



A WALK IN THEIR SHOES

with **JAMEKA WHITE**

OJT PROGRAM GRADUATE | ACCOUNT ASSISTANT, ARCHER WESTERN

In our first release of "A Walk in Their Shoes," a special edition series of Progress Magazine highlighting graduates of the District Department of Transportation's On-The-Job (OJT) Program, we feature Jameka White. Jameka is a District native and recently became a first-time homeowner in Ward 8, not too far from where she grew up. After completing the OJT Program, where she received training as a Safety Specialist Trainee, she was hired full-time as an Account Assistant for Archer Western, a subcontractor on the New Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge project. We sat down with Jameka to learn more about what led her to participate in the OJT Program and why she's excited to work on this significant bridge effort for the city.

HER STORY

WHAT WERE YOU DOING PRIOR TO JOINING THE OJT PROGRAM AND WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE?

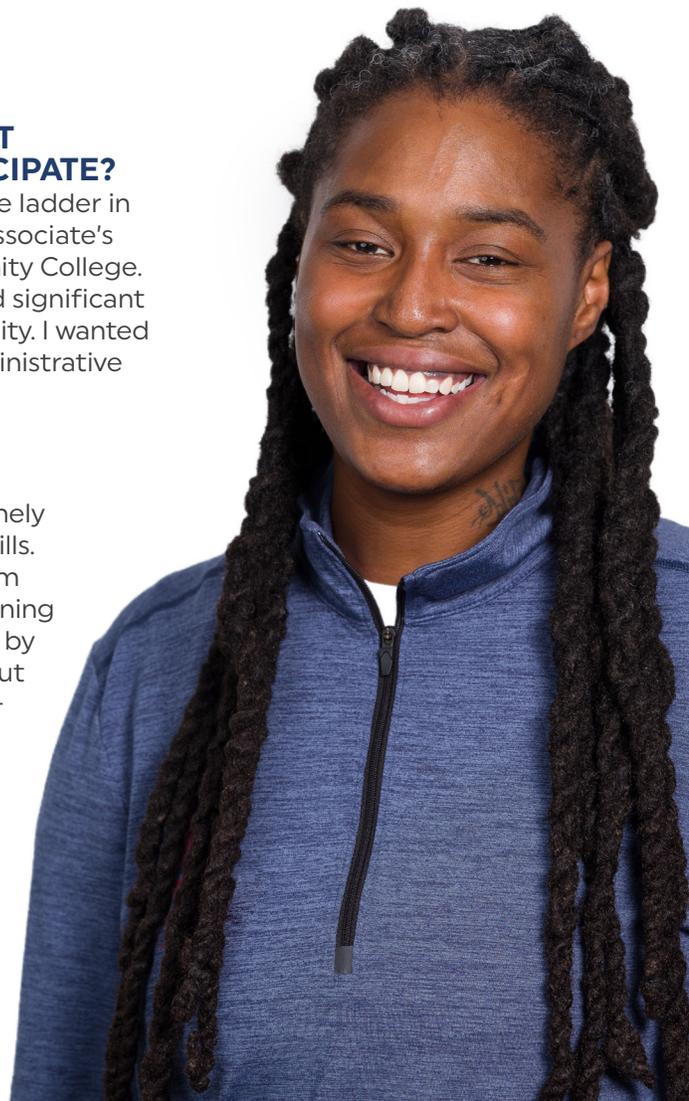
I started off my career as an electrician. I saw myself moving up the ladder in construction so I decided to further my education by getting an associate's degree in construction management from Montgomery Community College. Prior to earning my degree, I was in a bad car accident that caused significant nerve damage to my arm to the point where I no longer have mobility. I wanted to find a way to stay in construction, so I decided to learn the administrative side of things through the OJT Program.

