



JOHNETTA ABRAHAM



Journey-level Cement Mason
Oregon SW Washington Cement Masons

JATC (MA 1015) Cement Mason Oregon
Tradeswomen Inc. graduate

Johnetta Abraham first learned about Oregon Apprenticeship when her son spotted a flier for [Oregon Tradeswomen](#) at Portland Community College and brought it home for her. She discovered that she could apply for a Pre-Apprenticeship with Oregon Tradeswomen to get some hands-on experience at the Cement Masons before she began her apprenticeship program. Her Pre-Apprenticeship experience proved to be very valuable – she realized how much she enjoyed the work and applied for the Cement Mason program.

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Johnetta dove right into her program where she made connections and learned her trade from mentors. “I worked full time and all the time,” she said. “I always had work as an apprentice.” Johnetta attended classes for one week four times per year, which were fully funded by the apprenticeship committee.

After 3.5 years, Johnetta completed her apprenticeship. Throughout her program, her mother and sons were very supportive, though not everyone believed she could do it. “Some people thought I wouldn’t follow through,” she said. “Others thought this work was just for men. But now everyone is proud of me.”

Looking back, Johnetta learned a lot about how to make an apprenticeship work for her. Here are some key takeaways from her time as a Cement Mason apprentice:

Before you get started:

- Have a good support system
- Plan childcare coverage in advance
- Be easy to get along with and willing to learn

During your apprenticeship:

- Save your money for times when there isn’t any work. You’ll be making a lot, but don’t be tempted to spend it right away.
- If you do spend money, use it to buy new tools.
- Never act like you know everything, there’s always more to learn.

“It’s a learning process,” said Johnetta. If she had to rate her experience on a scale of 1-10, it’s a 10 all the way. “I’m very happy, I wouldn’t change anything!”

Q: WHAT DOES A CEMENT MASON DO?

A: Cement masons prepare and repair concrete, including pouring and finishing slabs, steps, wall tops, curbs and gutters, sidewalks, and paving. They work with a variety of materials including terrazzo, magnesite, epoxy, polymer, and other plastic materials for topping repair and injection.