

## 2016 YWCA Woman of Achievement-Economic Advancement Penelope Partridge



Penelope left home at 14 and found her own strengths in the trades: carpentry, maritime construction and through working on the boats in Alaska. At age 17 she began a bicycle mechanics class for women and transgendered individuals that she taught for 3 years under the nonprofit umbrella of the Emma Goldman Youth and Homeless Outreach Project. She taught mostly to homeless people and low income teens who did not have access to their own transportation, and therefore had limited ability to secure employment. Each participant was allowed to build and take a free bicycle from the shop.

At 23, she started the Felicity Ann Boat Project, a program that helped at risk high school girls receive credit for their learning in an all-women and trans carpentry shop. Students also had an **experiential education aboard boats and read from women's history** books. The project promoted the restoration of a historical ship: The Felicity Ann, which was the first boat to be sailed by a woman alone across an ocean.

**Due to Penelope's efforts, all of the high-school age participants designated "at-risk" by the Port Townsend School District were able to successfully graduate high school.** Further, through funds raised in her efforts, the Felicity Ann is now being given a full historical restoration by The Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding.

Penelope moved from the Felicity Ann Project to the Cape Cleare Fisheries, doing marine construction on an environmental conscious fishing boat. She went on to provide carpentry to Zyl Vardos Tiny House Manufacturing, but not without the continuing thread of advocacy for women.

In the last several years she has worked supporting survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence by leading support groups and as grant writer for SafePlace. All of her projects have been designed as a safe space for those involved to heal emotionally from

the unjustness of the world, and to find solace and community, and strengthening. In her free time she enjoys writing, running an excavator, and watercolor painting.