

# WTC 'Internship Reimagined' with Kimberly and Jessica

[00:00:04] **Angela Gardner:** Hello, everyone. This is Women Talk Construction, and I'm Angela Gardner. And I am here with my co host, Christy Powell. Hello, Christy. Hi, Angela. How are you doing today? Really good. How are you? Great, great. And we are here. with Jessica and Kim. They are with Girl Up Greenville. And so we're going to share more about them.

But hey, Kim and Jessica, how are y'all today?

[00:00:28] **Jessica McCoy:** Hi, we're good.

[00:00:29] **Angela Gardner:** Good, good, good. So let me Thank you for being on. Oh yeah, thank you. And they are actually a non profit. It in our community in Greenville that we discovered, um, I think I first saw them on Instagram. They, they were actually at the Women Confidence Builders launching last year, showcasing their wonderful nonprofit.

And so we have here today is Kim. She's the founder and executive director of Girl Up Greenville. And Jessica, who is the client experience manager at Bras. And she is actually the board chair this year, right? Okay. And we're just going to dive right into it because I know our audience wants to hear more about what you do and what your mission is and how your program is impacting our community.

So we'll get this started. Kim, why don't you go ahead and tell us?

[00:01:21] **Kimberly Morgan:** Yeah. So Girl at Greenville is a free life enrichment program that works with middle and high school girls here in the community. Um, our mission is to enrich young women with positive, formative experiences, um, that are helping them to instill their worth and value.

We do this through providing an after school program that predominantly serves middle school students. So we pick up from the schools, we bring them to our location, um, and do a variety of activities. I can share a little bit more about that in just a minute. And then we do weekly enrichment classes with high school students, and that program is called Grow U.

We do individual success planning with all of our students who are on site with us, so Making sure that we're helping them individually reach their goals, create goals and creating opportunities, whether it's within our organization or within the community for them to reach their goals. And then we also this past year got to launch our in school groups.

So we were in a couple local high schools, providing some girls leadership groups. Focusing on the castle framework for social, emotional learning, helping us to develop in that way. And then we have summer programming and our high school students also do our internship program where they're actually paid to grow up greenbelt, but they are in a variety of business sectors in the community.

To develop their professional skills and just get more connected to the community as well.

[00:02:45] **Angela Gardner:** I love that. I think I saw something on instagram one of them the other day Was it a pitch that she was doing or?

[00:02:51] **Kimberly Morgan:** We've had a couple girls share about a day in the life of being an intern. So last year about She is actually at a real estate company here and I mean, and these are amazing opportunities for girls who are young.

She just finished her freshman year of high school and so she, yeah, so she at a real estate agency, she has worked on helping with the mailing stuff that they have. She's gone to showings, she's done a variety of things. So she was sharing a little bit about her experience there. And those are the things that are really important.

To us. Mm-hmm. , we love doing group activities and so during the school year, we have clubs for our middle school students. We've had Sewing club, cosmetology club, barista Club, cooking Club, . Um, our students are developing these different skills and also learning what they like and what they don't like, which is so valuable for them.

It is valuable. They're helping to define who they are and. As they get older and move into our high school program, we're able to start, um, helping them narrow down some of that and create pathways for the future for them. So our high school students were very involved with their lives and helping make sure we're supporting them and taking the next steps for their future, whether that's college or career bound.

[00:04:06] **Christi Powell:** I love that you're providing some awesome opportunities for these girls. And honestly, I probably had 20 jobs between the ages of 13 and, and when I found construction, and it was because I couldn't find what I really love to do, right? I needed to find something that was really good for me. And so what you're doing with them, finding out who they are is so instrumental and them not wasting that time.

Obviously, I learned a lot at every place I went, but how cool would it have been if I would have known I didn't like accounting when I graduated, right? I hated it. And when I found construction, I was like, Oh, why am I doing accounting and sitting at a desk all day long? I love that you're doing that for them and just bringing that awareness to their lives.

I'm sure it's been very. Instrumental and then growing and being able to see that they can do whatever they want to do.

