

EMPOWERED

October 2025

Kristin Gallup
2025 WHVACR President

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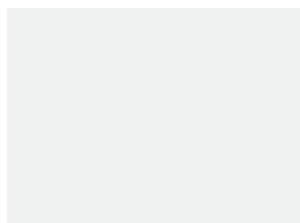
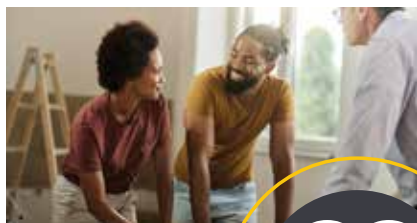
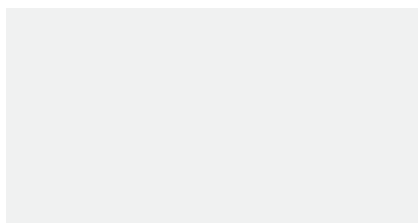
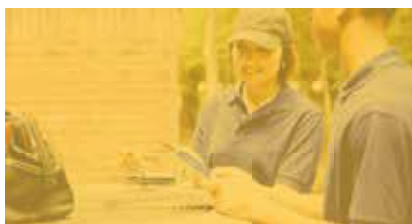
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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Sponsors, Members, Partners, and Friends,

As I reflect on this past year, I can truly say it has been an honor and a privilege to serve as the 2025 President of Women in HVACR. It has been quite a year – rewarding yes, but also one filled with change and challenges that have tested and ultimately strengthened our organization.

This has been a year of transformation. Together, we laid the foundation for an infrastructure that will continue to support our board members in the coming years. As many of you know, our board of 13 extraordinary leaders serve on a volunteer basis – balancing careers, businesses, families, and this passion-driven “second job”. Their commitment to advancing women in the trades and making a lasting difference in our industry has been nothing short of inspiring.

Like many of you, our board members faced difficult personal losses this year, while at the same time navigating an HVAC industry marked by sales declines, refrigerant transitions and tariff uncertainties. Yet through it all, they showed up – consistently, courageously, and with an unwavering drive to grow this organization beyond anything I could have imagined.

I am proud to share some key accomplishments from 2025:

- Membership growth of 15%, expanding our reach and community.
- Educational transformation by shifting from weekly Friday calls to dynamic Mastermind sessions – fostering education, networking and deeper engagement.
- Navigator Mentorship Program participation doubled, giving even more members the chance to grow professionally and personally.
- Scholarship funding increased from \$30,000 to \$55,000, allowing us to award 11 scholarships to women pursuing HVACR careers
- Increased Ambassador members from 12 to 42
- Sponsorship revitalization, with a new value proposition that helped us grow support by more than 40% - strengthening the backbone of our organization.

These accomplishments represent far more than numbers – they reflect the dedication and resilience of our board, our members, and our sponsors. Together, we are building a stronger, more inclusive industry and empowering women to step into leadership roles, pursue technical careers and share the future of HVACR.

While I am closing out my term with immense gratitude, I will continue to support this movement and community in every way possible just as I have since I joined Women in HVACR almost a decade ago. To our members, our sponsors, our ambassadors and especially our board: thank you for passion, support, perseverance and belief in the mission of Women in HVACR.

Here's to continuing the momentum and to an even brighter 2026.

Kristin

LESSONS IN RESILIENCE, GROWTH, AND MENTORSHIP: MY PATH TO LEADERSHIP IN HVACR

I found my way into the HVACR industry in 2016, starting out as an Associate Sales Manager. Nearly ten years later, I now serve as Vice President of Sales. When WHVACR asked me to share how mentorship has shaped my career, I felt both honored and grateful. But before I discuss the mentors who guided me, I need to acknowledge the countless hours I put into growing: through reading, training, sales courses, therapy, and working long weeks that often stretched from forty to sixty hours. I've always strived to be better, and I still do. To me, the moment we stop learning and stop striving is the moment we become stagnant.

My career actually began in the oil and gas industry, where I spent close to a decade in inside and outside sales. Like HVACR, it was a predominantly male field. Many of the men welcomed me, and a few became my first mentors. Several women became dear friends, but not everyone was so supportive. At my very first job after graduation, I joined as a contractor. Before I even arrived, the HR manager told the office staff, mostly women, what my salary was. As you can imagine, that didn't help me on day one. Within the first half hour, one of the owners pulled me aside and told me not to "wave around my degree," making sure I understood that a diploma didn't make me better than anyone else. I hadn't even introduced myself yet.

I don't share that story out of bitterness, because I truly learned from it. What it gave me was resilience. It also showed me how isolating an industry can feel without a network like WHVACR. While my friends and family were supportive, none of them could fully relate to what it was like to be a woman in that environment.

That's why my transition into HVACR was such a breath of fresh air. The very first woman I met was Linda Rodriguez. She trained me, welcomed me, and gave me my first glimpse of what this industry could be. If you've ever met Linda, you know she's authentic, smart, funny, and strong. Over the years, she's been a steady source of honest advice and unwavering support. She has always shown up when needed, and today, she continues to serve on the WHVACR board.

Not long after, I met Teri Haltom, who quickly became a mentor, though we never called it that. We often traveled together. While my trip schedules were jam-packed with meetings, hers always included time to pause, laugh, and even find the nearest body of water to dip our toes in. Teri's lesson was simple but powerful: slow down and enjoy the journey. She passed away in 2020, but her impact I still carry with me.

My first WHVACR event was with Linda and Teri at Hardi in Las Vegas, and I'll never forget it. I walked into a room of about fifty women and listened to Julie Decker and Marjorie McAlister speak with such grace and confidence. Their ability to articulate every thought so flawlessly left me in awe. I realized in that moment that I was in the right place. I wasn't there yet, but if I wanted to grow into a more polished version of myself, this was where I needed to be.

