



**STEERING A STEADY COURSE:** Chwarae Teg chief executive Ruth Marks, centre, with left to right, Chwarae Teg enterprise development managers Lynne Refae, Michelle Nicholls, Lois Poynting and Chwarae Teg enterprise projects co-ordinator Bev Bailey

## A fresh beginning: Katherine goes online

WHEN 35-year-old Katherine Bean from Colwyn Bay was awarded a doctorate for her skills in electronic engineering five years ago, she proved that women can have successful careers in a traditionally male dominated industry.

Now an expert in her field, Dr Bean is launching her own web design and IT support business, Dvana Consulting, with the aim of enabling small and medium sized business to grow in an ever more connected global economy.

Growing up in North Wales, Katherine's interest in computers began at school and after graduating and gaining a job with IBM, her career took her to the United States.

She said: "I was in America for six years, working for major software development companies, involved in design, problem solving, management and IT."

Returning home, Katherine contacted Conwy Enterprise Agency who put her in touch with Chwarae Teg's Women's Enterprise Wales project.

One of the biggest issues facing Katherine was having moved back from the US she needed to forge a new network of business contacts.

Katherine, who accompanied the Chwarae Teg team to London to receive their PROWESS award, said: "Chwarae Teg has given me the support and advice I needed, particularly when I had a car accident last year which delayed my plans."

Michelle Nicholls, Katherine's adviser at Chwarae Teg, said: "Katherine is a fantastic example of a woman who has overcome all of the stereotypes to carve a highly successful career in her field."

Chwarae Teg recently launched the Ready SET Go project aimed at tackling the increasing integration of women into the workforce, targeting science, engineering and technology (SET) and professions where women are traditionally under represented.

The project will also work with employers and teachers to reduce the barriers which still exist to female employment. ■

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# Chwarae Teg scores a first for women in Wales

Chwarae Teg, Wales' leading organisation for the economic development of women, has been recognised for excellence by gaining a prestigious national award.

Chwarae Teg is the first Welsh business support provider to achieve the coveted PROWESS Flagship Award.

The award is a best practice standard for excellence in women's business support and enterprise development from PROWESS, the UK organisation which supports women to start and grow businesses.

The award was made to Chwarae Teg in recognition of the high level of service the pan Wales organisation provides to women looking for business advice.

Chwarae Teg chief executive Ruth Marks received the award on behalf of the organisation from Isabella Moore, the government-appointed chair of the new Women's Enterprise Panel, on board the Cutty Sark in London.

Congratulating Chwarae Teg on its achievements Isabella Moore, former president of the British Chambers of Commerce, said: "Every woman who wants to start a business should have access to appropriate and effective local business support.

"This will be of benefit to the women themselves, the local economy and overall national economic growth."

Erica Watson, executive director of PROWESS, said: "One of our aims is to help members provide



the most effective support to all their clients but especially their female users. We developed the standards to be as measurable, transparent and as objective as possible.

"Chwarae Teg has been through a rigorous assessment and we congratulate them on their

achievement," she said.

"We know from visiting the US that the massive rise in the number of female business owners has been due in part to the excellent support on offer to women in that country.

"Flagship Award organisations are proving that such an approach is possible, we just need more of them if we are to have a similar impact over here."

Chwarae Teg chief executive Ruth Marks said: "We are delighted to be recognised in this way and to have gained recognition for the work we do in supporting the economic development of women in Wales.

"The PROWESS Flagship Award comes at a time when we at Chwarae Teg are as busy as ever, especially with our Women's Enterprise Wales (WEW) and Lone Parents' Venture (LPV) projects.

"Women's Enterprise Wales gave more than 600 women advice and support in 2003-04 resulting in

the start up of 157 new businesses and the creation of some 243 new jobs.

"In the last three years, Chwarae Teg has worked with more than 3,300 women across Wales and nearly 1,800 have received at least 7 hours support time.

"In total 446 women have started up their own businesses, leading to the creation of 605 jobs.

"Chwarae Teg is a partner in the WDA Potentia programme delivering the Lone Parents' venture project and over the same period helped 150 people in achieving their business goals."

Andrew Davies, Welsh Assembly Government Minister for Economic Development and Transport, said: "To receive national recognition is a remarkable achievement for Chwarae Teg and acknowledgement of the work it has done in encouraging women into the workplace with valuable and practical support."

To achieve the PROWESS Flagship Award organisations must demonstrate that they comply with a rigorous set of criteria designed to measure quality, client focus inclusion and equality.

PROWESS members are able to apply for a service delivery assessment against a set criteria aimed at measuring if they are 'women friendly'. To date just 15 business support providers throughout the UK have achieved PROWESS Flagship status. ■



Katherine Bean, left, with Chwarae Teg adviser Michelle Nicholls