

Delanee Daviau

July 8, 2019 Interviewer Jo-Ann Kolmes, camera Don Bouzek

Q: Tell us about your union and your current job.

DD: I am a member of Ironworkers Local 720 here in Edmonton. I currently work for the Building Trades of Alberta. My official title as of right now is the Building Trades of Alberta Charitable Foundation Coordinator as well as I am tasked with special projects. That means anything from event planning, like our upcoming Labour Day, to working with the different organizers of our affiliated unions to help coordinate their efforts and be successful.

Q: Tell us about your early life.

DD: I was born December 9, 1991 in Vanderhoof, British Columbia. It is the geographical centre of B.C. and probably its largest claim to fame. From there I lived in Prince George and moved to Maple Ridge. We lived on Vancouver Island as well, which is where I graduated high school out of Courtenay, British Columbia. My dad is going on 35 years as a paramedic with the B.C. Ambulance Service, so our family moved around quite a bit with his job. We were always moving to the next best posting or the next best place for our family. With lots of crime in Northern B.C. at the time, my dad decided to move the family to Vancouver Island, and that's where my mom and him will retire. He has worked union his entire life. My mom is a compounding pharmacy tech, so she's also union with the Hospital Employees Union on Vancouver Island. She specializes in chemotherapy, so she makes the chemo for all of the local cancer patients. I've had a pretty well-versed medical background, but not one that really set me up for a life of construction.

Q: How did that develop?

DD: I'm the oldest of three girls, so my parents were blessed with three daughters. My father, all of our family friends, and every adult in my life was always hunting and fishing, and so naturally my dad needed a hunting and fishing partner. That became his daughters. I was always

used to being in a boy's world. I didn't mind getting dirty, I always liked sports and competition. When I was going to high school I was in grade 10 and I was signed up for the electives of my grade 11 and 12 year, which is where I could access and start to experience shop classes. That was in grade 10, and about three weeks prior to the end of grade 10 we actually moved from Prince George to Courtenay, British Columbia. The school that I was transferring to didn't have any sort of shop programs except for woodworking, and woodworking never really appealed to me. I wanted to be in the mechanics and welding, but those options weren't available. So that kind of fizzled out the trades direction for me at that point until I was at a rodeo and I met a young women who loved her job. She was a welders helper on the pipeline. She talked about how much money she made, she talked about how she could work as much or as little as she wanted, that her job took her all over the place, and that she was loving this lifestyle that she fell into, and shared it with me. Right away I knew this sounded like something I wanted to do. I wanted to make as much money as I could in short periods of time and do whatever I wanted with the rest of my time. So I came home from Grand Prairie and went back home to B.C. and told my parents that I was going to be a welder. From there, we went over to the North Island College. Most of them were incredibly supportive, although they had no idea what that lifestyle looked like for me. They were both, okay this is what you're going to do; we're excited. So I moved on with that. We went over to the college, and in British Columbia it's a much different apprenticeship system. I went and signed up for what was called my C level. In British Columbia at the time, if you didn't have an employer you went to school first. From there I was accepted, and within two weeks I was going to welding school. I spent the next seven months attending night school, which was from 3 p.m. until 10 p.m. and I welded all day every day for seven months. Much different than attending technical training in Alberta, because we have classroom time in Alberta. Your day is split up between technical practical training, and theory work. Well in B.C. at the time, there was none of that – it was all welding. You did your theory training at home where you read your books and studied and came in and wrote the tests when you felt ready. Another couple big differences were if we ran out of plate to cut we jumped on a forklift and went out to the yard, picked up a piece of plate, brought it do the doors, hooked it onto the overhead crane, laid it on the table. So when I came out of welding school, I went from being afraid of my welding instructor striking the first arc (because I had never seen welding before) to knowing how to drive a forklift, use an overhead crane, and weld a CWB, in seven months. It

was incredible to go from not knowing absolutely anything to having this crazy amount of knowledge and hand skill. That's when I made the leap to come to Alberta. It was a very organic introduction to the trades. It didn't come from family, it came from meeting a stranger who gave me this small flicker of hope that I could have this life to being here today. I wouldn't have changed a thing.

Q: How did it work transferring the certification interprovincially?

DD: When I decided to come to Alberta to fulfil the working part of my career, I had already received my British Columbian blue book, which was really useful, because now I had something physical and tangible to swap over. Because I went to school for seven months versus the eight weeks that is technical training in Alberta, they knew that there was going to be some sort of discrepancy. How can they take seven months of education and compare it fairly to the eight weeks of training? At the time, I was not a represented worker but my boyfriend was a member of the Ironworkers Union. He knew that they had an apprenticeship office within their local and he knew that's who would help him, so he thought taking me there would help me. Sure enough, I got there and spoke to Jeff Norris, who was the training coordinator at the time, and he helped me swap my blue book over to the Alberta system. Luckily for me, Jeff was a source of knowledge and knew that there was a way to do this with my benefit in mind. Sure enough, when I transferred over I became a second year welding apprentice in Alberta instead of having to start back as a first year. They acknowledged my training for the first two years, which was a big help.

Q: So you started as a second year apprentice in Alberta?

DD: Correct. After transferring my C ticket blue book to Alberta, I then became a second year welding apprentice.

Q: When you took the shop classes in high school, were there other young women?

DD: I didn't get to take the shop class, because we moved schools. But I can talk about that. When I first came to my new high school, I went from Northern British Columbia, where everyone wore plaid to school. If you didn't have a six-inch lift on your truck, you weren't one of the cool kids. In the winters, we got dropped off on snowmobiles. It was a very rural community. We went to Kelly Road Secondary School up in the Hart in Prince George. From there, I went to Mark Isfeld in Courtenay, British Columbia. The girls had \$500 purses, the kids were driving beamers. It felt like I had gone through the matrix. I went from an environment where I felt like women could do anything – they have to do everything here. We hunt, we fish, we provide – it was just a very hearty lifestyle I felt, and that was my very small view of the world at that time. It felt like I was in California or something; it was a totally different feel. At that school, I think it would've been weird for me to have attended shop classes or done any of the stereotypical boy courses. My school in Northern British Columbia, I think it would've been completely business as usual. Very interesting to see those differences. Furthermore to that, it reflected on my report cards. Me and my mom were looking through old report cards, and when I changed environments I went from an honour roll student to scraping by with Cs for the last two years of high school. I went from an environment that I excelled in and had so much comfort in to this opposite world, and it shows. Who I was and my future wasn't harnessed in that high school, and I'm grateful that I found it outside of there once again.

