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Building Confidence, Community, and Careers: FORGE Girls Construction Camp Returns with New Projects and Expanded Reach

COLUMBUS, MISS. – FORGE, a nonprofit organization committed to advancing skilled trades and preparing the future workforce, proudly announces the return of its Girls Construction Camp, taking place June 9–13, 2025, at East Mississippi Community College’s Golden Triangle Campus.

Now in its second year, the camp welcomes girls ages 12–15 from across Northeast Mississippi, offering them a one-of-a-kind opportunity to explore construction careers through hands-on learning, mentorship, and real-world experiences. This year’s camp is also supported by student mentors—participants from last year’s inaugural camp who are returning to serve as leaders, encouragers, and role models throughout the week.

Build Mississippi serves as this year’s Title Sponsor, helping make the entire experience possible. Their support, along with contributions from all our sponsors and trade partners, reflects a shared commitment to empowering the next generation with hands-on learning, industry exposure, and meaningful mentorship.

Throughout the week, campers will learn essential construction skills such as framing, electrical wiring, roofing, drywall installation, plumbing, and painting. These activities will take place in EMCC’s Construction Engineering Technology workshop, under the guidance of industry professionals and EMCC instructor Alan Hall.

Each day also features a Lunch & Learn session, where campers hear from guest speakers on topics ranging from leadership and career confidence to statewide initiatives supporting the skilled trades. Sessions will also include interactive elements, such as a welding simulator experience.

New this year is a meaningful community service project in which campers will build and donate eight fully constructed community food pantry boxes to serve neighborhoods throughout the community.

“This project shows the girls that construction is not just about building structures—it’s about building community,” said Melinda Lowe, Executive Director of FORGE. “We want each camper to walk away with practical skills, a sense of pride, and the belief that they are capable of doing hard and important things.”

Another key highlight of the week is a field trip to multiple active job sites, where campers will explore real construction projects, meet industry professionals, and see their newly learned skills applied on a larger scale.

The camp's impact goes far beyond the classroom. Sam Sanders, a sophomore at New Hope High School and returning student mentor, recently shared how the experience empowered her at home:

“After a recent storm damaged our roof, I actually knew how to replace some of the shingles—and I had the confidence to do it—because of what I learned at last year’s camp,” she said. “It felt really good to be able to help my family like that.”

“We’re not just teaching girls how to use tools—we’re giving them a foundation to imagine themselves in high-demand, high-wage careers they may have never considered,” added Lowe.

To learn more about the FORGE Girls Construction Camp or support future programming, visit <https://forgeyourpath.org>.

About FORGE

FORGE is a nonprofit organization committed to empowering individuals and communities through trade-based education, workforce readiness, and advocacy. By connecting students to hands-on experiences and real career pathways, FORGE is forging a future where trades are valued and individuals thrive.

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2025 Girls Construction Camp Sponsors & Partners

FORGE gratefully acknowledges the generous donations, sponsorships, and hands-on guidance provided by the following trade partners and businesses supporting the 2025 Girls Construction Camp:

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