

# Emily Pilloton Is Building an Inspirational Path for Young Girls

**STEM** This remarkable entrepreneur builds with her students and demolishes stereotypes of what the construction industry should look like.

4 SHARES // SHARE THIS PAGE [f](#) [t](#) [g+](#) [in](#) [p](#)



**BREAKING BARRIERS:** Emily Pilloton is doing her part to educate and empower young girls to follow their passion into construction.

Since childhood when she played and built in the forest with her two younger sisters, Emily Pilloton knew that construction and design were a passion and instrumental part of her life. These days spent with her sisters were significant not only because they felt natural, but because they resonated on a deeper level for Pilloton as a young woman.

### Gaining experience

“That you have the ability and physical capability to act on your world is a really important lesson to learn as a young girl,” she says. Pilloton’s initial interest carried her through adolescence and into college where she attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and was finally given the space, both physically and intellectually, to explore design and building in an entirely new way.

In her mid-20s, Pilloton found herself in a great corporate job where she had a 401k and steady income, but she felt disinterested in the work. “I was doing work and it was so disconnected from reality. I felt like, ‘OK, am I really going to detail another doorknob or plumbing fixture?’”

### Starting Project H

In 2008, at the age of 26, she quit her job and founded her nonprofit, called Project H. It wasn’t so much a flash of awareness that she had been taking the wrong approach to <http://www.educationandcareernews.com/stem/emily-pilloton-is-building-an-inspirational-path-for-young-girls>



### If Construction Revitalized the U.S. Economy By 2040

Fast-forward to the year 2040: What does America look like, and how did we get there? The following is a detailed consideration of those questions.

**Never stop learning.**

We’ll send more stories, interviews, and videos straight to your inbox.

**Subscribe**



### 3 Ways to Prevent Construction-Related Suicide

The construction industry is at heightened risk for mental health problems, substance abuse and suicide.



With Project H, Pilloton took the approach of connecting with others through design and building to solve social problems. She notes, "I knew there was an opportunity in social spaces, specifically public education, social services, public policy, community-based design ... there wasn't enough [design]."

*She built three pieces of furniture for her own environment, and I think it changed the way she thought about where she lives..."*

### Teaching young girls

In 2010, Project H evolved to include Studio H, which is an in-school designing and building education program for high school students. It began in North Carolina and eventually relocated to the REALM Charter School in Berkeley. These students design and construct farmer's markets, school libraries,

outdoor sculptures and much more.

Inspired by Studio H, Girls Garage was formed in April 2016, which is an all-girls program focused on building and community projects. This initiative works with girls aged 9 to 13, as they try their hand at designing and construction. One of the partners Girls Garage often works with is a local women's shelter for homeless and abused women, and through this organization, Pilloton met a particularly inspiring young lady.

### A new perspective

The girl was living at the homeless shelter with her mother, but she came to Girls Garage as a participant in the program. "She built three pieces of furniture for her own environment, and I think it changed the way she thought about where she lives and where she's from and who her mother is and how she can change that," Pilloton says. "I feel very confident that the things she's done with us in our space have really changed the way she feels engaged with her community. That she's not a victim of something; she's not forced into these spaces. But she actually has the tools to act on her environment and to change it."

This engagement with her students and watching their perspectives transform before her eyes is what pushes Pilloton to continue her work and activism. "Young women need mentors," she shares. "We can create spaces for young girls that do the same thing but in a much more focused, safe, I will say politicized, and audacious way. That's really important to me to carve out those spaces for communities."

NICOLE ORTIZ, editorial@mediaplanet.com

### You Might Also Like



How Mia Hamm Keeps Her Brother's Fight Alive



Secretary John King's Lessons on Classroom Diversity



Protect and Serve: Insuring the National Critical Infrastructure



Venus Williams: Hitting the Books, Hitting the Court

Recommended by



[Facebook Comments Plugin](#)



© Mediaplanet 2018  
[Terms and Conditions](#) | [Cookie information](#)