[00:04:58] **Kimberly Morgan:** Yeah. And we went to see them, you know, making choices that align with the path that they want to be on. And so we're okay that we had a girl do an internship last year and there were a lot of things that she didn't love about it.

And she still went and participated and had a great attitude, but it's valuable information as she's going to go to college and she'll go on to med school and, but shaping what that looks like for her. So that way she is more clear for herself and what she is truly desiring to do.

[00:05:25] **Christi Powell:** So yeah. And I feel like when I was younger, I'm not sure about you.

I felt like I was just haphazardly finding my way. To what it was that I really needed. And, and it was because I wasn't really in tune with what I wanted and what was important to me, given back to the community. I didn't even know that was important to me until I was in my late thirties. You know, that's what brings me joy.

You know, I can sleep at night and I get to wake up with a smile on my face and I'm excited to go to work and just knowing that at 16 would have been phenomenal. Do

[00:06:04] **Kimberly Morgan:** you

[00:06:04] **Angela Gardner:** know someone in the upstate of South Carolina suffering from substance use disorder? Favor Upstate is a recovery community resource center that provides a compassionate and innovative response to the suffering caused by substance use.

[00:06:20] **Jessica McCoy:** Favor Upstate helps rebuild lives,

[00:06:23] **Angela Gardner:** build families, and strengthen communities.

Recovery from substance use disorder is a reality. For more information, visit [favorupstate.org](http://favorupstate.org).

[00:06:34] **Kimberly Morgan:** org.

Why I started Grow Up was because in my own life, looking back on... Would I wish there would have been, I wish there would have been more guidance and direction in my life from people, from adults around me who were calling out the good, you know, whether it's you're a really great listener or you're a really great leader, or, you know, it doesn't all have to be career focused, just like you mentioned with your involvement in the community, there's, there's a variety of things that define and make up who we are.

And so, um, having ways and having people to help encourage you to explore those things in a safe environment. Where you, you know, there's freedom to fail is really important.

[00:07:20] **Christi Powell:** Yeah, and just getting guidance too, right, Jessica, but you do a lot of that too. You do a lot of guiding, um, not only in our industry with Brassfield and Gorey, but also with the girls and Girl Up Greenville and your girls, you have your own girls.

And I'm sure that you are one of those moms that are constantly shepherding other students that are friends with your girls too.

[00:07:42] **Jessica McCoy:** Yeah, we definitely try to be, I mean, I think that's the one thing that Debra Bradley, who y'all had on your show a couple of weeks ago, talked about paying homage to the people who, you know, you stood on their shoulders.

And I think that's what Girl Up, we want to be those people for someone, right? To be able to give them exposure to different opportunities, to make sure they

have access to the things that they need to get there. It's just so important. You know, I fell into construction face first, you know, totally by accident.

Me too. Similarly to you, Christy, it's like, wow, if I had just known earlier and sooner and known all the opportunity that I was listening about Jasper and her being a firefighter at the Henry Career Center, like what a cool opportunity that was, is for her and the path that she's forging. And that's what we want for our girls.

And it's so, we're so grateful for partners. Like you all who allow us to tell that stories and help us to find partners who know that they need future workers. They need people who are really interested, engaged. And so this is such a great opportunity both for our students and for, you know, right here in the upstate for us to really grow and thrive together.

[00:08:50] **Christi Powell:** Yeah, we love what you're doing. So I know there has to be some unique challenges that you find with the needs of the girls in the under resourced communities. And that seems to be the demographic that you find that you're helping. What are some of those challenges and how can we help you surpass those challenges?

[00:09:09] **Kimberly Morgan:** There are a lot of challenges on a variety of levels. Life with people is hard, relationships are hard, supporting teenagers is hard, uh, being a teenager is hard. So there are some things that we just have to accept that are like, are going to be hard and that's okay. But as far as some other challenges that we face, I think continuing to find opportunities for young people in our community is really important.