Q: How did your apprenticeship in Alberta unfold?

DD: My apprenticeship, my very first job in Alberta was with the Ironworkers Union. I went out as a permit, which means I'm a person working through the local that hasn't attained membership yet. For example, if layoffs were to come, I'd be the first to be laid off. If there was a member who had posted in for the job prior to me, they would've had it. What's interesting with structural welders is that most of the contractors and clients, when dealing with structural steel, which the Ironworkers take care of, don't seek apprentices. It became very difficult for me to secure that first job. What ended up happening was the local union dispatched me as a third year apprentice. I was a second year apprentice who had no work experience, had seven months of education, but the only way for them to get me out and for a contractor to accept me would be to send me out as a third year. I suppose it was messing with the system, but looking

back I'm still grateful for it. So that got me out on my first job, and luckily for me, my boyfriend at the time, who's now my husband, was dispatched on the same job. We were going together, so I had that little bit of anxiety taken off. I wasn't going to this place called Fort McMurray that I'd heard of my whole life and had no idea what was there, I wasn't going to be looking for one of these camps in the middle of nowhere where there's thousands of men. I wasn't going to be walking in by myself. All these big fears were alleviated when I knew that we'd be going to this job together. We get up to Fort McMurray, we show up to camp. I'm just like a deer in headlights, wide-eyed, taking it all in. I remember getting my first camp room, I got my first site badge. I was so proud. I made it. That was making it for me at that stage in the game – getting to camp, pulling a slip, being in Fort McMurray. I'm a welder, baby – that's what it felt like. I'm making it. Those were really good days.

Q: What was the job?

DD: It was a shutdown for Clearwater. I think the duration was three days plus. We go in there, do a shutdown, get out. It was great. I remember going for my first camp meal, waiting in this lineup. Just the whole process – it's a whole other world, a series of firsts that are pretty overwhelming. Fort McMurray is like, especially coming from B.C., like it was the place that all the siblings or the dads went and came back. I had no connection to what it meant to be an Albertan worker. The first day on the job it was nerve-wracking. I didn't know what size coveralls I was. They come from size 30 to 60 plus I'm sure. I had no idea, so I just picked what everyone else was picking, because I don't want to stand there and, well I'm not sure, can I try them on? So you just take whatever is given, and take off extra layers or put more layers on. I know what size coveralls I am now, so I'm grateful for that. Then just the process, because it was a shutdown and it was during the busy times. Of course I didn't recognize what busy times were at that time. I wasn't aware of the ebb and flow or the cyclical cycle of the industry I was in at that time. We were all just waiting. We knew our foreman was going to be coming in. It was really interesting because when we first walked through the lunchroom doors my husband was the first one to walk in, of course boyfriend there. I heard somebody yell at him, oh where's Kim, Dave? Right away my heart sank. I'm like, who's Kim? Is this a girl from jobsite, who is this person? I remember thinking right off the bat, what am I doing? Now I have to worry about

this? I already have all these other things – I don't know what size clothes I wear here, I don't know anybody's name, I couldn't show you on a map where I am, I would never find the exit door if I had to get out of this place. What am I doing? Now he has this history. How is this going to work? I started doubting everything. Ten years later, Kim is one of my best friends, Kim McLean is one of my best friends. Her and Dave were just partners on a different job, but it's just all these things happening on the first day. So we get out to work and I'm partnered up, me and Dave, for probably the first five years we worked together they would never partner us up at the beginning. I can see when I was younger, because I started welding at 18 years old, that maybe my maturity level or his maturity level or just a new relationship, there's a lot of fragility around that sort of thing. But ya, I just sort of listened; my first day on the job was all listening. I was so afraid to make a mistake that I wasn't going to miss a thing. But the difficult thing about starting in the trades as an apprentice is that you don't know what you're doing. You don't understand the job you're even signing up for. You don't understand that you're in the middle of an oil sand site in the middle of nowhere with these giant pieces of machinery and equipment and thousands of people. It's such a big world to wrap your head around on the first day. I can just remember feeling intimidated; not intimidated by the people, intimidated by my new world. I don't understand this yet. There's not very many other times in your life where you're going to jump in with two feet, completely blind. That was the first one for me. Looking back, I think that doing that at 18 was probably the building blocks – for any apprentice, regardless of when you start – it's the building blocks for your career. But I just think going into it so young and, quite frankly, so vulnerable, it's the way I had to do it. I don't think going into it having a relative in the trade or having any kind of insight, I definitely deal best under pressure, and that's what I felt.

Q: In those few days there, did you have a chance to interact with other people? How did they treat you?

DD: I would say that everyone on my first couple jobs, because those short term shutdowns turned into a transfer to the next shutdown and the next shutdown, so they were a bunch of short term jobs all connected together with the same contractor. I was working with all different people and all different trades. I would say I felt like the number one thing was "How did you

get here?" Not in a negative context, but "What are you doing here girl?" "You want this to be the rest of your life?" That was almost the vibe. I remember one of the first Syncrude people I had contact with. We were inside this building and we were preparing to do a job. I was kind of just a helper at that stage of the game. I didn't really know what I was doing, so I was just very good at taking direction and helping out. This Syncrude guy had pulled me aside and said, "What are you doing with these guys?" I thought, "What do you mean? I'm a welder, I'm a welder with these guys." That's not what he meant. He considered the work we were doing and the career I was getting into to almost be too dirty, too physical, particularly with the Ironworkers is what he meant. It's like, "What are you doing this trade for? This is hard, this is rough, this is tough. What are you doing here?" He actually wanted me to do instrumentation; he thought that that would be a much better fit for me. I'd be clean all the time. It takes a lot of organizational skills and attention to detail, and women are really great at that, etc. Plus he talked about all these other benefits, like "You'll be employed forever," this that and the other. At the time, I just sort of brushed it off because I thought, well I don't even know what I'm doing here. I could assume that I would have that same feeling with anything else in this world, because this all looks different to me. So I'm going to stick to what I know. Even still though, I remember that conversation. When there's certain people who talk to me about certain trades, I tell them that – instrumentation. Not because there's anything to back away from a rough and tough trade, but just the fact of employment. Maybe the turnover rate of that trade isn't as much as it is with one of the construction trades. With the Ironworkers, we build things to completion and we move on. We build and the job is done and we move on, whereas instrumentation is more of a maintenance trade where you'd be there long term. It's always interesting to me to think about the first job I ever had, how I was given the advice to be talked out of it. I'm grateful I didn't. I'd say that everybody else too, like my brothers that I was working with – I wasn't working with any sisters at the time; I hadn't even met any other women on site. There was actually a pipefitter girl there, and I just remember them all knowing that she was a problem girl. I still don't know what that means, because I never interacted with her again. But I remember actually overhearing a fight between her and I'm assuming her supervision. She wasn't where she was supposed to be at a time, and I can remember the conversation going on and just remember thinking, I don't want that to be me. I don't ever want to give anybody a

reason to have an argument against me or my sisters or anybody else. So right there it kind of set my path.