A year later, at AHR in 2018, I met Marjorie in person. I had admired her since I first heard her speak, so I was thrilled when she invited me to walk the show with her. In just thirty minutes, she introduced me to people, explained products, and pointed out companies to watch. At one point, she asked me about my goals. Without thinking, I said, "I want to kick butt." She smiled warmly and replied, "That's great, Laurelyn. I have no doubt you will. But what are you going to do to make sure you kick butt?" Then she explained SMART goals, the importance of writing them down and checking in six months later.

It may sound simple, but that conversation changed me. From that day forward, I've started every year with a vision board. Over time, Marjorie became not just a mentor but also a close friend. She has reviewed my WHVACR board application, connected me with others, and always offered thoughtful guidance. Watching her own journey, from earning her executive degree to serving as WHVACR President, has been just as inspiring. I will always be one of her biggest fans.

Serving on the WHVACR board myself has introduced me to even more remarkable women. I've learned collaboration from Colleen Keyworth, who has a gift for harnessing the ideas of a room full of bright minds and hundreds of sticky notes. I've partnered with Kristin Gallup to grow the mentorship program, and her empathy, kindness, and presentation skills have inspired me to raise my own standards. Sarah Segrado-Hammond has shown me the strength that comes from listening first, then speaking with intention. And Erica Leonor radiates positivity, choosing gratitude even when life is hard. She has taught me how to reframe failure into a learning experience.

Along the way, I've also had the privilege of mentoring women in the industry, sometimes formally, sometimes not. Mentorship is never a one-way street. Each time I've mentored someone, I've found myself reflecting on my own advice and asking, "Am I living what I'm encouraging them to do?" Sometimes yes, sometimes no. But that self-check has helped me recalibrate more than once. And the joy of seeing a mentee succeed is unmatched. It's the same pride a parent feels watching their child shine.

There are so many more women who have influenced, motivated, and supported me throughout my HVACR journey that I couldn't name them all here. Transitioning from oil and gas to HVACR has been transformative, moving from an environment shaped by competitiveness to one defined by collaboration and growth. I am deeply grateful to WHVACR for introducing me to a community of women who not only shaped my career but also enriched my life.

Sharing this story is my way of saying thank you; to my mentors, my friends, and the women who encouraged me to write this down. My hope is that it shows how powerful mentorship can be, how inspiring the women of WHVACR are, and how transformative it is when we support one another on this journey.



Laurelyn Arriaga, Board Member and Vice President of Sales McDaniel Metals Inc



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SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING:
Increased from **\$30,000**
to **\$55,000**

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allowing us to award
11 scholarships to women
pursuing HVACR careers



11
pursuing
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careers

AMBASSADOR MEMBERS:
Increased from
12 to **42**



“Supporting the WHVACR Scholarship Program with a \$25,000 donation isn’t just about funding education—it’s about fueling ambition and opening doors. We’re investing in the next generation of female technicians and HVACR leaders who will shape the future of our industry with skill, resilience, and innovation. These scholarships are a powerful step toward building a more diverse and dynamic workforce—one where women are not only welcomed but empowered to lead. We’re proud to stand behind their journey with confidence and commitment.”

— Aimee Coulter, Sr. Channel Marketing Manager

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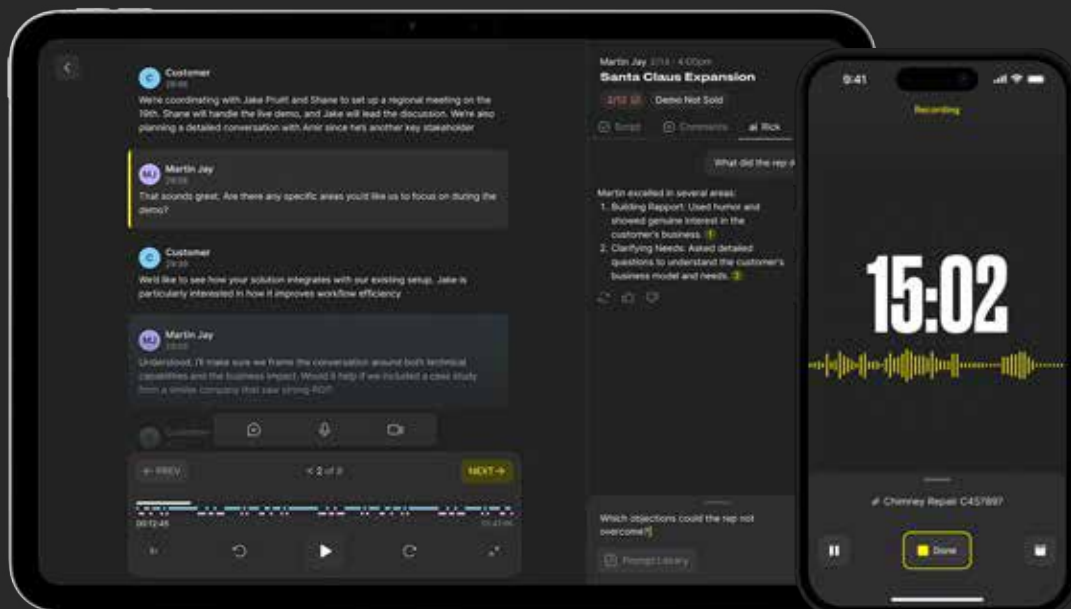