That's why we created our own internship program is because how do we find ways and putting them in environments where there are other people who are invested in their growth and their development as young people, right? Knowing that they are young, you know, we have, you know, rising freshmen who are participating.

So I think that is a challenge. I think there are still, you know, a lot of systemic challenges that we face in education, in housing. That impact the lives of our students dramatically and not just their personal lives, but their families as well, and that impacts the entire community. So we've had a lot of girls dealing with housing crisis this year that we've supported through that.

And it isn't just about finding a new place to live. You know, you're rewriting your entire life when you move in our community. And that is a really big

challenge that not just Grow Up is facing, not just our community is facing, but a lot of people in our community are facing.

[00:10:30] **Christi Powell:** Well, and that comes with grieving.

When you have to move or you have to find another place to live, I think a lot of us are not focused on what a real, how it really affects you deep down inside when you have to make big changes in your career and in life, even in my, at my age. You go through a grieving process, whether you think you do or not.

So these young girls that are dealing with housing crisis, you know, that's another thing that you're helping them to overcome when they come to see you is the grief that they're experiencing in that loss of a home or change of a home. You know, it can even be a better situation, but it's still a grieving process that you go through that I didn't even realize until a little bit of therapy.

We were talking to someone else earlier. About how important therapy is and what you're doing is somewhat a therapy, right? Because you're getting to know who they are and helping them where they, where they are and what they need. So we know that people who do get counseling and do get help and do get therapy are strong people.

We've got this, this stigma that if you go to therapy, there's something wrong with you. And in your week, well, it takes a very strong person to want to be better. So I love that you're doing that for those girls. And, um, even though it's not called therapy. It really is building relationships and helping them in ways that they need probably more than anybody can see.

Right. It's something that's not a scene. It's on the inside.

[00:11:54] **Kimberly Morgan:** We were very fortunate to actually have a counselor come in and work on site with our girls individually. So we are definitely proponents. I did not know that. That's awesome. Yeah. We are. We are strong proponents.

[00:12:04] **Christi Powell:** Nice.

[00:12:05] **Angela Gardner:** Nice. That's cool. Well, I was going to say is y'all are also creating that, that bit of stability in their life that they don't necessarily have when it comes to, you know, if they're moving.

So you're the constant. That's a really cool thing, because a home is really, I mean, that's a big deal in our society.

[00:12:24] **Kimberly Morgan:** Yes. When it comes to like defining those successes, I think that's what's really exciting about our program is that, you know, the ways that we define success are maybe different than like just worldly success.

Yes, the majority of our girls do go on to college. Yes, they get driver's license and bank account and have job experiences, which are all amazing things. That is amazing. Because of that stability and that longevity that, you know, they're with us for years, for the most part, we're able to see These little moments of, wow, she stepped out of her comfort zone.

Like that's normally really challenging for her, but she intentionally did X, Y, or Z. Yeah. Mm-hmm. to take a leadership position and show the other girls that it was okay or safe. You know? I really wish I had a hand clap that I could do .

[00:13:10] **Angela Gardner:** Well, that was actually, she, she answered my question. I was gonna ask about some success stories, and it sounds like you have probably

[00:13:17] **Jessica McCoy:** a ton of 'em,

[00:13:18] **Christi Powell:** right?

A lot of them.

[00:13:19] **Kimberly Morgan:** Those are the things that we just think about as how we define the success for our students. Yes, we'd love for them to make good grades in school, for sure. But, you know, there's plenty of research out there that supports having a healthy, holistic child will impact their school life. And actually, there's more recent research supporting the idea of helping students to find their purpose is actually a larger impact on their academic success.

Yes. It's been really, it's really fun, you know, seeing the girls now that are actually the rising sophomores, they've been with us since sixth grade and wow, to see them one girl specifically, like just her, well, even last year, her growth and her math, like, it wasn't about her grade, but the fact that she came in and went and helped other students with math.



It's like a huge jump from not wanting to do math and not wanting to work with a tutor to like now she's helping her peers in doing their homework.

