

## GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE

### Women building paths to meaningful and satisfying careers in the skilled trades at George Brown College

With Canada facing an acute shortage of skilled trades professionals, George Brown encourages women to consider the wide range of opportunities available in the trades.

Areej Farhan always pictured herself working in the construction industry, but on the administrative or design side, rather than handling tools on site. Now in her second year of George Brown College (GBC)'s Building Renovation Technology program, she is erecting steel framing and installing drywall.

"No other field can bring this kind of satisfaction," she said, adding that developing these hands-on skills has been "liberating."

"My favourite part of the program so far has been realizing how much detail goes into even the most seemingly basic buildings," she said. "Walking down the street, I look at buildings with a completely different perspective."

Farhan's career prospects are bright, as they are for many aspiring tradespeople right now. Canada faces a massive labour shortage of skilled trades professionals, according to a CIBC Capital Markets report from June 2023. And the Ontario government continues investing in promoting and supporting skilled trades education.

"I meet many women who, when I tell them what I'm doing in my program, are so fascinated by it, but they never see themselves in this field," she said. "If you have the curiosity, you're going to succeed."

#### Making mid-career shift into welding

Elementary school shop class ignited Lilly Lazare-Greene's passion for working with her hands, and decades later, she realized her dream of launching a career in the skilled trades after completing GBC's Welding Techniques program.

When pandemic lockdowns put a hold on her bartending career, she quickly decided to pursue a career in the trades for more stable employment. She completed the eight-month program and landed a job as a lab technician at the college right after graduation.

"I love manual labour and working hard," she said.

Taking a career U-turn in her 40s had its challenges, but she's now in a professional place where she feels like she belongs. "I feel like myself," she said.

"For women and girls who want to get into this trade, just do it," Lazare-Greene said. "It's super fun. If you like to get dirty and wear cool gear, use cool equipment and create something from nothing, it's a great career. I'm so grateful I chose it."

#### Skilled trades training at GBC

George Brown offers a wide range of construction, engineering and skilled trades programs at the Centre for Construction and Engineering Technologies. The college also offers a program called Women Transitioning to Trades Employment (WTTE). The Ontario government fully funds the tuition-free 16-week program. The college also offers scholarships and bursaries to students from under-represented and equity-deserving groups in the trades.

"We are proud of the role we're playing in developing a diverse future workforce in construction and the skilled trades," said Dr. Adel Esayed, Dean of GBC's Centre for Construction and Engineering Technologies. "There are so many meaningful and well-paying career opportunities out there, and ensuring everyone feels welcome in this field is a priority for us and integral to addressing the labour shortage."



# CITY IS OUR CLASSROOM

Learn how George Brown College supports women pursuing careers in the skilled trades and cultivates a diverse future workforce. With the city as our classroom, we provide construction and skilled trades training with real-world learning experiences in Toronto.



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