Q: Then what happened in your apprenticeship up until the time you got your certificate?

DD: The rest of my apprenticeship, I finished all those shutdowns with Clearwater, that was all great. It became very difficult for me to secure work through the local, because I wasn't a member. You need three work reports to become a member. I don't know how many I had secured at that point, but you need 28 working days before you could be administered a work report, and you need three positive work reports. I knew that I didn't have the longevity on any of those singular sites to get that consistent work report. Additionally, as a welder, you have to be a journeyman before you can become a member. They don't have apprentice welders. The only apprentice welders that they have are journeyman ironworkers that have started a second apprenticeship and therefore they're already within the local. At that time, I wasn't going to let my apprenticeship go, because I couldn't get hours and I wasn't familiar with any of the other locals at the time. I started applying at non-represented shops, and that's where I ended up getting a lot of my hours for the rest of my apprenticeship. I'll tell you what, every time there was an opportunity for a union job I posted in, and if I got it I quit. The number one difference between working union and working non-union was the safety. I can't tell you how many times where as a second year apprentice I was trying to teach the guys who'd been in the shop for 10, 20, 30 years basic rigging safety, to the point where I became a problem in these shops. I was trying to promote this way of thinking and this way of being a tradesman to these other people, and it's because of what I learned on that first introduction of being on a union site where you do speak up, because you want to protect your brothers and sisters and you want to protect yourself. With the union, the trades are elevated. If you belong to a union, being a tradesperson is something to be very proud of. That was something I didn't get to experience in the shops. It was an environment that people didn't want to be in. It was every man for themselves. It was competitive, and not in the sense of competitive to secure work – competitive to secure personal stature, to secure personal fulfillment. That was something I hadn't been exposed to. When I worked my first exposures with the union, we were a team. We were only as strong as our weakest link, and suddenly that was gone. Unfortunately – and I say unfortunate, because I

would never condone working back and forth union non-union – but it was the only way I knew I could get to the union. I needed hours to become a journeyman to become a member. If I couldn't get my hours through the local, I had to get them somewhere, knowing the end game was always Local 720. At that time my boyfriend, that's where he was. That's where I wanted to go; it was all I knew in regards to construction unions. My only exposure to unions was healthcare. So after working a couple non-union jobs And also, the work just wasn't fulfilling. My small exposure at that time with the union, we were welding big heavy steel, big rods, we were gouging. It was very high production, it was stuff that made you feel good at the end of the day. In these shops, everything was small and particular, and it wasn't as gratifying welding something this big versus something that you can't even put into perspective. It just wasn't satisfying work. Then I remember I saw the job posting. My husband called me and said, there's a job I'm posting in on, you need to post in on it too; they have apprentice calls. I posted in and I got the job, and it was with Supreme Steel. It was on a PSV job, so we were actually working on 184th Street to start and we were doing all these cone sections. I remember the one journeyman and probably one of the journeymen that gave me the hardest time over all my years even to this day. We had to grind out this huge groove where they needed to back weld and all this stuff; we needed to get all the carbon out from gouging. It was me and this other apprentice. I knew right away that I was going to be doing most of the work. Even though he was 6-1/2 feet tall, he was big and broad and strong, he was on a five-inch grinder and I was on a nine-inch grinder. I knew it and I thought, you know what, don't complain. You're not going to complain. You know and everyone who sees this knows. It goes without saying. All I'm going to do by complaining is paint a target on my back. It's not going to be about his lack of production, it's going to be about my complaining. So I left it be, and sure enough that ten-hour day using that nine-inch grinder, my arms were vibrating. I hadn't done that much grinding yet in my career; that was unbelievable. So the next day right in the safety meeting it was brought up that, "Are we going to get the girl apprentice off that nine-inch and give it to," they called him Too-Tall, "give it to Too-Tall?" I just thought for a second, "No I'm okay," and that's what I said. "I'm okay with the nine-inch." I was uncomfortable, yes, my arms were burning; I didn't want to even be grinding. But I knew right there that that was going to establish something. So I kept that nine-inch grinder and I got transferred to Fort McMurray. They asked me if I would go up to Fort McMurray with the rest of the pieces and continue welding, the only problem being that I

was an apprentice. I wasn't a journeyman yet, so I needed to figure out how I was going to be allowed to weld on this structure. The welding superintendent at the time worked it out with the contractor and the owner of the site that I would test for my C pressure, which is a welding ticket, a one-time ticket that you can get, and it's a qualifier for pressure. We weren't doing anything that was going to be under pressure, but it was the same qualifications of. I was actually the only welding apprentice that was allowed to weld on that project. It was a lot of pressure. Looking back, I probably wasn't ready for it. I didn't have the problem-solving skills that are required with welding wire that I now have and that I would be confident to use. But it was a really big deal and I was really excited. Got up there, I started having a couple issues with people. I still wasn't a member, so it was one of those situations where you don't want to ruffle feathers, you don't want to create waves, you're not going to push back. But at the same time, you're starting to get this independence as a tradesperson and know what's right and know how long it takes you to get from point A to point B. I just started getting more confident and I was starting to butt heads with people. Things that I felt were issues that it would be easy for people to give me a hard time about. I remember this one. "How come you two aren't done putting up all the light strings on the bottom of the PSV?" I remember standing in the middle of this wide open area, this dirt field, and there's so much wind you always had to be careful because the wind and the dust would just blind you. I remember standing there just pretty much screaming in my foreman's face: "There's no lightbulbs in it, so we're looking for lightbulbs. We found three on site so far. You wanna know why there's no lights? Because you guys didn't order lightbulbs." But I was a third year apprentice, and me and that particular foreman did not get along for the next eight years. You know I was going to run into him again. So it's interesting how the relationship changed. Now that I'm not an apprentice he doesn't have to feel so slighted by an apprentice telling him what's up. Now that I've established myself in the local, there's no question of who I am or where my loyalties are or what my business was. It's just interesting.

