



**2022 Women in Construction: Christina Champness,
Lendlease**

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Name: Christina Champness

Title: Project Executive

Company Name: Lendlease

What advice would you offer to other women getting into the construction industry?

Early in my career, someone told me make sure to “take a seat at the table.” You should not only be present but, more importantly, ensure your voice is heard. This is one of the best pieces of advice I ever received, and it’s especially important for women entering a historically male-dominated field. By taking a seat and speaking up, we’re able to contribute to meaningful conversations with a perspective that is uniquely our own. This results in better projects and, at the end of the day, a better company in which everyone feels recognized and respected.

What was your greatest professional achievement or most notable project in the last 12 months?

My most notable project in the last 12 months is the Blythedale Children’s Hospital Therapy Village renovation and expansion. The new Therapy Village is such a unique space and is the center of Blythedale’s rehabilitation program for physical and occupational therapy. Completed February 2022, it includes “houses” for treatment rooms and columns decorated as “trees” to make the center more welcoming to patients and their families. It brings me such joy and pride to see all the children who are benefiting from this new facility, which now features its own rock-climbing wall, specialized patient lift system and swing apparatus.

Why should women consider a career in construction?

I’ve always considered construction to be an exciting career because no one day is the same, and every few years, there’s the exciting challenge of starting a new project. When I entered the industry nearly 15 years ago, I knew I did not want to sit behind a desk every day doing the same thing. Construction allows me to apply my problem-solving skills and work alongside a diverse team of professionals who share my passion for the industry. Fortunately, more women are ascending through the ranks and filling management positions, providing valuable mentorship to the next generation of female leaders.

Starting out in the construction business, who or what empowered you?

My team has always empowered me, which speaks to the collaborative culture of both the industry and Lendlease as an employer. Even as an intern at Lendlease, I was given much-needed support from my team that helped me progress in my career. Over the past 15 years, Lendlease has provided a supportive working environment where I know I can ask questions, suggest ideas and work toward leadership roles that draw on my prior experience while challenging me to develop new skills.

Who within your own firm has helped you succeed within the construction industry?

At Lendlease I have had the opportunity to work primarily in the Healthcare Group led by Rich Steimel and Chuck Richmond. Both Rich and Chuck have been very influential my career, trusting me and steering me toward opportunities to advance my career, increased responsibilities and larger projects. Most recently, they provided me the opportunity to serve as Executive on the \$100 million gut renovation of a 100,000 s/f ambulatory care facility in Manhattan for Mt. Sinai Health System. This is the largest project that I will lead in my career with a team of eight overseeing both the office and field.

