



Setting Trends,

A conversation with 4-H alumna Mandy Rennehan, Blue-Collar CEO™ and Founder of Freshco.ca (not the grocery store!)

Mandy Rennehan is taking the world by storm.

She is called the Blue-Collar CEO™ for her ability to seamlessly navigate between white-collar and blue-collar, and to respectfully “tell it like it is.” A sought-after speaker, multiple award-winning entrepreneur, philanthropist, and trade industry ambassador, she founded Freshco.ca, Canada’s #1 full-service, reconstruction and retail maintenance provider at only age 19.

To be clear, this is not the grocery store. Freshco.ca operates across Canada and the eastern United States serving clients like Anthropologie, Apple, Banana Republic, Home Depot, Lululemon, Nike, Restoration Hardware, Sephora, Gap, Tiffany & Co., plus many more.

Mandy’s vision goes well beyond building successful businesses. She is **redefining the collar, blue™** to help solve the massive skilled trade shortage in North America. It is a profound economic and social issue that affects everyone. Consumers are paying more and waiting longer for services, companies can’t scale, and important infrastructure projects, like roads and hospitals, are being delayed.

Mandy is challenging the misconception that white-collar jobs are “better” or “more desirable” than blue-collar ones.

“Society needs both collars, and if we do not change this, the crippling effects of the skilled labour shortage will only get worse,” she says.

Mandy is at the top of her game in this male-dominated space and loving every minute of being there. In fact, her positivity is infectious, and this optimistic attitude is something Mandy had even when she was little.

Blazing Trails, Opening Doors

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE AND SUPPORT

Mandy and the Rennehan family of six didn't enjoy many luxuries growing up on a lobster fishermen's salary in the small town of Yarmouth on Canada's east coast. However, even though her parents sometimes struggled just to put food on the table, Mandy remembers that her home was always filled with love and support.

Joining the local 4-H club further instilled in Mandy the understanding that she could accomplish whatever she set out to do.

"These people in the 4-H program were so supportive," she says. "They had their own kids and jobs, but they were picking me up at 5 o'clock at night, feeding me and carting me around because they saw something in me. I think I saw that as well, but I didn't know how to grow it."

The 4-H program was the perfect fit for her character. Always interested in the outdoors and learning how to build things, especially out of wood, Mandy's discovery of 4-H was a true revelation. The program not only provided her with a way to harness her natural skillset for hands-on work, but also gave her an outlet for her growing personality. By the time she was in her early teens, Mandy was winning local public speaking competitions and building log cabins on the side for fun.

"4-H is an innovator. It's an innovator of kids' minds to get them thinking differently. And the world needs more innovators."

LEADERSHIP SKILLS FOR LIFE

A leader in the skilled trade industry, Mandy is a huge proponent of 4-H and its motto, *Learn To Do By Doing*. She shares the message not just to get people interested in the trades, but to show that 4-H is about teaching essential life and leadership skills that young people can carry through all aspects of their lives and use in their careers.

"The activities of the 4-H program are responsible for building an incredible skillset that goes far beyond textbook education," she says.

To Mandy, the 4-H program was a gift that helped shape her personality and career.

"It's not about the cows, it's not about the crafts: it's about people being able to understand time management and communication. All the things that every business struggles with, 4-H teaches from a very young age."

4-H IN THE BIGGER PICTURE

So where can 4-H go from here? According to Mandy, there is only one option: to bring the positivity of the program, and all the good it has done for her, to the wider world.

Just as Mandy has broken the mould as a woman in the construction business, she wants to see 4-H continue to evolve into a trail-blazing organization leading the way in positive youth development. ✨