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BREAKING BARRIERS WITH HEART & HUSTLE: ANGIE SWARTZ'S STORY

1. **Can you please share a little about your career path and what led you into the WHVACR industry?** My entry into the WHVACR industry was truly divine intervention. After years in customer service roles - from bookkeeping in the tire industry to office management at a software company - I was laid off after the dot-com bubble burst following 9/11. I took a temporary administrative role at my daughters' high school but was frustrated by the lack of merit-based advancement. When a permanent position opened that I couldn't apply for due to my temp status, the Vice Principal connected me with his wife at a job placement company. After taking time to reflect on what I wanted next in life, I reached out and set up an interview. She said, 'I have a company that you would be perfect for.' When I sat outside BDR's offices reading their mission, vision, and values, I thought 'THIS IS ME! THIS IS WHO I AM!' It was the perfect fit I'd been searching for. When I started, I thought, 'What have I gotten myself into?' Having married young with only a degree from the school of experience, I fought the narrative that I wasn't qualified or good enough. But I put my head down, kept a great attitude, and forged my path in the industry.
2. **What does your current role look like, and what do you enjoy most?** I've worked in many aspects of BDR - from Support Coach to my current role as Training Advisor. I helped build BDR University from the ground up, and nothing beats seeing that lightbulb moment when clients realize they have the tools to build their team's skills. It's like being part of their growth story.
3. **Did you always know you wanted to work in this industry, or did your career path take unexpected turns?** You know, that's such a great question because for the longest time, I didn't even think I was in this industry! I had this narrow view that 'real' WHVACR work happened in contractor offices or distribution centers. I was basically putting myself on the sidelines, thinking my role was somehow separate from the industry rather than integral to it. It wasn't until [specific moment/realization] that I realized I'd been limiting my own impact and influence all along. Turns out, I'd been in the industry the whole time - I just needed to see it with fresh eyes.
4. **How do you think women can make a difference in the HVACR industry?** Women bring collaborative leadership and a nurturing approach that strengthens the HVACR industry. We often excel at mentoring, building strong teams, and creating supportive work environments where people want to stay and grow. This translates into better safety cultures, improved training programs, and higher employee retention. Our tendency to see the big picture and focus on relationships helps address key industry challenges like workforce shortages and customer service. We bring fresh perspectives and different problem-solving approaches, combined with a genuine commitment to helping others succeed. This creates positive change that benefits technicians, teams, and customers alike.
5. **What is the best career advice you've ever received?** "You're being a Band-Aid. Don't be a Band-Aid!" (Thank you, Jane) I used to think my value came from fixing everything for everyone. But always jumping in wasn't helping anyone - including me. Now I ask, "How can I help you work through this?" instead of "Let me fix that." A Band-Aid is temporary; real impact comes from helping people to develop their own skills. I'm also working to be more concise in my communications. Man, that's a challenge!





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I

nvesting time in developing a Best In Class Recruitment Program

I have asked many leaders throughout my career what their role is in hiring a new associate on their team. Some of the answers I have received in large publicly traded organizations I have worked in are that it's not my job; however, it is every manager's responsibility to be part of the recruitment process. The most important relationship any associate will ever have is with their immediate manager, and this relationship needs to start with potential candidates' early interactions with your company.

What is the role of the Hiring Manager in the Recruitment Process?

I firmly believe that Hiring Managers have a crucial role in the recruitment process, including attracting, recruiting, and hiring. If you have a Human Resources Department, this is in partnership with them; however, any associate's most important relationship is with their leader, starting from the initial contact with that potential candidate. In the Cross-Industry Compensation & Benefits Survey report, HARDI along with 22 other distributor associations that service 959 distribution companies with 10,000 locations, participated confidentially, by providing critical information that Industry Insights, Inc. reported on in 2022. This biannual survey will have its latest findings published in May 2024. The number one primary concern/issue that these companies reported was that 72.7% were concerned with finding qualified employees. This is a staggering number. So, out of 959 distribution companies that answered the survey, 697 are focused on finding associates. You need to answer how you differentiate yourself from those 697 distribution companies. After being in recruitment for 30 years, I recommend actively involving the Hiring Manager, from the very beginning of the hiring process.

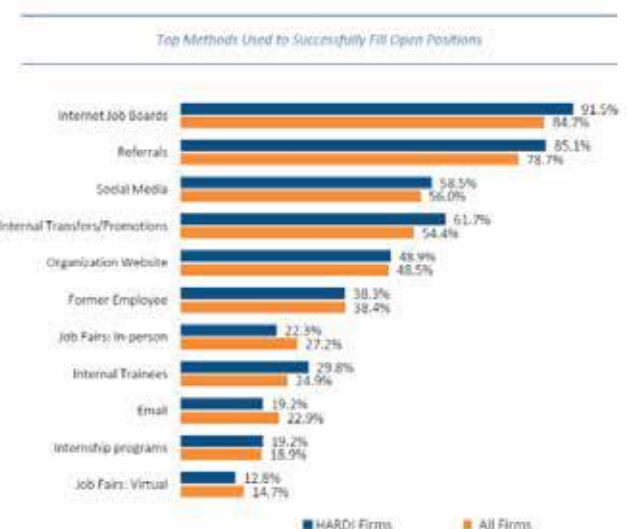
What can the Hiring Manager focus on when looking for the best candidates?

The Hiring Manager can articulate the company's culture, mission, and vision along with sharing the roles and responsibilities of the position through word of mouth, posting on their social media accounts, connecting with potential candidates through networking, and sharing why they choose to work for the organization. This is critical and can be leveraged to explain why the candidate should apply to the company.

