



## Director's Message:

Madame President, Doreen Bartoldus, charged us with **envisioning equity** this year. Equity is to realize that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.

Let's be open, understanding, and learn and listen as leaders. We are here to strengthen and amplify the success of women in construction. We all have different stories, but all of us are here for a reason.

### My "Her-Story":

I came to this country when I was 4 years old from Bolivia and had to learn English. We all lived in a basement -- mom, dad, baby sister and me all in one bed. Even though my mom didn't have any other family here and didn't know English herself, I watched her persevere.

Mom found an opportunity to live and take care of a family in Virginia. We lived on a farm. It was a new and incredible experience. My sister and I were young but we still marvel at how our mom worked so hard to support our family, all the while selflessly helping others.

My father became abusive. Mom took us away and raised us as a single mom. She learned English, started her own business and continued to help others. We moved when mom took a job caring for a wealthy family. We lived in a very nice part of town and had opportunities we had never had before -- sailing on a yacht along the east coast in the summers, riding in a leer jet in the winters out west to ski --but we always remembered our beginnings and the importance of helping others in need, no matter their circumstances.

As I said, we all have stories and are all here together for a reason. My experiences helped mold me. They allowed me to grow as a person and as a teacher. They brought me awareness and showed me how to stand up for those whose voices aren't being heard.

Let's **Envision Equity** together and continue to advocate for women in the construction industry. Our work is not done. We all have a voice here. Let's not be afraid to be leaders or to have those uncomfortable conversations. Let's listen with empathy, sincerity and authenticity.

And as Ruth Bader Ginsberg once said, "Real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time."

Have a great Fall Conference.

With my respect and appreciation,

**Romina Byrd**

Northeast Region Director 2020-2022