



2021 Women in Building Services: Daniela Siu, BBS Architects, Landscape Architects and Engineers PC

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Name: Daniela Siu

Title: Senior Mechanical Engineer

Company Name: BBS Architects, Landscape Architects and Engineers

What did you want to be when you grew up?

My path to engineering began at a young age with my interest sparked by my father (also an engineer), who loves fixing things. One of his hobbies, was repairing mechanical wrist watches and even if this required a lot of concentration he was trying not to be bothered by my noisy and nosy presence. I remember how mesmerized I was by the complexity of the mechanisms inside those little watches and how my father was feeding my curiosity.

I watched and learned from him, not only about fixing things, but also coming up with all sorts of ideas to improve them and work even better than before. I think this helped me a lot in developing an analytical thinking and a penchant for problem solving.

What led you to your current profession?

The feeling of accomplishment when I helped my father tinkering, his encouragement and open mind towards the fact that a girl, besides playing with dolls, can also be interested in how they are made or how they can be fixed (after a fight with my sister when, I was left with the head or the leg only to play with), made me later start thinking about engineering as a possible career.

In the past year, what project, transaction or accomplishment are you most proud of?

In November 2020, the modern Universal Pre-Kindergarten center opened its doors to Bay Shore children. My company, BBS, had the big task of re-purposing and bringing back to life a once abandoned Bay Shore Armory. I designed the HVAC and plumbing of the building. I can truly say that this was the most challenging project in my career so far. I am really proud about the result and about the fact that so many little kids will enjoy such a beautiful modern facility that, together with their teachers, will support and guide them in their first step in school education.

Who was/is your mentor and how did s/he influence/help you in your career?

In my career I met a lot of great people who helped and mentored me and to whom I am, and I will always be grateful. My most important mentor remains my father. I am where I am today, enjoying my profession and doing great things for our schools thanks to him.

What trends will dominate your industry in the coming months?

With an airborne virus like sars-cov-2, the absolute riskiest places for groups of people are indoor environments that have very poor fresh air ventilation. This describes thousands of public schools across the U.S. A significant amount of energy and research is put into ensuring school's air filtration and ventilation systems meet the necessary requirements during the pandemic.

How do you contribute to your community or profession?

By following the ASHRAE Epidemic Task Force Guide recommendations in retrofit and plan for the improvement of indoor air quality and to slow the transmission of viruses via the HVAC systems, to concentrate my effort in using a combination of strategies that will include increased ventilation, better filtration, improved air distribution, or use of other air cleaning or treatment technologies.

What books or social media influencers would you recommend to other women?

20% of electricity is used for air conditioning the building around the globe so, I am very interested in how anybody can create a more energy efficient air conditioner that will also cool the buildings without warming the planet. What caught my eye, recently, was an article about MIT professor Mircea Dinca, (who was born in the same town in Romania as I) co-founder of Transaera. The company is using a class of materials (metal organic frameworks-MOFs) to create a more energy efficient AC and was one of the 8 finalists in the competition Global Cooling Prize.

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