At a previous company, my team put together a referral program with the Hiring Manager that we shared with all associates to help tell their personal stories of why they worked for the company and rewarded them when a referral was hired and stayed with the company for 90 days. This was a valuable network of potential candidates that came from our associates, whom we respected and who showed their commitment to the business's success based on their performance. These success stories of associates joining the company could be captured and shared with internal associates and external potential candidates via the company website, LinkedIn, or a video that can be leveraged to attract potential candidates to apply and engage current associates to continue their careers with us.

How do you start the Recruiting and Hiring process for a position?

The first step is for the Hiring Manager to define the job description. This would include the job title, purpose, duties and responsibilities, required qualifications, preferred qualifications, and working conditions. Once this has been completed, the position can be posted. It should include the job title, introduction to the company, brief job description, top benefits being offered, job location, and how to apply. This will ensure the candidates know what to do in the position and understand more about the company. According to the 2022 Cross-Industry Compensation and Benefits Survey, the following are the top methods to fill open positions successfully:



I have found that leveraging Internet job boards has been highly successful regardless of the industry in which you are recruiting for positions. My go-to boards have been Indeed and Zip Recruiter, which will post your jobs for free if you have them on your company website. As mentioned above, associate referrals are the second most successful method of filling open positions and have also been a critical part of my recruitment strategy.

What do you do once you have candidates apply to your open job posting?

If they have one, Hiring Managers, in partnership with their Human Resources Department, should develop interview questions based on the current job description they have created. These questions should include behavioral questions that align with the company's culture and mission and specific functional skill questions to verify their job competency. Here are some questions that I have asked of candidates during an interview:

- Can you share a specific example of when you had to deal with a customer who was unhappy when returning a product, how you handled it, and what the outcome of that customer interaction was?
- Please describe a time when someone you worked with was not contributing fully and how you addressed it.
- How do you ensure you produce the best possible results on a project or day-to-day task?
- Can you share with me what you know about our company?

These are just a few questions that can further give insight into a candidate's background.

Who should extend an offer to a candidate?

Once you have identified the candidate you would like to move forward with for an offer, you should work with your Human Resources Department (if you have one) to finalize the salary you will be offering the candidate. I have found that having the Hiring Manager extend the offer to the candidate continues to build the relationship between that individual and their leader. How exciting is it for the Hiring Manager to call the individual who they have selected for the position and share this great news about the fact they are receiving an offer to join the company? The Human Resources Department can follow up and answer any questions the candidate might have regarding benefits, vacation, orientation, etc.

As a Hiring Manager, being active in the process, from creating the job description, sharing with your network, developing the interview questions, interviewing the candidate, and extending the employment offer, is all an essential part of being a manager, which is to engage with your associates from day one. Managers' roles in ensuring they hire the best candidate are critical in developing the relationship with their new hire. Being intentional with your time as a Manager proactively will leave your new hire to the company feeling valued and engaged even before their first day. Candidates invest time and effort into the interview, and the Hiring Manager should do the same.

HARDI provides our members with best-in-class training programs, both public and private, and customized eLearning programs relevant to the HVACR industry. If you'd like to learn more about these programs to engage and retain your associates or discuss how to attract, recruit, or hire associates, contact HARDI's Talent Development Team.

Stella Gary-Keane is the Vice President of Talent Development at HARDI, where she leads human resources, training, organizational development, finance, and operations. She joined HARDI in 2023, bringing thirty years of experience in HR strategy, including leadership development, succession planning, and cultural engagement. Previously, she served as Vice President of Talent at Express, Inc., where she advanced performance management systems, executive reviews, and diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Keane holds a Master's in Adult and Organizational Development from Temple University, a Bachelor's in Business Management from Clarion University, and an HR Certification from Villanova University. She also serves on the EGIA Foundation's Board of Trustees, supporting career development in the home services trades.





TOP 30 INFLUENTIAL WOMEN AWARD

The Top 30 Influential Women in Home Services Award celebrates the fearless leaders who are rewriting the playbook for success in one of the most essential industries. These women aren't simply making waves, they are reshaping the landscape of home services, bringing innovation, grit, and fresh thinking to fields like HVAC, and beyond. Their vision and impact prove that the future of home services is diverse, dynamic, and undeniably female, and their collective achievements demonstrate how far the industry has come and how much potential remains.

These honorees are more than industry professionals, they are architects of progress. From pioneering sustainable solutions and adopting cutting edge technology, to leading multimillion dollar companies and scaling family owned businesses into market leaders, each recipient is setting new benchmarks for excellence. They are breaking barriers, modernizing operations, and redefining customer experience while showing the next generation that leadership in home services can be bold and inclusive. Their businesses are proof points that efficiency, profitability, and innovation can thrive alongside empathy, mentorship, and social responsibility.

Beyond their business achievements, these women are powerful advocates for mentorship and community. They invest their time and expertise to uplift others, creating opportunities for women entering traditionally male dominated trades. Whether launching training programs, mentoring emerging leaders, or influencing policy and education, they are ensuring the industry grows stronger and more diverse. Their impact reaches far beyond their own companies, driving change across the entire sector, and demonstrating that when women succeed, entire communities benefit. Their presence in leadership roles encourages young women and girls to see home services not just as a career, but as a viable path to entrepreneurship and long term success.

This award recognizes not just what these women have accomplished, but the way they've elevated the entire home services industry. They embody the values of innovation, resilience, and servant leadership, inspiring others to think bigger and push the boundaries of what's possible. By honoring these trailblazers, we spotlight the incredible momentum women bring to home services and celebrate the bright future they are building for the next generation of leaders. Their stories serve as a call to action for the industry to continue investing in diversity, fostering inclusion, and breaking down barriers, ensuring that the next decade is even more groundbreaking and inclusive than the last.





