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2020 Women in Construction: Kate VanHeusen, Architectural Designer at Sasaki

March 27, 2020 - Spotlights



What was your greatest professional achievement or most notable project in the last 12 months?
Speaking at the Suffolk Construction Building an Inclusive Boston panel discussion about my

experience of working on 401 Congress Street, our winning RFP submission for the A2 parcel in the Seaport District. It was an honor to join the rest of the development team on stage to speak about how concepts of inclusivity were incorporated into the design of the public spaces of the project, as well as the diverse makeup of the project team. When designing the project, we focused on crafting accessible spaces that would make the public feel welcome. We also emphasized inclusivity in the structure of the project team. 401 Congress Street is a precedent for how others can build diversity in a project's recruitment, design, and partnership work in Boston's real estate sector.

When I'm not working I am...Running with my rescue dog Riley. Running helps clear my head so when I'm working, I'm on. I find that some of my best thinking occurs while I'm out trying to keep up with Riley.

What are you doing differently in 2020 that has had a positive impact on your career? Being decisive. The fast pace of our projects require good decisions to be made constantly, and I find it beneficial to pick a direction and go with it. The clients appreciate it and it's much more efficient for everyone's time.

What trends are you seeing in your field this year? An increased focus on a healthy environments and sustainability through better design. Our development and design team is putting in significant effort to rethink what is achievable and what combination of elements can produce a high performing, energy efficient, healthy buildings. A complete set of design, construction and operation principles for that incorporate sustainably, wellness and innovative design thought out the project.

Who or what inspired you to join the construction industry? I learned very early in my career from some truly great mentors that if you want to make good design, you need to know how it's built. I value not only the ability to design but knowing how the detail works, how the pieces come together, and how the construction assembly is as important as the design itself. Without that, you've got nothing.

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