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2021 Ones to Watch: Amanda Nelson, Estimator, Vantage Builders, Inc.

May 28, 2021 - Spotlights

Who or what inspires you? The women I get to work with in the A/E/C industry have really pushed me to believe in myself and hold my chin up during the tough times I may encounter. I see them juggle so many things, workwise and personally, and still find success. Whether it's the women at Vantage or subcontractors, architects, engineers, brokers, clients – I consistently feel like we're working together, and the solidarity motivates me to do my best. I'm the oldest of three daughters, have a strong mother, and 10 of my 14 first cousins are women...so it makes sense that women inspire me and in turn I feel like I don't want to let them down.

What led you to your current profession? I was working as an administrative assistant at a sitework contractor almost 10 years ago and I was always willing to pitch in and help on projects outside my admin duties. The company owners invested in me and gave me opportunities to grow and I am grateful that they never shied away from asking me to take on new things. My interest in the work led me to keep learning on the job while moving into new positions. Vantage Builders has a similar mentality about training, encouraging growth and providing opportunity internally, and I always try to take advantage of the chances to gain new experience.

What advice can you offer to someone who is interested in a career in your industry? My biggest piece of advice is to ask questions. Subcontractors I talk to are always willing to teach me about their trades, and I learned early on to keep a notepad nearby when I call them and just take notes. I have coworkers with 20+ years of experience, and they've taught me so much just by stopping by their desks for a quick chat. Architects and engineers help me learn by discussing their design choices and the reasons behind them. By fostering good relationships, I gain from the vast knowledge these people have and how willing they are to share it with me. Be a sponge!

How do you contribute to your community or your profession? I've been a "Big" since January 2020 in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program. My "Little" is 9 years old, very curious and always asks about what I do at work. Answering her questions makes me appreciate my job even more. Listening to her talk about all the things she could grow up to be is not only inspiring, but it shows me how far young girls have come in dreaming of their futures. Being a Big Sister gives me a sense of purpose outside of myself and means a lot to me.