Q: What's a PSV?

DD: It's a big cone. It's a pressure surge vessel. What it does, as the product comes into it, it swirls all around this thing. It gets heated up, froth rises to the top, everything that's liquid

would then flow out a pipeline, and the stuff at the top gets scraped and reprocessed. I've never seen it at the end. But ya, it was an amazing job I got to work with. It was my first introduction to American Ironworkers. It was a huge job and we had jobs everywhere. This was in 2013. I'm going to share this story on that particular job. There came a point in that job where they were going to transfer me to somewhere else, because they needed an apprentice welder somewhere. At first I was called into the office and they made me this offer, and I felt this need to appease everyone and say yes and be a people pleaser. It's one of my downfalls; I believe it's a downfall. So right away I accepted the position. I'm like, okay I'll go there, that's perfect. Then I went back to work and I started thinking, well if it's a 10 and 4 schedule it's gonna take me a hell of a lot longer to get all my hours than it will on a 21 and 7 schedule. Furthermore, on the 21 and 7 schedule it was supposed to be a 14 and 7, but because we were technically working our days off we were receiving a week of double time pay. Suddenly I was like, no no, back up the bus. I was like, what am I going to do now? I accepted this, I don't want this anymore. I'm like, oh great, what did I do? Delanee, that's what you get for saying yes. I said, you know what, no this is enough. I knocked on the door and the superintendent welcomed me. He's like, oh hey, how's it going? I sat down and said, you know, I've been doing some thinking. I was very serious and very somber. I remember saying, I think I was premature on my answer. I've done some thinking, and for the success of my apprenticeship, I need to stay here. I hope that doesn't cause bad blood and I hope there's still a position for me here. He's like, oh ya that's fine; thanks, I actually really appreciate that you went back and did some good thinking about it, and I agree you made the right decision. I was like, okay that was easy. So then the next question, would you go to nightshift? I was like, well what does that exactly mean? What does nightshift mean? What is that going to look like compared to my dayshift role? They informed me that on nightshift we would be bringing in all the new cone sections, and that's what was going to line the inside of the cone. The stuff that they're putting through there is very abrasive, tar sands, very abrasive. So we had to put an extra layer of stainless coated plate inside of the cone, so it was getting a second layer. You guys are going to be bringing the pieces in and fitting them to the wall. I thought, that's awesome, I've never done that before. Plus, Delanee, you're going to get a \$3 raise. I'm like, okay this is getting better by the minute. ... My husband had been up there with me for a short period of time before he was done in Fort MacMurray. He wanted to go back to Edmonton and continue working in the yard, same contractor and everything. So

they sent him back to Edmonton, so I was in Fort McMurray by myself. A few interesting things happened on that job. When I switched to nightshift, of course I go back and speak to my husband, or boyfriend at the time, and say, look, I'm getting switched to nightshift, it's more money. He's like, well I would come back to work nightshift. I'm like, oh okay. So I go and tell the superintendent, just so you know, if you're looking for nightshift people, Dave will come back up to Fort McMurray and work nights. It's an extra \$3 an hour, blah blah blah. So okay, Dave's coming back up, that's great. We do our first turnaround, we go back. I get a phone call from my mother-in-law. She got my letter from the AIT, so she has my results if I have passed my schooling or not yet. I already have all my hours and now I'm waiting for this letter. I did my second and third years back to back, so I had a whole bunch of hours to catch up on as well as wait for these exam results. I'm just trying to recall what order that happened. I had already received my results, forgive me. I had already received my results, so I knew that as soon as I got my hours I was going to be a red seal journeyman welder. I was just waiting, trying to count down the shifts, I'm adding it all. I knew that by the time I got back from this turnaround I'd have all my hours. All I needed was the hall to sign the book, and we were good to go. So that's what I did. I came back on nightshift; it was my first journeyman job. It was pretty cool, because I knew everybody there. They got to see me come into journeymanhood, and it was really exciting. The other really interesting thing about this job is that this was my and Dave's last job before we got married. Everyone knew we were engaged. Me and my husband actually got married on 7-20, the same date as our local union, Ironworkers 720. Our day was coming up for layoffs. The employer knew we were getting married, this is the date of our wedding, and we'd like to be laid off a month in advance. They were totally good with that. On our last shift I remember coming into the lunchroom. It was a very small shift of us on nights; there was six of us. We were all sitting in the lunchroom and I could see they were all stirring and I knew they were up to something. The super comes out and the GF and they're all just kind of looking around. The job steward, Henry Hughes, he brought me a card that they had drawn. I still have it right where I do my makeup every day. They drew me and Dave a picture on the back of a crane inspection sheet, and it showed a little PSV and the crane and it showed me and Dave and all our coworkers. They all signed it and wished us all the best in our marriage, and they gave us an envelope with \$800 cash in it. That was six of our brothers wanting to send us on our way with a good well wish. I remember starting to bawl instantly and go around and I'm giving

everyone hugs. They're like, "There's no crying in welding and ironworking." I said, "Right now I'm a wife." I just remember feeling like this is my family. I couldn't even tell my coworkers in a non-union environment what was safe and what was unsafe. Here I am with my union brothers and my soon-to-be husband, and they're wishing us on our way with almost \$1,000. They didn't have to do that. Furthermore, all these men over the age of 40 did not have to get together and draw me a card with highlighters on the back of a JLG inspection form. This is why I'm here and this is what I'm a part of now. Ya, that token, I've carried it on throughout every job. If there's someone that is sick, if there's somebody that has a child, if there's somebody that's just going through the dumps, I make sure that we have a card. I make sure that everybody signs it, I make sure that we do a collection. If we can't do a collection based on circumstance, we get a basket or do something. That moment for me was the moment I knew that this was the place for me. That was a lot of information; sorry, guys.

Q: That's your community.

DD: That is my community. That's what I fight for. The fact that relationships like that can exist in a workplace, that's what I fight for with the Labour Movement. That's why I want workers to be represented and to be unionized, so that they can feel like when they go to work they're just as valued as they are at home. There hasn't been a day in my working life as a union member that that hasn't existed. It's crazy, these things that are just a part of your life that you don't think about until you have to think about them.

Q: What do you do in welding, and how did you acquire those skills? Could you describe the sense of pride that developed as your skill level developed?

