

## ENHANCED EXPOSURE EQUALS

# A More Diverse Workforce

### The Situation

Debra Lary, Work-Based Learning Coordinator for Newton County Schools in Covington, GA, is responsible for introducing high school students throughout the county to work-based training programs and careers. “I receive calls looking for good students all of the time, but if students haven’t been exposed to the industry or the opportunities an internship or job could lead to, then it is a hard sell,” she said.

Then, her Career Tech Director introduced her to ConstructReach, a workforce development initiative and consultancy that works with educators, brands, general contractors, and students to continue filling the pipeline for the construction industry with diverse, high-performing candidates.

### The Challenges

“Construction is a hard sell, especially for some of our good students because they don’t realize how much money there is to be made in construction,” she shared. “Me telling them only goes so far.” She was struggling to reach *all types* of students.

When Debra started speaking with ConstructReach, she immediately expressed interest in an “I Built This!” event—a platform for construction companies, educators, students, household brand names, and the surrounding community to gather for a day filled with learning, fun, and promise.

“As we began planning this event, the ConstructReach team was simultaneously sending me information and resources for all my students—and tips on how to attract diverse students to construction.”

### The Solution

The ConstructReach team also shared valuable contacts with Debra and came to speak to construction and manufacturing classes throughout the county. “They were young and engaging,” she said. “The students listened and became excited about the possibility of working within the construction industry.”

Then, the ConstructReach team came for the “I Built This!” Event.

“This was an eye opener for students; it showed them that there are more job opportunities within construction than those for which you wear a hard hat,” she shared. “Students that have never expressed an interest in the industry or responded to my calls for internships or jobs were asking questions and getting hands-on experience!”

### The Results

ConstructReach meets students where they are in order to get and keep their attention. Now, Debra is seeing more interest from a more diverse pool of students than ever before. “I’m seeing more women and more minorities express interest in construction opportunities I’m presenting to them now,” Debra said.

A bonus? As a result of the event, five students received internships and three received permanent positions.



**DEBRA LARY**

Work-Based Learning  
Coordinator for Newton County  
Schools in Covington, GA



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