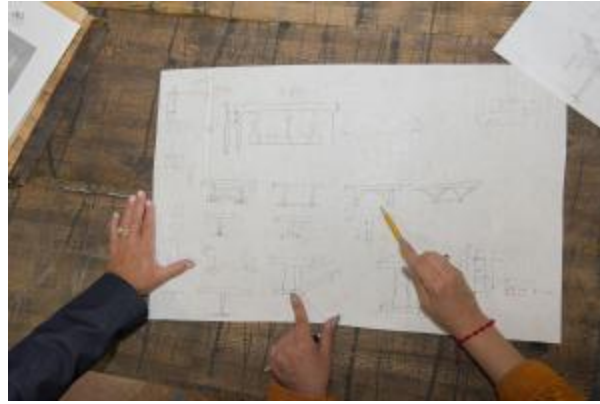


Once Protégé, Now Mentor, Suzanne Donaldson Helps Others

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Suzanne Donaldson, owner of Donaldson Enterprises, believes in giving back. Hear how she serves as a role model for others through our program that first helped her.



Why do you serve as a mentor in our mentor protégé program?

I am very passionate about lifting others up through mentorship, encouragement and support because I would not be where I am today had others not offered the same to me at critical points along my journey. I have served as a mentor and a coach for small businesses and individuals for several years. When the Port asked if I would serve as a mentor, I immediately

accepted because it provides me the opportunity to directly give back to the community through a program that benefitted me and my business. I feel that it is important that there are mentors and role models who are minorities and females serving in this capacity. The number of visible successful businesses and role models in the past has been primarily Caucasian males. As the number of minority businesses increase and the number of female businesses increase so should the successes. As a successful female minority business owner, I am honored to be a mentor in the Port's mentor protégé program and to serve as a role model by sharing my experiences of overcoming adversity, beating the odds, working hard and learning some tough lessons along the way.

Was participating as a protégé in our program useful, and why?

Absolutely! I was very fortunate to have two seasoned mentors who shared their real-life experiences and processes with me. The support services that were provided to me were very helpful; specifically the hands-on accounting support was extremely useful. I always knew how much money I had on hand but learning to understand a profit and loss statement and a balance sheet was very important. Utilizing an official accounting system rather than the “old shoebox method” was critical to realizing the financial health of my business. Developing and implementing a marketing plan was the pivoting point for Donaldson Enterprises. I still utilize a marketing plan and I set goals as my business grows. Additionally, the networking opportunities allowed me to build and strengthen relationships with others in the industry, some of which I have partnered with and have worked with for several years.

Tell us a little about your business?

Donaldson Enterprises, a 100 percent American Indian Female Owned Business, was established in 2002 and started working in the construction industry on small projects providing Minority-owned, Woman-owned, or Emerging Small Business outreach consulting services, at the time known as outreach consulting. Over the years, I learned skills and added to my service offerings as my capacity grew. Donaldson Enterprises is a 100 percent Native American Woman Owned Business that started in 2002 providing legal assistant services to multiple attorneys. In 2003, the company moved into the construction industry providing business development and outreach consulting services. Donaldson Enterprises works with clients nationally offering everything from community engagement to workshops and project management plan coordination to staff augmentation in the public and private sectors.

Anything else you want to say?

The fundamentals that I learned in the Port's mentor protégé program continue to help me grow my business. I feel very fortunate to have been a part of the program as a protégé and now to be a mentor is very fulfilling. I absolutely love my life, my network, the work that I do

and most of all, the feeling that I get knowing that I have helped others through mentoring, coaching and support services. I am lucky that this is all part of my business and I get to do this every day!

Learn more about our small business opportunities at www.portofportland.com.