

# SHANNON BENNETT



JACOB & SAMUEL DRILLING LTD. - Val Caron, Ontario

“The words ‘strong’ and ‘Aboriginal women’ go together for me,” says Shannon Bennett, owner and operator of Jacob & Samuel Drilling Ltd., “because that’s all I’ve known.” She goes on, “I’ve been surrounded by a lot of strong women, mother, sister, nieces and cousins.”

She talks about her mother not only being a strong woman, but a strong role model. “She had five children,” recalls Shannon. “And she kept us all in line. I don’t remember one time when we were not at school, or any extracurricular activity, on time. Then she adds, with a chuckle, “I’ve never had to be stressed about being late for anything, because there is no stress attached to getting somewhere on time.” Respect was also an important lesson. “My mother taught me a lot of respect for other human beings, regardless of a hierarchy. There’s no hierarchy for anything, where respect is involved.”

Family is important, and she talks about her brothers, who were also a very big influence on her. “I think for me, I was the little sister trying to get three big brothers attention.” Then she laughs, “So it took me 40 years but buying a drilling business, you know, suddenly they all pay attention because they’re diamond drillers.” She adds, proudly, “Now two of them work with me.”

Jacob & Samuel drilling does different types of extractions. “We say diamond drilling, but it’s because the drill bits we use contain diamond fragments. We drill for all kinds of minerals, and extract core for mining companies.” She describes the importance of extracting the best core samples for the companies, but being really cost effective. “Every client has different needs,” she states. “Our job is to provide them with a specialized drill program that meets their respective needs. And we need to take into account their technical, and regulatory and environmental requirements. It’s a big job, and a lot of that starts with our employees.”

The company is building a long-term training program, for its employees, to retain good talent, but also to improve safety and quality of life for everyone. “If you build respect and dignity into your team,” she states, “that spills over into day-to-day work. And it spills over into our relationships with our customers. So, ideally, you get customer satisfaction at every level.”

“And I find it rewarding to be able to give a person a job. That’s the biggest thing - giving back to the community. Of course, I respect all the human resources I have, but my goal is to have Aboriginal people reaping those rewards.”

She talks about support she had in building her business.

“The Métis Voyager Development Fund were unbelievable. Steven Morse and Caroline Bertrand did so much work to help me. They set aside time to help us do business plans and promotional material. They did a lot of the heavy lifting. And Waubetek Business Development Corporation assisted me with grants for my backdrops, and my promo stuff, which is really important for growth.”

“It’s a big thing to believe in yourself,” she says. “It’s tougher for a woman, and hopefully someday that goes away. It’s tougher for minorities, period.” She adds, “But it’s more than believing in yourself, you also have to pull from those old moments, and use them, and say ‘Look at me - nobody’s going to beat me down.’”



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