HVACR MENTORING PROGRAM

ARE YOU A NAVIGATOR?

Participation in our Women in HVACR Mentoring Program has Doubled

- 120+ active WHVACR members benefiting from our mentoring program
- 80+ mentoring relationships established
- 400+ Mentorship meetings through MentorCity. And countless in-person or phone meetings
- 90+ total goals set



"I highly recommend the Navigator program to anyone seeking mentorship because investing in the development of the next generation is invaluable."

"This program gives you access to experienced women who can help you find your voice, navigate challenges, and grow both professionally and personally."

"As a Navigator, you have the opportunity to build relationships and impact the success of others in ways you can't imagine until you engage."

Are you a Navigator?

The Women in HVACR Mentoring Program is more than just a professional development initiative, it's a movement that's redefining what leadership looks like in a traditionally male-dominated field. Participation has doubled, with 120+ members actively engaged, and over 80 mentoring relationships already in motion. With 400+ mentorship meetings logged on MentorCity, plus countless in-person and phone connections, this program is building a powerful ecosystem of support. The 90+ goals set and achieved show how mentorship translates into measurable wins, helping women not just dream big, but actually level up their careers and businesses. This isn't just about numbers, it's about creating a ripple effect that will inspire the next generation of women to step confidently into HVACR careers.

One of the most inspiring stories comes from Jackie Sorensen, President of Thorson Heating & Air Conditioning, who turned her own mentorship experience into a platform others. Jackie admits she once needed a push to tackle the financial side of her business, and the program delivered. Her mentor helped her navigate P&L reports, sharpen her understanding of the numbers, and gave her the confidence to enter the prestigious 10KSB program. That experience transformed her leadership style and gave her a playbook scaling her business, proof that investing in yourself pays dividends your team and company. For Jackie, this wasn't just professional growth, it was personal transformation, showing her the power of stepping outside her comfort zone and embracing new challenges with courage and determination.

Jackie's transformation fueled her decision to become a mentor herself, determined to inspire more women to step into the technical and leadership sides of HVACR. She was the only woman in her class when she completed her HVAC program in 2010 and wants others to know there's room for them in this trade. As she puts it, mentoring is a two-way street, every conversation and check-in builds not only the mentee's skills but also reinforces her own leadership chops. It's the kind of symbiotic growth that pushes the entire industry forward. By mentoring, Jackie continues to shape the future of HVACR, making it clear that women have a critical role in driving innovation and raising standards across the board.

Anyone still on the fence, Jackie's advice is simple, get involved. Whether you're just starting out or leading a thriving business, the program offers a front-row seat to mentorship at its finest. You'll gain access to seasoned professionals ready to share insights, help you navigate challenges, and uncover opportunities you may never have imagined. It's not just about career growth, it's about creating a legacy and shaping the next generation of leaders in HVACR. This is where future trailblazers are born. By participating, you not only build your own confidence and skills, you also contribute to a broader cultural shift, making the HVACR industry more inclusive, more dynamic, and more resilient for years to come.

How has participating in the Women in HVACR Mentoring Program helped you as a mentee?

The mentoring program gave me valuable accountability and guidance from someone outside my daily circle. It exposed me to tools from another part of the industry. It pushed me to learn my numbers, take P&L classes, and gave me the courage to join the 10KSB program. It also helped me navigate tough moments in leadership, through firing a tech I was mentoring, and which has inspired me to grow as an owner.

What was the most impactful thing you learned about yourself during the process?

Having regular check ins and support showed me how much I could grow when I put the work in. Mentoring helped me see where I needed to build new skills and pushed me to find the resources to get there. That mindset has changed how I lead my team and how I look at opportunities.

Can you share an example of a goal you accomplished while in the program as a mentee?

One of my biggest goals was to get comfortable with the financial side of running a business. Talking it through with my mentor helped me understand where I was falling short. She encouraged me to dig into reports and understand my numbers, which led me to P&L training and ultimately the 10KSB program. Those steps built confidence and gave me a clearer view of how to grow Thorson Heating.

What inspired you to want to become a mentor in the program?

I feel like I have a unique chance to encourage other women to step into the technical side of HVACR. I want to share my story so they know it can be done. When I first joined Women in HVACR, I was surprised by how few technicians were part of it. Back in school I was the only woman in my class and the first to finish the program in 2010, and no other women have completed it since. That makes me want to be visible and help more women see there is room for them in this trade.

What are you enjoying the most about your role as a mentor?

Mentoring is rewarding because it is truly a two-way street. Even quick check-ins or small wins are rewarding, because you see how much confidence builds from having someone in your corner. It feels more meaningful because you know how hard they have worked to get there. It is also a chance to give back professionally and diversify your own career at the same time.

Why would you encourage someone to join the Women in HVACR Mentoring Program?

This program connects you with people who really get what it's like to work in this trade and they want to see you do well. Whether you are just starting out or leading a team, you'll get support, ideas, and tools to grow. It also helps you see sides of HVACR you might never think about, and both people end up learning from each other.

**Mentee Turned Mentor –
Jackie Sorensen, President,
Thorson Heating & Air Conditioning**



HAVE YOU SUBMITTED AN ENDOWMENT?

Women in HVACR is proud to introduce the WHVACR Endowment, a dedicated initiative designed to ensure sustainable scholarship opportunities for women entering the skilled trades.

The Endowment Committee oversees this effort, ensuring that the program not only supports education but also strengthens the future of the industry by investing in its next generation of leaders.

The Endowment is structured to provide a perpetual funding source for scholarships by preserving principal investments and utilizing only the annual earnings for distribution. This approach ensures sustainable support for educational and training opportunities for women pursuing careers in the trades.

