GLASS & METAL ALLIANCE

DANA GAETA

GLAZIER WITH
EUREKA METAL & GLASS SERVICES, INC.

SPOTLIGHT

On Dana Gaeta:

Title Glazier for Eureka Metal & Glass Services, Inc. (Philadelphia, PA)

Hometown Fox Chase neighborhood of Philadelphia

Pet Bella the blue Pit Bull

Favorite Sports Team Eagles

Favorite Movie Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

ABOUT DANA

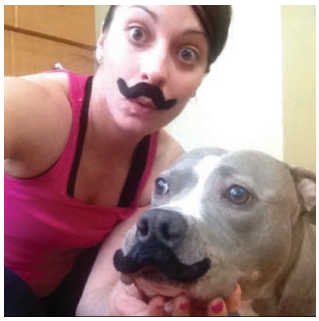
Dana Gaeta counts multiple generations of union members and business agents among her extended family. She learned the value of unions from an early age, as she witnessed the lifestyle and quality of life afforded by working in the trades. Although Dana knew she wanted to work with her hands – and emphatically declared she wanted to support herself and not depend on someone else – she couldn't imagine following into the trade of painting with the rest of her family. Instead, a cousin suggested glazing, and Dana thought it seemed interesting.

After earning her GED, Dana became an industrial worker in 2006. She began her glazing apprenticeship in 2007, and has now acquired a decade of experience.

In 2016, a first-time skiing accident nearly cost Dana her career. She tore her ACL and was out of work for more than six months, the longest she'd ever been without work. Luckily, she bounced back and was able to resume where she left off.

Today, Dana is a glazier with Eureka Metal & Glass Services, Inc., of Philadelphia, Pa.

Below: Dana working in Haiti and with her dog Bella.



BUILDING AMERICA

Dana has had the opportunity to work on some impressive projects. Since October, she has been installing metal and setting glass on the new Comcast Innovation and Technology Center. When completed in 2018, the 60-story, 1,121-foot tower will be Philadelphia's tallest structure, and the U.S.'s tallest building outside Chicago or New York.

Dana's favorite project was the South Street Bridge reconstruction. Spanning the Schuylkill River between West Philadelphia and Center City, the 100+ year-old bridge was completely rebuilt and reopened in 2012 with a new design that features four glowing glass pylons. Dana participated in the glazing installation for the pylons. Materials and crew had to access the site by boat. "Hanging over a bridge is definitely not something glaziers do every day," Dana says. "We had to wear life jackets, and the frames were so big they were built on a barge and lifted into place by crane."

Dana says that while it may seem like glazing work is the same, she feels that every day in glazing is a new adventure. "I like that I'm actually building America."

GLAZIER BY DAY . . .

Self-proclaimed glazier by day and girly by night, Dana enjoys dispelling myths and stereotypes about glaziers, particularly the misconception that all glaziers are men. "I love to see people's faces when I tell them I'm a glazier," she says. "I don't look like a 'typical' glazier. But I can do it just like a man. Being a woman just makes glazing even better."

Dana continues to shift perceptions outside of work. She's currently training to be the first woman boxer to represent the glaziers in the annual A Lift for a Vet Fight Night in which members of the trades compete against one another. This year's event will be held in September. Former professional boxer and Eureka Metal & Glass Foreman Paul Tilelli is helping Dana train for the event. "Paul is running the Comcast job, so we work together. It's pretty cool to have him as my foreman and to have him as a coach," she says.

In her free time, Dana enjoys going out with friends, dancing, and being active. In addition to her boxing training, she just joined the glaziers' softball team and likes to hike and ski. Skydiving is on her list of ambitions.

She also serves on the tech team supporting A/V services for Bethel Philadelphia Mills Church. In 2013, Dana and four other local union tradespeople participated on the church's mission trip to Haiti where they built a home for earthquake victims.

GO FOR IT

Dana happily endorses her decision to become a glazier: "If you want to work with your hands and be someone in life, I say 'go for it.'" For her, glazing equates to great coworkers, great money, and ongoing learning opportunities. "You learn so much," she explains. "I've learned to always look out for others, and I know there are others looking out for me."

Top to bottom: South Street Bridge with illuminated glass pylons (image © J. Fusco for Visit Philadelphia™); Dana at work, in training, and looking glamorous; Dana with children on the mission trip to Haiti