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2020 Women Who Build Spotlight: Christine O'Hare, JCJ Architecture

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Christine O'Hare, AIA, LEED AP, Senior Project Manager at JCJ Architecture

How many years have you been in your current field? 22 years

What would you tell your daughter about entering this profession? I tell both of my daughters that no matter what profession they enter they should not expect anything handed to them based on being a woman. Working hard and proving their strength is the way to advancement and fulfillment within their careers.

What are you planning to do differently in 2020 to have a positive impact on your career? Starting a new year and beginning the new decade, I'm thinking about those things I'm doing now that I want to continue to embrace. It took me a long time to learn that I could not do it all in this profession and be good at what I do. I understand now that my strength in this profession is my ability to build trusting relationships with both my teams and my clients. These connections don't just motivate and inspire me, they help me to focus my intention and energy in an incredibly positive way. In the past several years I have been working on finding a better balance between family and my career. We all struggle with this and it sounds like a minor thing, but it was a big shift in my thinking about my career and what advancement means to me. Today I know I am more focused and passionate about what I do as an architect and project manager because I am balancing those responsibilities with my family time.

What was your favorite job and what did you learn from it? Two projects that meant a great deal personally were the Gallaudet-Clerc Center at the American School for the Deaf and the Gengras Center at University of Saint Joseph. My thesis in school was focused on design for the deaf and children with special needs. Every child has unique needs and interacts with their spaces in different ways; children with special needs often have very unique spatial needs in order just feel at ease in an environment. On both of these projects I enjoyed the opportunity to briefly become part of these unique communities. By developing a relationship with the staff and students within these communities and observing their daily movements throughout their space I was better able to create environments for them that would enhance their educational experiences.