

# **Women in Construction: Defying Stereotypes - Part 1**

## **- Emma Szalewicz**

Holly Andersen has a job that most people would classify as a typical “man’s job.” I am inspired by her and all that she does. Holly is the Project Manager for the Planning Office at Bennington College in Bennington, Vermont. She is the mother of two girls, Josie (seven) and Celia (four). Her weekend/winter jobs include being an examiner for the American Association of Snowboard Instructors and for the Professional Ski Instructors of America Adaptive Education Staff. In the following interview, she described her job.

"I have many jobs. I am a mother of two young children. I have a four year old and a seven year old. I work for the American Association of Snowboard Instructors and I am an examiner, so I give exams to snowboard instructors in The Eastern Division between Maine and Florida. I am on the Professional Ski Instructors of America Adaptive Education Staff, so I give certifications and educational clinics to instructors who teach adaptive skiing and snowboarding. I help people learn how to guide blind people or people missing limbs. I volunteer at the Adaptive Sports Foundation. I also teach water skiing to disabled people, and I volunteer in the winter for The Adaptive Sports Foundation and I teach adaptive skiing and snowboarding to Wounded Warriors, generally from the Iraq war, but pretty much to anyone who served and has been disabled as a result. Then I am a staff trainer at Mount Snow in Dover, Vermont, where I help train and provide educational assistance for snowboard instructors. And then I work at Bennington College. I am the Project Manager for the Planning Office and I run the Capital Construction on campus, which includes underground steam lines, water mains, mechanical systems, renovations to existing buildings and roofs, and construction of new buildings. I was the Project Manager for the Center of the Advancement of Public Action (CAPA) on campus for the college and had a lot of fun with that.

I started school thinking I wanted to be an environmental engineer. Then I learned that engineers just sit at a desk all day, which was not for me. I spent a summer working with my uncle as an electrician's apprentice and I was hooked on construction. Now I have a degree in construction management and wood products engineering."

"My typical day is like this. Wake up at 5:30. Pack lunches, pick up, get cleaned up and ready for work, wake kids up, feed them, dress them, brush hair, teeth, get Josie dressed and ready with snack, homework, and teacher folder, get her on the bus, pack Celia in the car with lunch and change of clothes and drop off at BECC (pre-school) and wash her hands. Leave there and go to a septic system install, roof repair, meet an engineer at a streamline, talk to an architect about egress, deal with unhappy occupants of buildings, meet a code official, meet with boss, go in a basement, up on a roof, climb in a truck with a contractor and go look at something broken, have a sustainability meeting, meet with faculty, and then sit at my computer for five minutes. Then go pick up Celia while she is screaming that she does not want to leave, pick Josie up at tennis or at sitter's. Go home, get mail, unpack lunches, launder dirty clothes, feed cats, get dinner ready, feed kids, Rob comes home, feed him, clean up mess, read with Josie, sometimes go to a board meeting or a conference call. About 7:30 watch a show with the kids and then take them upstairs and get them in bed, read books, then go downstairs and pay bills. You know, relax."