[00:14:15] **Christi Powell:** That's, yeah, that's awesome. And that's the other thing that you're instilling in those girls too is servanthood, right? Both of you are servants. You're helping other girls.

They're going to see that and they're going to want to help other girls. And that's how we make our world a better place, right? It's just by supporting each other and making sure that we care about one another. And you definitely are a great example of that for those girls. So another question I have for you, I know that you've had your challenges at Girl Up Greenville.

Tell us what we can do and how the community can support you. I know that you have a lot of information on your website and, and they can obviously go there, but what is it that you need the most? Maybe there's a couple of things that you'd like to share with the audience that you really need to be able to continue to do what you're doing and to grow, um, and get more girls in and get more volunteers, whatever.

What is it that you need?

[00:15:06] **Jessica McCoy:** Yeah, that's a great question. So I think one thing I know y'all have listeners all across the world, which I think is amazing, but we sit in upstate South Carolina and are really fortunate that there are amazing nonprofits and organizations doing things in our community that are just really impactful.

Well, we think that's grow at Greenville even further, you know. to the next level is that this really is a community driven need. Kim talked earlier about how we are now going into the high schools and into middle school to bring our program. And that was that the ask of Greenville County. They actually saw the impact that our students were receiving and what was changing in their lives.

And they said, Hey, we want you to come into the schools and do this, which is really rare. And so for us to continue to reach students both as we bring them into our own space and as we go into the school, we just We need support and advocacy, you know, and that starts with what we're doing today. We're so grateful to you, Angela and Christy, both for your exposure and your advocacy for us.



You know, that's a great way. And then having our volunteers and mentors who come and they walk alongside our girls every day and they are committed to them. You know, they are that sustained. Presence that you all mentioned. And then honestly, our most immediate and biggest need is financial resources.

You know, we, we are fully 501c3 nonprofit. We are based solely off of donations and grants and really probably more than 80 percent of our budget is from corporate and private donations. And that is really what we need to exist. And I know that. That's hard. It's really hard for people to give their hard earned resources.

It is, it is scary. We acknowledge that. But you know, if you look at the data and statistics from years and years, you'll see that if you are someone who is generous with your earnings, you have higher revenue and profits, you have better brands, more loyal customers. And so we really just want to challenge your listeners all across the globe to.

Find someone, find an organization in your community and invest in them. And that is with both your time, your resources, and your talent. Like we would love to see that trifold. And here in the upstate, we would love to have more opportunities of companies who. Who take on our interns, who will hire them, who are open to that, who will come alongside us financially.

You know, like you mentioned, there are tons of opportunities you can get to Kim or myself via the website, but those are the ways that we really are looking for support from our community. Awesome.

[00:17:41] **Christi Powell:** Thank you. We're making lots of notes over here.

[00:17:44] **Angela Gardner:** Yeah. We're going to make sure that we'll and we'll give you a lot more social love.

Yeah. We will take it all. Give us all the love. Yes. We'll give you all kinds of

[00:17:54] **Christi Powell:** love. And I think that, so let me ask a question that we haven't talked about yet. Is this something that's duplicatable? Would you be able to do something like this in another city or another state? Is this something that if our listeners are listening and across the world, would they be able to get ahold of you and find out how they can do something similar in their area?

Is that something that you have put together yet? Or is that a rough question for today?

[00:18:23] **Kimberly Morgan:** The reality is, is that anyone can be doing exactly what I'm doing in their community. Awesome. It doesn't take Grillup Greenville, it doesn't take... You know, I'm happy to help coach anyone alongside that I think that is, you know, I want to empower.

All people to make a difference in their community. It requires just being available to the needs around you being intentional with the needs around you. But, yes, we have been working on how to duplicate our program in other areas as we continue to be asked to do so.

[00:18:52] **Christi Powell:** I bet I think that you need to have 1 in every city.

So that's just my

[00:18:57] **Angela Gardner:** opinion. You know, I was thinking, Christy, you know, here's a way that you might can make some extra money. I'm going to share it live on here, but you just mentioned your internships and you had to do it internally. I bet you have a process to that. And I bet y'all have a little gym there that you might not know about because of even how you're doing it and who you're doing it with.