Donors and sponsors will be recognized for their contributions, with acknowledgments at annual events and through lasting visibility within WHVACR, but the central goal remains clear: to create a self-funded, long-term scholarship program that empowers women and reinforces the organization's mission of growth, education, and opportunity in HVACR.





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OUR BOARD



The Women in HVACR Board of Directors embodies the heart and vision of the organization, setting the pace for growth, innovation, and inclusion across the industry. These dynamic leaders bring together decades of experience and an unwavering passion for empowering women in a traditionally male-dominated field. Their mission is clear, to provide mentorship, education, and networking opportunities that help women at every stage of their HVACR careers. By shaping strategy and driving key initiatives, the Board ensures the organization continues to be the premier platform for professional and personal development.

These board members are more than just decision makers, they are trailblazers who lead by example. Each woman brings a unique background and expertise, from running successful businesses to mastering the technical side of the trade. Their diverse perspectives fuel collaboration and creative problem-solving, proving that leadership in HVACR is stronger and more resilient when women are at the table. Their commitment to opening doors for the next generation sets a high standard for what leadership should look like.

Through their dedication, the Board champions signature programs such as the national mentoring initiative, scholarship opportunities, and the annual conference that unites industry professionals from across the country. They guide committees with purpose and clarity, making sure every effort—from education and outreach to marketing and partnerships—delivers real value to members and partners. Their leadership not only keeps the organization thriving but also elevates the entire HVACR industry by showing what's possible when women work together.

Above all, the women serving on the Board inspire others to aim higher and step into leadership roles with confidence. Their work is a testament to the power of collaboration and the impact of passionate, purpose-driven leadership. By giving their time, expertise, and vision, they are shaping a more inclusive and forward-thinking HVACR community. Their influence extends far beyond board meetings, creating a legacy of opportunity and progress that will resonate for years to come.



“I choose to pour into Women in HVACR because I strongly believe in lighting the path for others – empowering women to break barriers, build confidence, and rise together in an industry where our presence and leadership is not just needed, but truly transformative”.

Christyn Mueller, Board Member and Director of Global Learning & Development Johnson Controls



“My commitment to the Women in HVACR organization is rooted in my passion for mentoring women in this industry to achieve what brings them joy. The possibilities are endless when you can help women navigate through the challenges in their personal and professional lives, help them set goals, and watch them achieve stellar results. Their success is personally rewarding for me!”

Lisa Knapp, Board Member and President and Founder Sea the Possibility Leadership Consulting, Inc.



“Being part of WHVACR is incredibly rewarding, providing the opportunity to give back to a community that has inspired, encouraged, and empowered me throughout my career and personal growth.”

Laurelyn Arriaga, Board Member and Vice President of Sales McDaniel Metals Inc



“I believe in empowering others, building a supportive community, and opening doors for growth and innovation in our industry. I strive to inspire the next generation and help shape the HVACR industry into one where women can continue to build successful careers.”

Angela Miller, Executive Board Member, Treasurer and Brand Ambassador Goettl Air Conditioning & Plumbing



“Throughout my career, I have been fortunate enough to work with, and learn from, exceptional female leaders. When I heard about this organization, I saw this as an opportunity to support an amazing industry, continue to meet inspiring women, and also pay it forward to the next generation of female workers. It’s been extremely rewarding!”

Melanie Cochran, Board Member



“To share with and learn from all the fantastic women leaders in the HVACR industry.”
Jane Sidebottom, 2025 Vice President, President & Founder AMK



“I have two granddaughters who I want to have an opportunity in this industry when they choose their career - so I love being part of a community who supports women.”

Becky Hoelscher, Board Member and Sr. Account Manager Arkema



I’ve seen firsthand how the trades can change lives and create meaningful careers, and I’m passionate about making sure more women have access to those opportunities. Serving on the Women in HVACR board gives me the chance to give back, champion inclusion, and help raise up the next generation of women leaders in our industry.”

Kelcey Brueggeman, Board Member & Co-Owner SBE



“I joined Women in HVACR because I believe this industry is stronger when every voice is heard. Women bring fresh perspective, resilience, and leadership that builds legacies—not just companies. I want to help lay a foundation where women know they belong, where they can lead boldly, and where future generations see HVACR as a place for their gifts to thrive.”

Crystal Williams, Executive Board Member, Secretary, Founder & Marketing Strategist Lemonseed Marketing



“I watched my mom stand alone in this industry, and I felt it when I took over. I refuse to let the next generation of women do the same. My ‘why’ is to ensure they go further, faster — never alone, but always with women beside them as a calling.”

Sarah Hammond, Board Member and President Atlas Services, Inc



“WHVACR resonates with my core values: Integrity, teamwork, and a relentless pursuit of excellence. I am passionate about mentoring within the HVACR community and advancing opportunities for women in the trades.”

Lori Tschohl, Past President and President, Eagle Pipe & Mechanical

“My why for stepping into the role of Executive Director of Women in HVACR is simple—I’ve lived this industry my whole life. As a daughter in the trade, as a contractor, and as someone who has walked this path for more than 15 years, I know firsthand the challenges and the opportunities it holds. I lead with empathy and understanding because I’ve been there, and I believe deeply in the power of community this industry creates. For me, this isn’t just about leading an organization; it’s about honoring a lifetime of experience and giving back to the people and the work that shaped me. Every day, I am inspired by the volunteers and leaders who step up, and my why is being able to serve alongside them to keep building something bigger than ourselves.”

Amy O’Grady, Executive Director



“I joined Women in HVACR to give back to the mentors who poured into me throughout my career. Their guidance, support, and encouragement helped shape my path in the HVAC industry, and being part of this organization allows me to pay that forward, supporting, uplifting, and creating opportunities for the next generation of women in our field.”

