challenging economic times in history.

This is exactly the case with GlobaLinks Learning Abroad, founded in 1990 by Cynthia Banks. These operations include providing international educational programs to more than 3,000 North American undergraduates annually via overseas university partnerships and innovative programs under three brands: AustraLearn (Australia, New Zealand, Fiji), AsiaLearn (China, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and Thailand) and EuroLearn (England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Italy and The Netherlands). The organization's reach across North America, with students from more than 600 universities and colleges choosing to study with GlobaLinks Learning Abroad each semester.

For GlobaLinks Learning Abroad employees, Cynthia serves as a role model, one who leads not only within the organization but also outside it through a variety of volunteer and elected positions, both locally and internationally. Of the more than 40 employees at GlobaLinks Learning Abroad, 75 percent are women, many of whom started at the company right out of college. An indication of the nurturing environment, the organization has an employee turnover rate of less than 10 percent in the last five years.

GlobaLinks Learning Abroad believes in equal opportunity employment across all genders, races, and special interests. GlobaLinks Learning Abroad's top leadership structure reinforces this point. The company is 100 percent women-owned by Cynthia Banks and Sheila Houston, who resides in Australia and serves as director of Australia and New Zealand programs. Of the next five top managers, three are women.

Throughout its two decades in business, GlobaLinks Learning Abroad has strongly advocated for women's success. Employees gain valuable global business experience by being sent overseas for training.

As a small company, it is not always financially feasible to send staff to expensive training seminars. For this reason, GlobaLinks Learning Abroad has come up with innovative yet cost-effective way to support its women: an in-house professional development program. Through the program, staff members are surveyed about their skills and career needs and then assisted in the creation of a customized plan for professional development. Staff members who have experience in certain areas are then employed to train others in the organization.

To foster the development of its staff, GlobaLinks supports employees with benefits of medical and dental coverage, as well as tuition reimbursements, health-and-wellness benefits, and a supportive environment when it is necessary to bring a child to the office.

With female students comprising 60 percent of all students who study abroad, GlobaLinks is attuned to their unique needs. The organization believes in international education as a teacher of leadership, which often leads to greater career possibilities for young women.

This is partly why GlobaLinks Learning Abroad programs provide extensive support including insurance coverage, in-country resident coordinators, risk and liability management and 24/7 access, in order to promote the health and safety of participants.

GlobaLinks Learning Abroad also plants leadership seeds among its student participant population through its Future International Educator/Alumna of the Year Award program, which since its inception three years ago has been awarded to women. Given annually to an outstanding alumnus of the AustraLearn / AsiaLearn / EuroLearn programs, the award is designed to encourage and support the next generation of professionals working in the international education field, which encompasses college and university professionals developing and evaluating programs, employees and overseas staff of program providers, government employees, researchers and related service providers, among others.