

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

AT COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

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Issue 105

Searching for a secure job started for **Sheela Backen** in FM in 1995 when her soon to be husband said it was a good place to work. In 1997 Sheela stepped into the Integrated Solid Waste (ISW) supervisor role just in time for the flood of 1997! Now she is the ISW manager and has been a great leader ever since. Did you know that the Colorado Association for Recycling has awarded Facilities Management's Integrated Solid Waste Program the Outstanding Government Recycling/Waste Diversion Program Award? When Sheela started there were very few women in upper management, but much like her own upward movement that has changed over the years, though there is still a need for more women within Facilities careers. When asked to share a quote from a woman she admires, Sheela shared wisdom from her grandmother, "You can't wait on someone else to do the work, you just have to get it done!" and the ever true, "Try to find something that you love and it will never feel like work."



Sheela Backen (left)



Jyenna Baeza, the rockstar of custodial coordination, started with CSU FM in 2003 as a non-student hourly. Throughout her 18 years with FM, she worked her way through custodial leadership roles to where she is today. In the last 5 years, she said she has seen more rapid advancement of women in the workforce than ever before, noting that this is the first time there has been a woman in the Building Services Group (BSG) manager position. When Jyenna started at FM she remembers there were only three supervisor roles held by women and now Building Services has seven. The quote she shared is from Oprah Winfrey, "Think like a queen. A queen is not afraid to fail. Failure is another stepping-stone to greatness."

Jyenna Baeza demonstrates floor maintenance

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Rita Schmid has been helping run main campus since 2017, and is the supervisor for Team 8. She joined the CSU workforce because her husband enjoyed working at CSU. Like many of the women in Facilities, Rita started at an entry-level position and worked her way up through a lead custodial position, and is now a custodial supervisor. In addition to her hard work as a supervisor, Rita serves on the FM Engagement & Recognition Committee as a Co-Chair. Rita shares a quote from Ani DiFranco, a singer-song writer who runs her own record label, “I know there is strength in the differences between us. I know there is comfort where we overlap.”



Rita Schmid

Speaking of Women’s History, **Jamie Cardenas** chose to share a quote from Amelia Earhart, the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean: “The most difficult thing is the decision to act. The rest is merely tenacity.” Jamie is wrapping up her third year with CSU FM and feels fortunate to have landed in such a wonderful department. Jamie started as a custodial manager in BSG and is now the first woman BSG manager in CSU Facilities Management’s history. She has observed some great women leaders promoted over her three years, but still recognizes there is a feeling of male dominance in the field. However, she believes FM is truly headed toward a more inclusive workforce – it will just take time and effort.

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