DD: One thing that was always very apparent to me as an apprentice working with my husband was where I stood on the skill level scale. Not because he highlighted it, but I was just very aware of what he could accomplish in an hour versus what I could accomplish in an hour. It made me very competitive, is what it did. Furthermore, with welding I learned very quickly that other welders and other tradespeople will be the first to come and look at your finished work. If I were to weld something and walk away, you can guarantee they're all coming to see what it

was or whose number is on that. After the inspector leaves, they're coming to see if it says VT okay or UT okay. Everyone's keeping tabs on each other's skill. So naturally, and probably because there were more eyes on me in general as a young woman in the field, I needed to be good. I was very fortunate that doing my C level welding in British Columbia gave me seven months of hand skill that no other apprentice had. Even if you put all the technical training of a welding apprentice in this province, it still wouldn't equal the amount of hours I had on a stinger before I'd even been on a jobsite. So felt like the hand skill was always there; it was the speed. That's why working with my husband was great, because he would always remind me, Delanee, first you get good, then you get fast. I was always reminded, that's right, I just gotta get good. I gotta get good, I gotta be more efficient. My husband is, I will say on the record for the rest of my life, one of the best welders I know. Not only do I know, but I'm willing to say he's one of the best welders in Local 720. He's naturally gifted, he can figure things out, he thinks ten steps ahead of everyone else. That's the number one reason he's the best partner I ever had. It's interesting the way our relationship was digested onsite. At first it was always like, oh married couple, let's separate them – that'll be good for morale, that'll keep out any drama, all that stuff. Within the first two weeks they learned damn well that we're the best partners to have together. We don't need to know what their family story is, or tell me about your wife, or what do your kids do? I know everything I need to know about this guy; all we have to do is work. It happens to be we live together, so we're really good at understanding what the other needs and when they need it. So we became partners. When your partner and your mentor is also one of the best welders on site, you start to pick up their good habits, and some of their bad habits, Dave. I remember being on a job in Saskatchewan. It was the first time we'd gone to work out of province. There was these two sections that both needed a lug welded on them. None of the ironworkers could do their work until the lugs were welded. Well there's two welding machines, two welders and two lugs – let's go, Dave. So we high-fived and it was lids down and we raced, and I won. Not only did I win, they all voted that mine was nicer. That was a big deal, and Dave was so good about it. It was never poor Dave, oh what's that going to do to his ego? He wants me to be better than him, he wants me to be faster, he wants me to be the best me. It was a really great and natural partnership and mentorship. It feels really good when you can go to a jobsite and everyone always asks where the other spouse is. I show up – where's Dave? What do you mean? Well, get him out here, he's sitting at home. Or he would be at a jobsite – where's

Delanee, where's the other half? Call her. I suppose somewhere somebody thinks or could have seen it as Dave helping me along my career in a way that wasn't mine, but me and Dave both know that that wasn't the case. Dave always knew that my career was mine; he just helped me be better at it. It was very interesting.

Q: Did you meet other women on those jobs?

DD: To be honest, my interactions with other women on the jobsites were very few and far between during my early years as a tradesperson. There were a couple of girl apprentices on the PSV job up at CNRL, one being an Ironworker, so we really didn't interact that much because the job was a weld show, so we were just welding, welding, welding. The welders were super busy, the Ironworkers were doing their thing, so we were kind of segregated. There was another girl, though, that had caused a lot of problems. She has family ties to the local, I'll say that – has family ties to the local. She was very young, younger than me at the time, which is actually crazy, because I was 18; no sorry, I was 20 at the time, so I think she was 18. Everyone's always told me my entire life since I was five years old that I'm an old soul. I think that makes a big difference and I think my entire life hearing that, it's just something people say. I don't get it. Until I had to see it in practicality and in the trades, it resonates. I see so many young women come in who are just young women – we're bubbly, we're excitable. To come into a world that is all mature men that are not excitable, are not bubbly, are not sassy, it's just polar opposites. I think that me being this old soul, I've never been giggly, I've never been giddy, I've been always looking for the serious conversation in the room. I think that I was just a different person coming into the trades. That's not to say that there isn't a place for every personality, but I think that your path throughout apprenticeship and throughout this industry is going to be very individual based on the type of person you are. I'm incredibly emotional, but this old soul feature makes me easier to first be introduced to, I think. That's my perception of it all. She really struggled, not only with the guys, she really struggled with me and I struggled with her. There's this girl who isn't capable of lifting the torque wrench or isn't capable of holding a nine-inch grinder all day, so she gets to work with the quality control people. Okay. It just didn't make sense to me. Why is she here? This was another girl. This was "Why is that right, why am I doing my job?" I kind of got sucked into the same mentality that probably a lot of men do and what

makes it difficult for women to succeed, is why is she getting special treatment? Why is she getting this? I think in that situation, to be totally honest, it was poor supervision skills. That could've been handled differently and probably not caused the sort of animosity it did between her and I. I'm having the boys in one ear saying, "Oh I wish I was a girl, then I could do that." Meanwhile, here I am standing there with a nine-inch grinder the same way they are, but without getting the credit. It took me a long time to realize, you don't need the credit, you're earning your credit. But it's hard when there's somebody the same gender as you that's perceived the same way you are, getting it easy, and her story is setting the tone, because if they were a girl they could have the easy job. Well why isn't my story setting the tone, that this girl is an equal? So for a long time I did not speak to that girl, I was incredibly cold to that girl, because I had a bone to pick. To be totally honest, I didn't even realize how – I'm sort of verbalizing this for the first time right now – but I didn't realize that until I was competent enough in my own, when it stopped mattering what anybody else, like it didn't matter because I knew how good of a welder I was. It didn't matter that she couldn't do her job or she couldn't keep up or that she was giving people a bad name. I knew that when people saw me they would see my skill set, my successes, my achievements. I'll tell you, me and her ran into each other again. It was interesting because when I knew she was there, the first thing I did was roll my eyes, like oh great, here we go all over again. Now as a journeyman I have to deal with this. What's it going to be like? I'm not going to tolerate this, because I have a responsibility I feel to every woman in my industry to make sure that their first day on the jobsite they're treated with respect because of the mark I left on them. That's something that I carry with me every day on my shoulders, that I want to make it easier for the next girl behind me. I do that by working hard. On this job, me and her were partnered. I'll tell you what, that immature little girl that I met on that jobsite was no longer. Jessie had matured into a bright woman who wanted to take charge and take ownership of her actions, and she wanted to be a part of it. I embraced it and I'll tell you what, she's one of my favourite partners. We laughed, everything that we did had hearts on it. I defended her. I would say that probably the most heated argument I've ever been in with somebody on a jobsite, was defending her. I would do it all again, and to this day, I tell both sides of the story. Don't discount anybody. We all are entering this world in a different space. Me and her may have both been introduced at the same age, but I was much more grounded somehow. That's who I am; I'm not sure really. But we were at different places, and it

took her longer to get there. But she's there. She's a journeyman now. My husband actually just had the pleasure of working with her again, and again she's killing it. I'm so proud of her. But it's been interesting getting to that perspective. At first when I wasn't confident in my own self, it made me incredibly defensive of her and her actions. Then as I grew into the tradesperson I am today and with the knowledge and skill base, I'm confident in my skills and in my trade and it really doesn't matter. I'm hoping that through Build Together, through projects like this, that that's a message we can get out there so that we can all help make those first days easier for each other. I think we get hung up on other people's shortcomings when sometimes they're a reflection of our own. I think Build Together is a really good vessel for that conversation.