And I think there would be a lot of companies out there that might be very interested. And this, you know, program that y'all are doing with your girls in your internship, and it's extremely successful. And we as companies need those tips. So think about

[00:19:36] **Christi Powell:** that, especially the younger ones. There's a lot of very motivated freshmen.

Like I've met a lot of them recently, and I'm like blown away by the fact they want to work. They're motivated. They want to make their own money. And they're willing to learn anything. So why are we waiting till they're 16 and 17? My youngest went to work at 13 years old, just cause she wanted a little extra money and she wanted to be around other people that are bigger, which is pretty funny, but it's so good, you know?

And at 13. I got to help decide where that was going to be, you know, where, what her influence was going to be. And, um, you know, just helping guide her and what you are, you're doing something very similar for those girls. And it's so important for their future.

[00:20:22] **Kimberly Morgan:** Yeah. Now I need the hand clap emoji for everything you just said, because that's exactly why we did.

Exactly. Exactly. I love it.

[00:20:34] **Christi Powell:** Girl Up Greenville is helping further succeed and live confidently in their worth and value. A free life enrichment program, Girl Up Greenville works with middle and high school girls to initiate early life changing success by empowering girls to reach their highest potential through after school and summer programs, weekly enrichment classes, a summer internship program, individual success planning, and in school leadership groups.

Do you want to learn more and get involved? Girl Up Greenville? Visit their website. [girlupgreenbell.org](http://girlupgreenbell.org) or follow them on social at [girl G I R L U P G V L .org](https://www.instagram.com/girlupgreenbell). Thank you for everything that you do for our community. Girl up greenbell.

I went to work at 13. I want to designer jeans. And my parents were like, and we're only paying for half. And I'm like, okay, so, you know, I mean, whatever the motivation is, right. And a lot of places won't take those kids to work because they are not a certain age. So I love, and Angela is so right. We probably need to make that duplicatable.

So the Hill electrics and 84 lumbers and, you know, you know, just our smaller businesses can put some, some of those girls to work. Yeah. So tell us a story. I would love to hear a story about one of your students that really will inspire our audience to pick up and do what you're doing.

[00:22:01] **Kimberly Morgan:** Oh, there's so many amazing stories because there's so many incredible individuals that I have the privilege and honor of doing life with.

I have been doing this, I started to grow up in 2019, but I have been doing this for 10 years. And I have still have a relationship from my first cohort of 6th graders from 10 years ago. Um, and that's a lot of life. And so I think it truly is just. Staying girls, being able to overcome really hard things we've had girls who have, I would, this would be a story and it's not, I think it's important that we don't further victimize the girls that we work with, but continue to define them by their successes and by what they're overcoming while also sharing a little bit about what they are overcoming.

Yes. So one of my girls, a few years ago, she had been with us and for a year and is so great. We love her. And, but she was. struggling mentality, like her mental health was really struggling and we were really able to provide a counselor for her. We were able to provide some testing that she needed. So that way we were going into the school with her to advocate for her needs within the school and Also placing her in a job position where she does some shadowing at first, and then they hired her.

And that was once again, going back to creating a sense of purpose and control in her life. And she overcame the mental health battle that she was dealing with at the time. And now she's learning to drive. She's doing driving lessons. Fun. But it's just, that to me is like, I, that is one time in my life, my experience where I'm like, I, and I don't say it's like, like, I think we truly made a difference in the end.

In someone's actual life, like them being here today, right? And it wasn't me. It wasn't just me that made that happen. It was all of our incredible community partners who are also joining alongside us to support these girls

[00:24:00] **Christi Powell:** that you were the vessel.

[00:24:04] **Kimberly Morgan:** But that's, I mean, it takes so many, you know, so yeah, you know, if they're a counseling service or if they are, you know, they.

