

Bethesda

BY MoCo360

Bright Young Things

Watch for these faces someday on a *Fortune* magazine cover, Wheaties box or Oscars broadcast **BY DAWN KLAVON**



Sami, Kenzie and Emmie Goldsteen

Sisters Doing It for Themselves

Construction is a predominantly male field, but not if the Goldsteen sisters have anything to say about it. In 2022, the Bethesda residents—Sami, 17, Kenzie, 15, and Emmie, 13—founded Buildgirls, a nonprofit educating high school girls about women in architecture, construction and engineering, or ACE.

The idea came during COVID, when students worked remotely and the sisters used their father's desk at home for schoolwork. Their dad, who works with infrastructure companies, had many presentations from businesses across the industry sitting on his desk. One day, Sami noticed all his team slides had one thing in common—they were all pictures of men.

"I was able to learn firsthand that women only represent less than 10% of

the entire ACE fields," says Sami, who goes to Holton-Arms School in Bethesda (her younger sisters attend Sidwell Friends School in Washington, D.C.). "They make up less than 2% of those leadership roles."

So the sisters started their female-centric organization to offer a variety of opportunities at the high school level. Buildgirls now has more than 250 members in 18 states and three countries. The Buildgirls team records and posts video and audio interviews on buildgirls.org, highlighting accomplished women in ACE professions.

The group also holds "discovery events," putting members face-to-face with leaders in the field. The Goldsteen girls are all considering careers in an ACE field, and Buildgirls offers excellent chances for all of its members to make inroads.

"There are opportunities if you want them," says Buildgirls member Lila Rosenberg, 17. "It's really important to be spreading this information."

ACE executives emphasize the necessity of the organization. "It absolutely needs to be done," says Susan Hecker, an executive vice president at Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Services and a Buildgirls advisory board member. "To see what Buildgirls is doing, starting at a younger age, it's so important—I think what they've accomplished is nothing short of extraordinary."



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