Q Could you talk about the emotional component that's important in the job?

DD: I think that in construction it's very transient. We come and we go as the project dictates, as manpower requirements dictate, as the economy dictates. At any given time, there can be thousands of workers flooding from all over Canada to Alberta, and vice versa. I think that something I recognized right away, from working both union and non-union, was this family that is both discussed and not discussed that exists in union environments. We've all taken an oath to our local to do what it takes to keep our local in good standing with our contractors by providing quality work, safe work, and timely work. I think that has been achieved over the years by having this family-like unit where everyone takes care of each other. I believe that my role in that has been an important one. I don't think that I always knew that it was happening, but I've always felt like whether it be in the lunchroom, in camp, on the jobsite, I try and be that space for people to come to. Part of it's natural – I want everyone to feel happy and comfortable, and naturally as a woman I think I'm better at detecting when something isn't falling within those lines. When someone's having a bad day, I'm more likely to pick up on it than maybe one of our brothers. Something that's become very apparent to me is that I have been the safe place for many of my brothers. If that could be to share their insecurities on the job we're doing or their insecurities with some of the other coworkers or other trades, or if they're having a tough time at home or financially – for whatever reason, I have attracted those conversations. I quite often have related it to being the woman onsite. There's a certain amount of compassion that women naturally have, an emotional being to not only accept that

information but then be careful with it. It's how you handle that information is the next step. I think sometimes we all need that safe place, and the construction site isn't always the best place to find it. Especially when you're away working from your families, there's stresses that come with that. I was always very fortunate to travel with my family, me and my husband. We don't have children, it was the two of us. We always had that emotional stability, the physical compatibility. We had that person to have a hug at the end of the day. There's certain things like that that I think get forgotten about. I don't think they're forgotten about by our members, because we all experience it, but maybe by society. When we're up there in Fort McMurray, ya okay we're making big money. That's all that people see, is the outcomes of the big money. They see the nice house, the nice truck, the fancy toys, the cabins. But they don't see the sacrifice that is more than just being away from home. It's emotional sacrifice, it's physical sacrifice, it's stuff that you can't get back. I feel like my chosen place in this union family I have is to bear some of that burden with my brothers and my sisters. I don't want them to bear that burden alone, because they're not alone and that's the point. Here I go again. Damn these union people, I love them.

Q: Tell us about Build Together and your history with them.

DD: I'm just trying to think. It was on our two year wedding anniversary, which would be, okay five years; just some mental processing there. Okay, so I remember seeing a post on my union's website looking for any sisters that would be interested in joining this group called Build Together with the Building Trades. That was it, that's what the message said. I thought, well I have no idea what this is, but let's see what it is. Maybe it's training, maybe it's, who knows what this is. So I sent an email off saying, hey I'm interested; is there any further information that I could read up on? They emailed me a quick little digital pamphlet that had information on what the basis of the program was but not really what it could be or what it would end up being, I should say. So I said, okay I'm interested. I got another email saying, are you interested? I said, ya based on the information I was given, I'm interested; I don't really know too much. So that was it. I got a phone call a month later saying that my executive board had unanimously chosen me to be their representative. I was super excited about that. I remember feeling very privileged, like look at me, I have a role with my local union, I'm a representative going down to

the Building Trades. I felt honoured and I felt like I had been given this role, and it was all very exciting for me. This was sort of my first big intro. I had been invited to a couple other smaller events with my local. One of them was a strategic planning session where they wanted some varying perspectives, so that's why they utilized me. Then I had attended job steward training and foreman training and things like that. But this was my first role, so I felt very privileged and very honoured to be doing that. I remember our first meeting – it was on my wedding anniversary, so I remember that – all of us girls just sort of coming into the room. I remember definitely feeling like I should have my back up. Here was this group of women, all these other tradeswomen. We all think that we've got it going on with our own locals obviously, because we're being chosen ones from our locals. I find when you're in a world that isn't yours – and by that I mean a world we're the minority in – you're very protective of it. What you have established thus far, incredibly protective. There isn't always just a big group of women with their open arms. There's less chances of opportunity for us, so we're going to fight tooth and nail for them. Just to get it out there, if you're a man there's a million places for you to go and opportunities and doors opening. But when you're a woman, okay we don't even know what they're here for, and if there's fewer positions of success for a woman you gotta fight harder to get them. That might be my phone. . .

Q: What is Build Together doing?

DD: I think Build Together's overarching goal is to be a mechanism for industry to handle problems in the workplace. Quite often we get hung up on these problems, whether it's women not feeling that they're getting the same job opportunities, whether it's personal protective equipment not fitting properly, whether it's discrimination. Whatever the case may be, there needs to be a vehicle for solutions. Our goal, and I think the most practical use of Build Together, would be to take all of these subject matter experts and ask. We want to be the vessel for change. We have the knowhow, we have the skill, and we have the resources to do it. I think the goal is to be partnered with our contractors, with our owners. If you have this resource of solutions sitting here just waiting to be used, let's put it into action. We're very excited that Worley Parsons has reached out to us and asked for a sit-down on how we could develop a national program for them as a contractor to bring up issues of diversity and inclusion. We have

a very strong mandate on what we want that to look like. We want to explain the difference between equality and equity, because we feel that we're not actually asking for that much. We're just asking for somebody to understand the process and understand the barriers so that something can be done about them. I think the only way to do that is to get out into industry. Furthermore, with Build Together, the fact that we have representatives from each of the different affiliated locals coming together, is a really good showing of cooperation. We can work together, we do work together, and we will continue to. Build Together in my eyes has always been a real morale booster. We attend different events, we host our own curling bonspiel. We have raised funds and donated them to charity. We've been politically active by sitting down with different MLAs and attending MLA receptions. We are being involved in organizing efforts and getting familiar with the labour code within our province. We want to make change but we need the connections, we need the vessels into industry. We can do it here, but it has to be out out there. Furthermore, this is for everybody, this isn't just for the women of the Building Trades. We want to make tangible change for every single member. We have never gone into this thinking, what can we do for women? What can we do for our industry? The problems that the seven percent have, you can guarantee the other 93 percent are having it; it's just different. If we can address the biggest and ugliest problem in the room, maybe we can address the others. Build Together is in this for all of us, not just the women. If that's what it takes to get the issues fixed, then we'll wear that. But we're here for everybody.