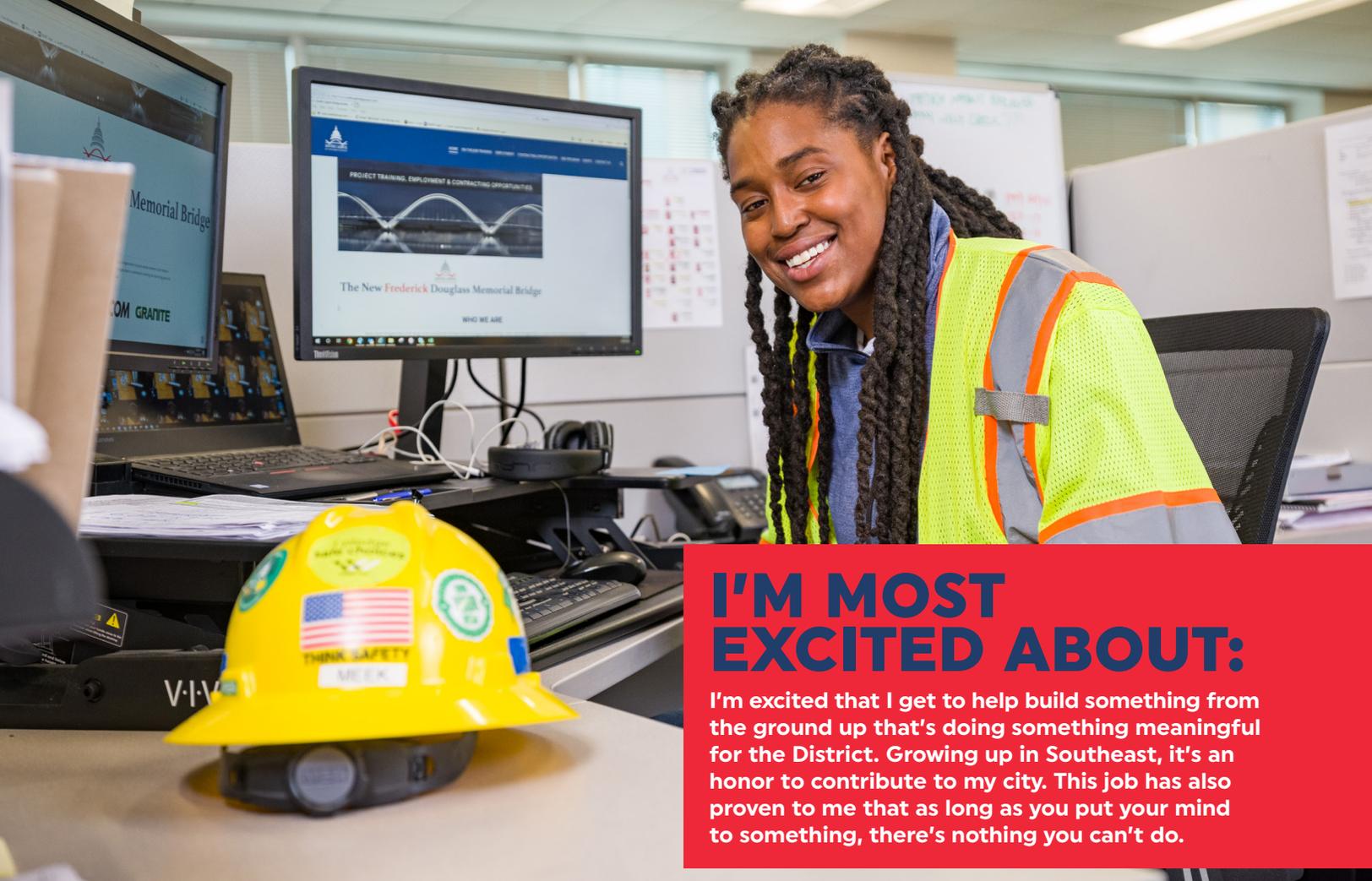
WHAT ARE SOME OF THE VALUABLE SKILLS YOU ACQUIRED FROM WORKING IN THE PROGRAM?

I learned how to be a problem solver and how to fulfill tasks in a timely manner. I also learned valuable team building and management skills. First, for me it was about completing tasks in just my trade. Now I'm learning things from how to get permits to how to think about planning for a big project such as this – all of the things you don't get to see by just doing one thing. As a general contractor you have to learn about the whole job, so learning more about other parts of construction – the overhead, the financials, the planning – was helpful.

WHAT DOES YOUR CURRENT JOB ENTAIL?

In my new role as an Account Assistant, I handle documents for new hires, complete incident reports, and help out with the MOT (Maintenance of Traffic) team, which supports traffic control and inventory on the streets. I also work very closely with the accounting department to ensure that subcontractors have the proper documentation completed (i.e. insurance forms and pay applications) to be compensated.





I'M MOST EXCITED ABOUT:

I'm excited that I get to help build something from the ground up that's doing something meaningful for the District. Growing up in Southeast, it's an honor to contribute to my city. This job has also proven to me that as long as you put your mind to something, there's nothing you can't do.

THE BEST PART OF THE JOB:

I love who I work with, that's the main thing. I love being in an atmosphere that supports learning. There are no limitations. I'm not worried about them putting too much on my plate because they're always teaching me more and showing me how to get it done. I love the hands-on experience, not just from the OJT Program, but in my current role. Learning as I go and having a mentor has allowed me to truly thrive in my new career!

IN 10 YEARS, THIS IS WHERE I'LL BE:

I see myself as a head accountant or head controller on a smaller job someday. I see myself like my boss, the controller (head accountant), eventually running my own office, being a manager or maybe even an engineer one day.

JAMEKA'S ADVICE TO OJT PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS:

Come in with an open mind and be sure to listen. Be open to new things and to learning. Have a positive attitude; that will take you a long way. Attitude is the most important thing.

“You can do anything you set your mind to!”