



POST EXCLUSIVE

Hard-hat Sandra to the rescue

She's helping the city build better schools

By NEIL GRAVES

When the city School Construction Authority found itself in a crunch late last summer — the primary contractor on a \$75 million project had just gone belly-up — it needed someone with a hammer.

Up stepped Sandra Wilkin, president of Bradford Construction in Manhattan — hammer in hand.

Bradford, the junior company in the joint venture to renovate four public schools, took on



the massive project and completed it on time and within budget.

The official ribbon-cutting for one of the schools, PS 69 in Jackson Heights, Queens, came last week.

"A decision had to be made on the most effective way to get the job done," said Wilkin, who successfully lobbied the SCA to acquire the total project.

"As a mother of two, I



Anthony Fioranelli

SHE HAS A HAMMER: Sandra Wilkin's construction firm answered Board of Ed's call.

was very concerned with what I might have to do if my children's schools weren't ready."

Wilkin, who is a for-

mer nurse, said she decided to get involved after a medical associate needed direction while having an outpa-

tient clinic built.

The contractor, it seems, couldn't grasp hygienic concepts, such as constructing sterile corridors in separate areas from garbage-removal facilities.

"I felt there was a need for people with a background in the health-care industry to get into construction," Wilkin said of her 5-year-old company, which still specializes in medical facilities.

Wilkin, the daughter of a aeronautical engineer, said constructing has always been a part of her life.

"While my friends were getting Barbie dolls, I was getting erector sets," she said.

The myth that women can't pull their weight is just that — a myth, she continued.

"I've seen women haul heavy electrical equipment around with no problem," said Wilkin, whose 22-person staff includes eight women.

She said even though only 8 percent of metro-area construction companies are female-owned, there are plenty of jobs for women in the trade, ranging from surveyors to architects to carpenters.

"Women project supervisors and project managers are very much in demand," she said.

"The good ones get jobs very fast."