



George Brown grad blazes trail for women in construction

By Richard Lyall

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Maryam Mohammad Amin, 28, of Great Gulf Homes is helping to blaze a trail for women in construction after graduating from the RESCON Residential Construction Management Certificate Program at George Brown College. Here, she is shown at the construction site for King Oak in King City.

Richard Lyall has represented Ontario's residential construction industry since 1991 as president of RESCON and in other various capacities

As a five-year-old girl in Afghanistan, Maryam Mohammad Amin found her passion for construction while watching her father build their home.

Over six months in the city of Mazar-E-Sharif, "I was on site and would go with him to watch him to do the excavation, and the foundation," says the 28-year-old Toronto resident. "He was a mechanical engineer, but he knew construction."

And I'm proud to tell you that Maryam grew up and pursued her passion, graduating last year from an intense 28-week program sponsored by RESCON, the voice of the GTA's builders, at George Brown College in Toronto. This industry-education partnership is one of the ways we're trying to get youth into the industry.

This month, 14 graduates from the college's Construction Engineering Technology program began the course component of the RESCON Residential Construction Management Certificate

Program. In September, they'll begin 14 weeks of on-the-job experience through internships with our members.

The lone woman in her class of nine, Maryam took a placement with Great Gulf Homes as site administrative clerk at the King Oak site in King City and went on to be hired full-time. Other builders who have participated in the program include Arista, Daniels, Tridel, Empire, Brookfield, Tucker HiRise, Sorbara, H&R, Menkes, Starlane and Remington. The students they trained have gone on to take junior positions such as residential project manager, project coordinator, site coordinator, superintendent or estimator.

“This program gave the students more specialized training in residential construction management,” says Clint Kissoon, chair of the GBC’s Centre for Construction and Engineering Technologies (CCET). “Before, we were the choice of employers looking for residential construction managers, but our high-value partnership with RESCON consolidated this.”

The courses involved are: quality control and defect prevention; home design and value engineering; purchasing and bid processes; residential construction project management; and high-rise residential construction. Students are given an even mix of low-rise and high-rise education, and then are placed in the sector they're most comfortable in.

The tuition is \$3,444 per year, taxes included. But through the interest of RESCON’s \$500,000 endowment fund, students are provided with \$1,000 scholarships.

She says the certificate program taught her skills that she uses on the job every day, including computer skills, how to read drawings, project management, the Ontario Building Code, safety, surveying, report writing — even team-building skills.

“I work with seven people, and if it wasn’t for my understanding of working with a team, I wouldn’t survive,” she says.

Maryam is happy to help blaze a trail for other women to follow in a male-dominated industry, and draws inspiration from one of her supers on the job, Lisa Belo, who boasts more than 20 years of experience.

And she encourages women to pursue a career in construction.

“They can do it,” Maryam says. “Working with people in construction, it’s easier because they’re very straight up. There’s no routine. Every day, there is a new challenge and you have to solve it right away.”

For more information about the program, contact Dorothy Rogowski of GBC at drogowsk@georgebrown.ca, visit www.georgebrown.ca or call 408-2014-2015.