Kristin Gallup, 2025 President and Director Product Management Carrier Enterprise



“I joined the Board of Women in HVACR to make a meaningful difference for fellow women in the HVAC industry. My goal is to serve as a role model for female students exploring this field and to support women already working in the industry who are seeking camaraderie, mentorship, and a sense of belonging. Throughout my years as a WHVACR member, I’ve built lasting, impactful relationships that have helped me grow—both personally and professionally. Now, I’m passionate about helping other women do the same—building connections, finding confidence, and thriving in their careers.”

Linda Rodriguez, Board Member and Marketing and Events Manager Quietflex

PILLAR AWARD WINNERS

This year's award winners embody the highest standards of leadership, innovation, and service, representing the very best of what the HVACR industry has to offer. Each honoree stands out not only for their professional accomplishments but also for how they embody the three pillars that define these awards, Mentorship, Education, and Networking. These trailblazers are more than industry professionals, they are pioneers and visionaries who are redefining what success looks like in a fast evolving marketplace. Their work reflects a deep commitment to strengthening the industry from the inside out, creating opportunities for others and ensuring that future generations of HVACR professionals will inherit a stronger, more inclusive, and more innovative field.

The Mentorship pillar celebrates those who actively lift others as they climb, creating a ripple effect of growth and empowerment across the industry. These winners share their time, experience, and wisdom to guide emerging professionals and fellow entrepreneurs, creating opportunities for others to step into leadership roles with confidence. Through one on one guidance, structured mentorship programs, and a willingness to keep their doors open to anyone seeking advice, they have become trusted allies to the next generation. Their influence goes beyond simply offering advice, they model what leadership with integrity looks like and provide the encouragement and clarity needed to help others navigate challenges. Their commitment proves that when leaders invest in others, the entire industry benefits, fostering a culture of trust, innovation, and support that extends far beyond their own organizations.

The Education pillar recognizes those who make knowledge accessible and actionable, turning complex technical concepts into practical skills that raise standards across the industry. These honorees design training programs, lead workshops, and share resources that help peers stay ahead of evolving technologies and market trends. They translate intricate engineering and design principles into clear lessons that contractors, technicians, and business owners can apply immediately in the field. By championing professional development and encouraging continuous learning, they ensure that HVACR professionals are equipped to deliver excellence while embracing innovation. Their efforts strengthen the workforce, inspire future leaders, and keep the industry at the forefront of change. They are not only teachers, they are catalysts for professional growth, setting the stage for a new generation of experts and innovators who will continue to drive the trade forward.

The Networking pillar highlights those who build meaningful connections and create platforms where collaboration thrives, proving that strong relationships are the backbone of a resilient industry. These winners bring together contractors, distributors, manufacturers, and influencers, bridging gaps across the value chain and fostering partnerships that drive collective success. Whether through national events, local gatherings, or dynamic online communities, they cultivate relationships that lead to new ideas, stronger alliances, and lasting industry impact. By championing authentic connections, these award recipients show that networking is more than exchanging business cards, it is about building trust, sharing knowledge, and creating opportunities for everyone to grow together. Their efforts have created vibrant ecosystems of collaboration where ideas can flourish and where the entire HVACR community can thrive.

These awards not only celebrate individual achievement, they shine a light on the values that will shape the industry's future. By honoring leaders who embody mentorship, education, and networking, we acknowledge the collective effort required to keep HVACR strong and innovative. These winners remind us that growth does not happen in isolation, it is the product of shared wisdom, continuous learning, and meaningful relationships. Their dedication to these pillars ensures that the next chapter of the industry will be defined by collaboration, excellence, and opportunity for all.



Stephanie Postell, COO
Anchor Heating and Air,
Mentor Pillar Award Winner

Stephanie Postell is the embodiment of mentorship in action, a leader who lifts others while building a thriving business of her own. As co-owner of Anchor Heating and Air in Charleston, she has made mentorship the cornerstone of her career, sharing her time, expertise, and resources to help others succeed in the trades. She routinely takes calls from business owners across the country, offering insight and encouragement drawn from her years of experience, and locally she has become a trusted guide for women in the Charleston business community, always willing to share hard earned lessons and provide steady, honest support. Whether through one on one conversations, speaking engagements, or simply serving as a sounding board, Stephanie shows up with authenticity and a genuine desire to help others grow. Her impact is both personal and transformative, from providing hands on support to an entrepreneur launching an HVAC company from the ground up to sharing vendor contacts, marketing tools, and customer service processes. By helping create business plans and guiding licensing, branding, and pricing strategies, she empowers new business owners to enter competitive markets with confidence and clarity. At Anchor Heating and Air, she has cultivated a culture built around mentorship, pairing apprentices and junior technicians with seasoned team members to ensure real hands on learning, and she is passionate about encouraging more women to enter the trades by speaking to young women in Charleston about HVAC careers and breaking industry stereotypes. Beyond her own team, she continues to field calls from aspiring technicians and business owners nationwide, sharing resources and motivating them to pursue their goals, and when an HVAC company from Gulf Shores visited to shadow her operations she opened the books on everything from branding and team culture to leadership development and operational systems, inspiring a rebrand and stronger systems that revitalized their business. Stephanie's mentoring style, a unique blend of honesty, clarity, and encouragement, builds trust and confidence, creating a culture of accountability, support, and continuous learning while inspiring a new generation of leaders to rise and shaping the future of the HVAC industry.