Q: What's your role in Build Together?

DD: I was one of the very first people brought on with Build Together, one of the originals. Ironworkers was very supportive of having a member join in right away, and because of my commitment to it I've just stayed. Throughout that when we first started, we would do rotating chair positions so everyone got an opportunity to lead and prepare agendas and see how that all played out. But we soon found that in order to make any action we needed some consistency, so that meant having some more permanent positions. We started having co-chairs but unfortunately, with the change of industry and some turbulence out there, one of the affiliates that co-chaired with me, actually their local union left the Building Trades. When that happened, it was down to myself, and as a committee we sort of took a minute to look at what

was going on and we realized that our participation with Build Together was not guaranteed, that we were all part of an industry that can be political and that can be unforgiving. So as such, we need to make hay while the sun shines and we need to secure some positions and move forward. That's when the committee nominated me and asked me if I would do the chair position. I am now the sole chair for Build Together Alberta, but we do have our financial secretary and we still have our recording secretary so we do have an executive board and of course everything is still through the executive director and anything big is put through the executive board. So we still have structures there. But as far as my role goes, I try and do a lot of the in between work, whoever it is we're partnering with. Or if we're being part of an event or being invited somewhere, I'm typically the go between. I also coordinate and plan when each meeting is going to happen, just sort of ensuring that the health of the committee is there. Part of that also means I've come to learn about doing things that aren't so fun, like letting people know when their participation should be increased or letting people know what's expected of them even if they're not receptive to it. I think it's made me a better leader in the sense that coordinating – this is my first experience working with so many women – coordinating this many women is a chore, I will say that. As a woman I'm difficult, I'm opinionated. My sisters are incredibly patient with me and help us get to all of our goals. But it can be incredibly difficult working with a large group of people who all want the same end goal but just the path to get there can be so different. It means balancing people's ideas. Build Together has given me a lot of really good tools just in being a leader and moving up and knowing what it means to have responsibilities and timelines and all these things that were a small introduction in the beginning to a much, well it's my career now.

Q: How big is the group?

DD: When we started we were 14 people and we are currently 6 of a possible 18. Our numbers have fallen with the amount of work in the province. As times get tougher, trying to secure a job has become tougher. Build Together Alberta will always only be union-friendly, so our sisters that have had to go and work elsewhere outside of our affiliates have been removed. There are some women who have left the trade altogether. We have affiliates who left the Building Trades. We have what I believe to be a lack of financial support from locals who may be resistant to

sending us a new representative to replace one that has since gone or a new one. There's a financial responsibility attached to that, and if there isn't the same income coming into the local, how can they justify it? So it's been an interesting balancing act. None of us are experienced in this, so we just kind of play it as it goes and try and keep the health of the committee. We have the commitment of the Building Trades and of course our locals to keep the committee going, but there comes a time when there's this much work and this many people. That balance is beginning to show itself, so we're trying to adjust accordingly. But when the workload of 16 is now on six, and six people that also have fulltime jobs, we work really well together and I'm grateful for their patience with me and with each other, because it gets to be a lot. Being asked to do things outside of payroll, it can be a lot.

Q: What year did Build Together start?

DD: Build Together started in 2014, or was it 2015? I want to say 2014 it started, yep.

Q: How are health and safety incidents handled?

DD: Typically, if you are on an industrial site you would have gone through a pre-access drug and alcohol test, to start with. Any of the large Fort McMurray sites obviously have the drug and alcohol test. Once you receive your job you would then be scheduled in to go and provide a urine sample. With that urine sample, it's typically five to seven panel. They're testing for everything from opiates to THC, marijuana, methamphetamines – you name it, they're looking for it. Once you have successfully passed your drug and alcohol test, you would then go onsite. When an incident occurs onsite, there's a few things that they want to know. First is if there was property damage, if there was damage or an injury sustained, if it's a near miss. It all depends what bracket this is in. If it's a near miss, almost an accident, almost got hurt, it would be reported. Once it was reported, that's how it should go. Things like near misses are reported so that they can detect trends in poor safety. Let's say there was a near miss happen, no property damage, no bodily harm, but they notice that the worker is behaving funny. That's what we call reasonable cause. They have reasonable cause to now send you for a drug and alcohol test to see if you are under the influence. Say you're slurring your words, you're stumbling, maybe your

eyes are really bloodshot, maybe there's an odor of alcohol on you. They're going to send you away, and that's what we call reasonable cause, that they have reasonable cause to believe that you may be under the influence. That could be after an incident, or there could've been no incident. You could've been tying up your shoelaces on the wrong foot and they could inquire about what is causing this worker If there was an incident, let's say somebody backed a truck into a barricade, there's now been an incident, there's now been property damage. First thing you would do, freeze the scene; first thing you do, freeze the scene. Don't drive the truck forward, don't do anything. The scene has to be frozen so that a proper assessment of it can be done. Next thing you're going to do is you're going to call your front line supervision, your foreman. They will come and assess the situation, probably bring further supervision from up the ranks, and safety is going to be involved. At this point, because there is property damage, they already have a reasonable cause, there will be a drug and alcohol test happening. Of course, there's what we call the Canadian model, which lays out your obligations as someone working for the COAA. You will choose, based on what works for you, whether you will provide a swab and a breathalyser or a urine sample and a breathalyser. Both are up to your discretion, and the incident will carry through. Obviously, if nobody is hurt that's the best case scenario; if somebody is hurt, of course at that point safety emergency services would be brought in. If there was an incident within a piece of equipment or somewhere that was hard to get, you would have high angle rescue attend or perhaps the rope team come in and get you out of there. But you can guarantee that if there was an incident, it needs to be reported, it needs to be investigated, and then there will be some sort of outcome, whether that be through the investigation they find something is faulty or whether they find out through the drug and alcohol test that that person was under the influence. There will be an outcome, but there is a process. It doesn't matter how minor, there's a process.

