

Letitia Hanke Turns Adversity into Advocacy for Youth Trades Education

Roofing company CEO Letitia Hanke transforms personal adversity into opportunity, empowering youth through The LIME Foundation and NextGen Trades Academy.

SANTA ROSA, CA, UNITED STATES, October 21, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Letitia Hanke, CEO of ARS Roofing & Gutters, has built more than just rooftops over her 21-year career; she's building pathways for the next generation of skilled workers. Through her nonprofit, [The LIME Foundation](#), and its flagship program, the NextGen Trades Academy, Hanke is tackling one of the most pressing issues in today's workforce: the shortage of skilled trade professionals.



“

One gentleman... was living in a car with his sister and his mom. He took our program, got this really amazing job, now he's helping other youth be able to have career opportunities at a higher level.”

Letitia Hanke

Hanke's mission was born from personal experience. As a Black woman entering the roofing industry in her early twenties, she faced skepticism and discrimination in a field where women make up less than 11% of the workforce.

Hanke built ARS Roofing & Gutters into a respected leader in Northern California's construction sector. Yet her proudest work, she says, happens off the rooftop, mentoring youth who are seeking direction. “I see these kids completely transform,” she reflected. “Find that pathway, figure out what they want to do in their lives, and they're thriving.”

Building Futures Through The LIME Foundation

Founded in 2015, The LIME Foundation (“Leaders Inspiring Mentorship and Education”) provides resources and mentorship to underserved youth, seniors, and communities. Its NextGen Trades

Academy equips young adults with practical, hands-on training in construction, electrical work, and HVAC, fields critical to building America's trade workforce.

The program partners with local contractors and community leaders, offering youth certifications, job placement support, and confidence to launch their careers. Many graduates secure full-time jobs after completing the program, with some going on to mentor others.



"One gentleman... was living in a car with his sister and his mom. He took our program, got this really amazing job," Hanke shared, "now he's working for the Petaluma Unified School District, and he's helping other youth be able to have career opportunities at a higher level."

Trades Education as a Workforce Solution

Industry experts have warned of a growing skilled labor shortage, with millions of unfilled jobs across construction and manufacturing sectors. Programs like NextGen Trades Academy play a pivotal role in bridging that gap.

Her advocacy has made Hanke [a recognized voice in workforce development](#), earning her honors from regional chambers of commerce, state education boards, and national organizations promoting women in construction.

From Adversity to Advocacy

Hanke's journey from receptionist to CEO exemplifies perseverance and leadership. Having experienced bullying and adversity at a young age, Hanke offered this advice to her younger self: "If I could go back and tell that little [girl] that the color of her skin one day is going to inspire others. It's going to inspire women; it's going to inspire other people of color. I would tell that little [girl] to just keep on going, and do not give up, no matter what."

Her story resonates deeply with young women and minorities entering the trades. Through speaking engagements, mentorship programs, and partnerships with local schools, Hanke continues to amplify a message of inclusion and empowerment in industries where diversity has long been underrepresented.

About ARS Roofing & Gutters

[Alternative Roofing Solutions, Inc. \(ARS Roofing & Gutters\)](#) is the premier roofing and gutter company serving Sonoma, Napa, and Marin counties. With a team of over 24 experienced

professionals, ARS provides commercial and residential roofing, gutters, waterproofing, and expert roof maintenance Sonoma County and Marin County homeowners trust. The company is fully bonded and insured, with additional liability coverage for HOAs, condominiums, and apartments, and offers 24/7 emergency support year-round. CA Contracting License #837618

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