Nasim has made education and professional development the centerpiece of her career, creating opportunities for colleagues and industry professionals to expand their technical knowledge and stay ahead of rapidly evolving technologies. With a focus on electrification and advanced HVAC solutions, she shares her expertise through both formal training programs and informal mentorship, empowering others to deepen their skills, embrace new technologies, and take on greater responsibilities with confidence. Her ability to translate complex engineering concepts into clear, actionable insights has made her a trusted educator and mentor within the HVACR industry. Nasim recently led a large scale training session on the future of heat pumps and electrification that attracted more than 500 engineers, providing valuable insights into one of the most critical technologies shaping the future of HVACR. Within Lennox, she has guided colleagues in achieving professional certifications and mentored team members as they transition into new roles, ensuring they are supported and well prepared as they develop new skills. Her patented system for dynamically calibrating motor parameters exemplifies how she blends technical innovation with practical education, turning cutting edge engineering into real world solutions that improve system performance. By integrating real world applications and emerging technologies into her sessions, Nasim gives professionals both the theoretical understanding and the practical tools needed to implement these advancements effectively. Her mentorship has strengthened Lennox's talent pipeline and inspired many professionals, particularly women, to pursue leadership roles in HVACR, making her a driving force for innovation, professional growth, and the future of the industry.



Dr. Nasim Rahman, Senior Product Manager,
Education Pillar Award Winner

Jessica Slaughter, Marketing Manager at RLS, has redefined what networking looks like in the HVACR industry by building platforms where meaningful relationships and real collaboration flourish. She spearheaded the RLS Mobile Showroom Tour, bringing live product demonstrations straight to distributor branches and job sites across the country, creating face to face connections that turn first meetings into lasting partnerships. By partnering with distributors through wholesale vendor showcases and designing education campaigns such as Press Fits and PressSure, she has united contractors, distributors, and OEM partners around shared goals while accelerating the adoption of ACR press technology. Jessica also built dynamic distributor portals that offer 24/7 access to marketing resources, training materials, and promotional tools, ensuring partners can confidently sell and stay engaged. Beyond in person events, she has cultivated vibrant digital communities by growing RLS's social media channels and launching influencer collaborations, giving contractors and industry voices a space to share ideas, engage in dialogue, and form authentic connections.

Her gift for bringing diverse stakeholders together has strengthened the entire HVACR value chain and positioned RLS as a true connector in the market. Jessica has coordinated collaborations between distributors and equipment manufacturers to make RLS the press ready solution of choice, while amplifying the company's presence at key industry events including AHR Expo, Chillventa, ISH Expo in Germany, and the ServiceTitan HVAC Nationals powered by Trane Championship. She expanded contractor education through the RLS Online Training Certification Program, certifying thousands of professionals and fostering connections across the trade. From launching the Mobile Showroom Campaign to creating the Distributor Program and leading the RLS 10 year anniversary celebration, Jessica uses every initiative as a chance to connect people and ideas. Her campaigns not only highlight contractor expertise and the industry's shift to A2L refrigerants, they also create a stronger sense of community and shared purpose. Through her strategic vision and natural ability to unite people, Jessica Slaughter has become a powerhouse of networking and collaboration, proving that strong relationships are the key to driving innovation and growth in HVACR.



Jessica Slaughter, Marketing Manager,
Network Pillar Award Winner



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VICE PRESIDENT'S LETTER



I am frequently reminded of the impact that WHVACR participation has had on our members. Throughout the organization, our members, partners, sponsors and allies are demonstrating how $1+1=3$. And while the math purists amongst us will declare this not possible, allow me to give you a few of the many examples of where it is absolutely possible:

- WHVACR members Erica Leonor, Michelle Myers and Angie Snow bring their expertise to the creation of The CSR Academy, to train and support call center and office staff for home services businesses.

- Many articles and podcast interviews amongst and between members, sponsors and allies. These sessions address the business and development challenges faced

by companies across the HVACR industry, bringing deep expertise from our sponsors, with the front-line experience of our members. Our members and their employers all benefit from this added exposure. Cross functional – cross generational magic!

- Crystal Williams and Stephanie Postell join forces to bring the We Mean Business Conference, providing targeted tools, support and community to family/spouse let home services companies. Why is this so important? Because multi-generational family businesses and leaders need a different kind of support.

- The collaboration across partner organizations such as HARDI, AHR, HvaChicks and Women in ASHRAE, where we are building each organization's reach, to amplify opportunity for, and impact by, women in the HVACR trades. Together we can align around building future women leaders across the HVACR career spectrum.

- The conversations mentors and mentees in the Navigator Program resulting in promotions and new business relationships. This program has grown 3X over the last year, and we are building our industry partnerships to meet the growing demand for mentoring of trades people and field personnel.

As we look forward to 2026, $1+1=3$ will be at the center of our strategy. Specifically, we will bring opportunities for personal and professional growth to our members by:

- Offering content and networking opportunities to strengthen the career and business success of our members.
- Continue to build the Navigator Program to include structured mentor training, allowing mentorship to become a permanent part of our members' leadership growth and style.
- Regular virtual and in-person networking to help reinforce the relationships built at our national conference and in-community engagement through our Ambassador program.

And for our sponsors, partners and allies:

- More collaboration in attracting, developing and retaining women to fill the skills gaps across the industry
- Unique ways to engage and reinforce your value and commitment to the industry
- Amplification of your industry leadership
- Access to our content and knowledge leaders for your events and customers.

Come be a part of this amazing growth, through committee engagement, participating in the Navigator program, joining one of our advisory councils or as an Ambassador in your area. Building community creates lasting relationships, partnerships and positive business outcomes. Let the WHVACR $1+1=3$ strategy be the forced multiplier that helps you deliver your personal and business growth.

Jane



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