Working mental health, any of these things they can come find other people to partner with and bring their their talents with them But I think that is the one story where I'm like we truly made a difference like I know we make a difference in other Ways. Yes, but I think that is probably the most impactful story that I feel in my heart just because I know what we did Intervene in her life to make sure that she was healthy and

[00:24:34] **Christi Powell:** safe And there's so many more kids that are probably in that same boat.

How do we reach them? How do we encourage them to, um, come to Girl Up Greenville?

[00:24:45] **Kimberly Morgan:** I think something that attracts our students to Girl Up is our honesty. We are very clear about our expectations. We have high expectations for our students. We have a high level of accountability. And I think for the most part, students desire that they want to be believed in.

They want to feel like someone expects more of them. Like, you know, she has more potential in them than maybe they can see for themselves. Cause I think girls lose confidence as teens, especially there's a huge crisis with young black females with mental health right now. Yes. As far as the increase in, um, self harm.

And that's why I mean, when I was saying, like, anyone can do this is being available to the needs and the people around you to truly just love the people around you and courage. And like I said, we're very honest with our students as far as what we expect of them, and they rise to the occasion and not like, you know, they rise to the occasion.

Yes. And I do wish there were more faces that we're expecting more of them.

[00:25:44] **Christi Powell:** Thank you for sharing that. Well, I would love for you to share with our audience, how they can get ahold of you, how they can support you and how they can volunteer. I know that you have a great website, but I'm going to let you share all of that information.

[00:25:58] **Jessica McCoy:** Yeah, so obviously they can go to our website, which has links to our volunteer page, a way to become a donor, a recurring donor, which we would love. We would love to have monthly givers and just to come back to what Kim said about being involved. When I got involved with Girl Up, I was very clear with Kim at the time, her saying 2019.

I'm like, oh my goodness. In 2019, I had a two and a four year old, and I learned about what Kim was doing. And I said. I can't be there every week. I cannot do that. I travel for work. I work full time. My husband does. I have two little kids. I said, but here's what I here's what I can offer. I can offer the resources that I have.

I can offer the connections that I have. I can offer financial support and the skill set that I've developed over the years. How can you use. Me in this way. So what I would say is once again to your listeners, think about that. Think about where you are and in what life space. And I know all of us have this during the season of busyness, and that is not a good thing at all.

So just evaluate where you are spending that time and those resources and the impact that you could make to you. Genuinely save lives to transform the path that someone is on. You can reach out to me. Um, I am always available. I do work at grass and glory. I'll be happy to share my email with both of y'all for y'all to post on the forum or anywhere else.

So please go there and and check both of

[00:27:24] **Kimberly Morgan:** us out and you always out on Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn. You know, there's definitely cons with social media, but I will say Instagram and Facebook are really the best way to hear from our girls directly. They actually, this summer, creating the posts themselves and, um, themselves.

So you're really getting to hear directly from them about their perspective and their experience, which is way more powerful than just my. You know, perspective of it that you get to hear from them directly and what they're loving and appreciating and or even struggling with. Who knows? Tell us

[00:27:56] **Christi Powell:** the name of the website again.

Yeah,

[00:27:58] **Kimberly Morgan:** it's girlupgv1. org and that is the same girl up GVL is also our username on our social media. And

[00:28:07] **Christi Powell:** that is your logo on the front of your shirt, isn't it, Kim? Yeah. I love it. Yes. Thank you so much for being on with us today. We appreciate you and what you're doing for our community and what you're doing for the girls.

All over the world because now they're all going to hear what you're doing and hopefully you will inspire others To do what you're doing, too. Thanks for being on today.

[00:28:28] **Kimberly Morgan:** Thank you for having

[00:28:29] **Jessica McCoy:** us. Thank you for

[00:28:30] **Kimberly Morgan:** having us

Well, that's all

[00:28:38] **Christi Powell:** for this episode Thank you so much for listening to the women talk construction podcast with your

[00:28:43] **Kimberly Morgan:** host christy powell and angela

[00:28:45] **Christi Powell:** gardner

[00:28:46] **Kimberly Morgan:** See you next time