



MEET AYANNA

At R.J. Leeper, our Workforce Development team is dedicated to guiding community and trade partners towards career prospects that facilitate upward mobility for individuals from diverse backgrounds, with the ultimate goal of creating generational wealth in the Charlotte area.

In this month's edition of our newsletter, we're proud to showcase Ayanna Washington, a valued member of the Leeper team who shifted from the insurance industry to construction. Her story embodies our ongoing commitment to this mission. Please read on for more details.

"I WOULD ABSOLUTELY RECOMMEND CONSTRUCTION AS A CAREER. IT'S A FIELD WITH COUNTLESS OPPORTUNITIES WITH MANY CAREER PATHS TO TRAVEL"

Prior to her position at Leeper Construction, Washington worked for a major insurance company for 20 years. Upon finding herself with an empty nest, Washington realized she needed "me time" without a load of responsibility, and decided to take a year off from work for some much needed and well-deserved personal time off. A one year break quickly transformed to two, and Washington decided not to return



to insurance, understanding that that chapter of her life had completed. While the break closed one chapter, another one simultaneously opened--an interest in construction. Washington says during those two years off she began to involve herself in local community work within her hometown. She observed a need for some major services that would make a community self-sufficient that simply "just did not exist". Washington says that she wished to create and build a space that would address all of those needs. From there, Ayanna enrolled herself in the Goodwill Construction Skills Training Program and upon completion, landed a full-time position as a Project Assistant with R.J. Leeper Construction.

Pictured above: Ayanna Washington & Verona Hendrix, Career Navigation Coach at Goodwill Industries of the Southern Piedmont.

With a year under her belt with Leeper, Ayanna states that the greatest impact of working in the construction industry has simply been the exposure to the industry. She remarks "it is exciting to see all the different trades involved in the construction world and all the intricate moving parts that bring the product together". With Leeper, Washington has been exposed to multiple commercial projects, becoming familiar with the administrative, financial, and the field operations. Today, she exclaims that she would "absolutely" recommend construction as a career path for others, stating that it is a field with "countless opportunities".



Goodwill's Construction Training Program was created by Goodwill Industries of the Southern Piedmont in partnership with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS), Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) and The ROC (Rebuilding Opportunities in Construction). The program offers specialized training courses in areas of construction such as blueprint reading and estimating, HVAC, electrical, forklifting, commercial carpentry, and drone piloting, striving to assist those of the Charlotte community "access high-potential, family-sustaining trade careers at no cost to them".

Community Engagement



On Tuesday, October 31st, our team hosted a Luncheon for our valued trade partners on our Charlotte Airport Terminal Lobby Expansion project. The luncheon, also attended by our joint venture partners at Holder Construction and Edison Foard sought to commemorate the remarkable strides accomplished thus far.

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