

CONTACT:
[Leslie Horna](#), [WORKNOW](#), 303.523.1978

WORKNOW Empowers Women In Construction

*Colorado Beats National Average for Number of Women in Male-Dominated Industry.
We profile one women's journey.*

Marilyn Monroe once said, "Give a girl the right shoes and she can conquer the world."

In construction, work boots are the recommended choice of shoes for most, except for DeTonia Gooden. She loves shoes, devoting a percentage of each paycheck to purchasing a new pair of high heels that she often wears to work at [Advanced Safety Consulting](#). Gooden is driven to conquer any challenge presented to her.

At 17 years old, Gooden was expelled from high school due to a history of absenteeism. A few years later, she became pregnant with her son. These life events changed everything for Gooden. She began taking an adult education program at a Chicago community college (where Gooden was living at the time) and later passed the GED to earn her high school diploma. She credits her family being a strong support network to encourage her to stay strong and keep stepping forward.

Prior to the start of Gooden's career in construction, she worked in retail and service businesses as the leader of corporate training and change management activities. Gooden is ambitious and assertive and was looking for a new challenge.

"It's important to learn a trade, something I can do in the long term and develop over time," said Gooden.

Construction is an attractive industry with over 96,000 vacant jobs in demand locally by 2025. Plotting the next phase of her career, Gooden became interested in construction. The industry is so broad that even changing roles within the sector can involve new challenges, skills, and qualifications to acquire. Gooden wants to work in construction because of the opportunities to continue to learn, to be challenged, and advance her skills. Additionally, construction trade jobs are available to all experience levels and include many types of roles; not just manual labor. She saw a television advertisement for [CORE Partner Construction Careers Now](#) and right away signed up for classes.

Construction Careers Now is a Denver metro training curriculum that prepares novice to seasoned workers with access to skilled trades, apprenticeships, and construction management career pathways. Construction Careers Now partnered with [WORKNOW](#), Colorado's newest workforce development platform, to provide a central hub for training, advancement, and support resources.

"WORKNOW synthesizes the tools, resources, relationships, and support that individuals need when starting a career or changing careers while balancing the needs of the industry and

community,” said Erika Anderson, Recruiter with Construction Careers Now. “With over 600 individuals enrolled in WORKNOW, our collaboration has assisted nearly 300 people with job placements and close to 200 incumbent workers with advancement opportunities. Construction Careers Now is proud to partner in this work,” said Anderson.

Gooden gushed about how much fun the classes were, how much she learned, and the many great contacts she made to start her new career in construction. She enjoyed welding the most. Upon graduation, there weren't positions available in welding though she received an alluring offer from Advanced Safety Consulting. The company provides safety and environmental training and consulting for various industries, including construction. This is Gooden's first job in the industry and in her four months on the job, her role has already changed a few times.

Gooden joined the team as office manager though rapidly took on more projects, many of which were above and beyond her current responsibilities. She began managing invoicing, accounting, and human resource functions for the business and is now Director of Operations and Business Development. In this role, Gooden oversees customer satisfaction, marketing, communications, auditing and analyzing data, as well as the launch of a new business development function for Advanced Safety Consulting.

Hard work and persistence pays off. Gooden plans to invest monies earned from her promotions in welding classes at Emily Griffith Technical College. Her goal is to be self-employed with her own welding company, a goal that Advanced Safety Consulting supports. They provide access to complimentary training and classes which Gooden has already taken advantage of a few times.

“I would advise others interested in making their mark in construction to always find something to do,” said Gooden. “Take initiative to learn more about the company, get better at your job...just don't be afraid to ask.”

Good career advice can be hard to find, especially for women in construction. As of 2015, women comprised only 1.3 percent of the U.S. construction workforce. Of the WORKNOW Members enrolled in 2018, 16 percent are women compared to the increased national average of 7 percent. WORKNOW's strong results could be attributed to the gender-specific career support services the employment platform provides. WORKNOW provides a strong professional mentorship network including peer-to-peer panel discussions, networking events, and a dedicated Career Navigator. Gooden credits her Navigator as her best sounding board and who she goes to for work advice.

“We empower construction employers and employees to break down barriers for women and people of color in the industry,” said Katrina Wert, Director of the Center for Workforce Initiatives at Community College of Denver. “WORKNOW career support resources encourages acknowledgment of our vulnerabilities and coaches us to assert ourselves to find meaning and belonging in our workplace,” Wert continued.

Professional development can fuel confidence and power for women. Power speaks to the competence and the ability to influence others which are valuable traits when working with teams like construction crews. Defying gender stereotypes, Gooden is confident, strong,



Presents



PO Box 173363
Denver, CO 80217-3363
[720] 389-0999 phone
coreworknow@gmail.com

ColoCorePartners.com

assertive, and motivated. She leverages WORKNOW's career support services to use her power, influence, and talent to make a positive impact at Advanced Safety Consulting as well on behalf of other women in the construction industry.

Gooden was recently a guest panelist for a WORKNOW Peer-to-Peer Networking discussion. She knows what she wants and is going after it with laser-like focus, but not everyone has that confidence, that drive, or the support. Gooden's advice is to "be confident in yourself and what you bring to the table that's unique to you."

Someone as driven as Gooden also needs time to relax and recharge. She enjoys spending time with family and friends, attending a ballet performance, watching horror movies, and welding. Gooden can often be found welding with her neighbor who is a working artist and who often shares tips and tricks to better her craft.

"Success is possible for everyone. You just have to ask," said Gooden. "The support from WORKNOW provides more for me to learn, to grow. With WORKNOW, there's always something more to learn."

To put your best foot forward, enrollment in WORKNOW is free. To enroll, register to attend an Information Session, call phone 720-352-6019 or submit an Interest Form online at worknow.org. CORE/WORKNOW believes that YOU matter and can help change the industry and make our community better. Together, we're building more; we're building you.

###