Q: How does the union get involved with potential health and safety issues?

DD: I'll be completely honest, the union itself, aside from providing the mandatory safety training – and by mandatory I mean mandatory by the site owners, not by the local union; this is training that's mandatory to perform the work – the union has no say in the safety. That is all contractor. My belief is that union people uphold those rules better and more wholeheartedly

because of the union mentality, as opposed to the union forcing safety rules on workers. I hear that quite a lot from my non-union friends – oh ya, I don't like the union because of the safety. Well it's not the union providing the safety, it's the union members ensuring the safety for each other. That's the difference. Let's say, something that occurs every single winter is falling ice. These big steamers, there's so much steam that comes out of a plant and it creates a lot of ice buildup. There have been several workers die in this province because of falling ice. For example, what we do in that situation is we all have a responsibility to each other to keep an eye out for unsafe conditions, one of them being ice buildup. When ice buildup is first seen it would be reported to front line supervision. Before a worker would walk away from the area they would red ribbon probably let's say 20 feet around the area so that no other worker When you see red ribbon, that is 100 percent sure sign that you are not allowed to be in there, regardless of anything. Unless your name is on the tag or you're working on the crew that that tag belongs to, do not cross it. Right away if a worker puts up red flag, they'll know that no other worker should be entering that area. Front line supervision will be called, and then because this is a regular occurrence, Syncrude and different owners like this have personnel that are trained and hired to go and do this. They go up there, knock the ice down, melt it or whatever it is they do, and bring it down. I guess it still comes down to the workers looking after each other, but there's definitely those processes in place. Just like common practices – that's something that's a common practice for all of us now, because we're used to working in the northern Alberta winters. If we had our brothers and sisters from the south coming up and helping us, that isn't a common practice for them. That's something that I think as union people we recognize more than other groups of people, is that when we have somebody that isn't familiar we know the hazard and know to inform them. I think that there's an ownership of safety that's within a union person more so than other groups, so I think that we advise each other well on things like that.

Q: What are the differences in safety between a union and non-union workplace?

DD: What I find interesting is that there's always this correlation with safety and union people. It's been confusing to me for a while, as a union person. When I hear, oh the union with all the safety, I can't handle it – to me that doesn't make sense, because I know that it's the contractor

that demands the safety. But that being said, union people, Building Trades affiliated people, harness that safety within themselves for each other. I think that differs from our competition or the unrepresented sector, because they don't have the same ownership to their organization that we do. We have a responsibility to our local union and therefore have a responsibility to our brothers and sisters. Unless you've earned your way into an organization and you belong to an organization that legitimately has fought year after year, battle after battle to secure these safe working conditions, how can you ever really harness it? That's what the unions in this province do – they've harnessed it from the beginning of time in this province, for not only the represented workers but for every other worker, whether they knew it or not. I think there's a lot of thank yous that our organizations are owed. We've saved a lot of lives just by protecting each other. I think it's forgotten about quite often in this province. I don't think there's any shame in saying that this province is staunchly Conservative. There's a sense of independence that I find, coming from B.C. I find as a person who wasn't in this province until a working class adult, there's this very singular way of thinking in Alberta. Not with all, of course, not with all. But you look back at Alberta's history and everything has been the work of many. You think about the Wheat Board, you think about the different counties that have been brought together in Alberta. That didn't happen by one person or one group of people, that happened by a collection of like-minded people banding together for the benefit of all. That's what the unions have done since day one and that's what they'll continue to do. My local turned 70 years old yesterday, and we will continue to do it for the next 70 years. It's something that is harnessed in here, it's not just something that's an added bonus to a paycheque. Safety has to be lived, it has to be practiced. It's a living thing. I don't practice safety because a contractor wants me to or because it'll help them secure the next bid. I practice safety because every single one of my brothers and sisters needs to get home every day the same way I do. I know that they carry that burden with the same weight as me every single day. That's why we did this, that's why we got into this, is so that we could be together and we would have that second set of shoulders to keep us up when we couldn't do it ourselves. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

Q: Is there sometimes pressure from the employer to ignore some incidents in order to avoid the inconvenience of a temporary shutdown?

DD: One of the best parts about working union and being in a union environment, in construction specifically, is this responsibility to each other. There's this unwritten code of having each other's back, and it's something that we all take very seriously. That includes having each other's back when it comes to safety and our personal sense of wellbeing in safety. I would say this. If your employer is asking you to turn the other way when your life is at risk, your safety is at risk, the hands and feet and limbs of your coworkers are at risk – that says everything you need to know about that employer. We show up and go to work so that we can show up and go to work, then the next day we can show up and go to work. When an employer is willing to turn a blind eye to the opportunity you have to show up and go to work the next day, that says everything you need to know about them. That dollar on your paycheque is never going to be worth your life. I can promise any worker that has ever felt that way, there's somebody in our world – whether it be a business agent, whether it be the business manager, whether it be the job steward, whether it be a brother or sister on the job – that will stand with you and make sure that your concerns are heard, that they're validated, and that they are addressed. In my world, in the union world, we expect and we accept nothing less.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to say?

DD: I think my biggest thing I want everyone to understand is that we're invested in them, not just in a sense that we want to make our most vulnerable feel included or our most segregated feel included. I want our industry to work as one, to function as one. I want, when there's a success for the pipefitter, that it's a success for the insulator. I want us to feed off of each other's ups and be there in each other's downs. I think that above all else we're facing, at least in my time, we're facing big challenges ahead of us right now, whether it be political, whether it be legislative, whether it be internal. Our backs are up right now, and Build Together and me personally are invested into ensuring that our backs aren't up to each other. We still need to have room for conversation and we still need to build that fire and bring everyone together. We need to build morale so that we can build market share. When we build market share, we have jobs. We can't do it without each other. I'm trying to inspire that into Build Together because once we have momentum and once this industry is reminded about what belongs to it and what we are and what we're capable of, ya I think we need an uprising. I really just want the message

to be clear that Build Together is here now, it's here to stay, although we hope our focus changes. We hope that in ten years we don't have to worry about attracting and retaining women anymore. Maybe at that time Build Together is just about morale building. Maybe we're about mass organizing campaigns. Maybe we're about educating the next generation of business managers and agents. But whatever it looks like, Build Together is going to support this industry, because this industry has supported us. We're all so grateful to belong here. It makes me really proud to be a part of Build Together and to be a part of the Building Trades and the successes. We're just better together.

[END]