



OUR PEOPLE: SARA RASOULI

Sara Rasouli is only 33 years old, but she's already dreaming big. And it all started with a mentor who believed in her.

Born in Iran, Rasouli and her parents came to Canada when she was 14, in time for her to start high school in her new country. Immediately, she gravitated toward courses like math and physics, which eventually led her to a career in engineering.

After studying electrical engineering at the University of Waterloo and graduating in 2007, Rasouli began working as an engineer at OPG's Pickering Nuclear Generating Station. After eight years of being content with what she was doing, she was approached by Brian McGee, then Pickering Nuclear's Senior Vice President.

"He saw potential in me that I hadn't seen in myself and kind of reached out to me to become my mentor," Rasouli said. "He encouraged me to use more of my interpersonal and leadership skills to get me out of my technical box."

This encouragement was a huge boost of confidence for Rasouli, who began to believe in her leadership qualities and dream of a larger role at Pickering.

With that thought, Rasouli soon stretched her legs and made an effort to put herself out there.

She joined the Toastmasters International club to develop her public speaking skills and build her confidence. Later she asked to lead the OSART (Operational Safety Review Team) evaluation, run by an international team, at Pickering in 2016. And at the end of that year, she took the big step of applying for the Shift Supervisor Training program at Pickering Nuclear, an intense four-year training process that licenses applicants to manage nuclear operators in a control room.

In the program's taxing one-week selection process, Rasouli and 11 other applicants went through classroom training, exam writing, and an exercise in a mock control room, which presented various accident scenarios to gauge the applicants' problem-solving skills.

Out of the 12 applicants, only six were selected to advance to the training program. Rasouli was one of them and she's now supporting operations at Pickering until her course starts in June.

Initially, she didn't feel qualified or ready to take on the program. But she had to overcome her own internal barriers.

"As women, one of our biggest internal barriers is fear," she said. "Fear of being judged, fear of failing and, worst of all, fear of not being able to do it all. That's why we think we have to make a choice; an ambitious career or family life, and sometimes we make that choice in silence."

"It's beneficial to talk with someone who's gone through it, to shed some light on how overcoming barriers is possible."

Rasouli says she eventually wants to become that example of a female leader who has made it, a "role model for the new generation of female workers."

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT SARA RASOULI

Position: Shift Supervisor in Training

Work location: Pickering Nuclear Generating Station

Years of service: 10

Favourite spot to visit in Ontario: Niagara-on-the-Lake

Favourite book: "Presence" by Amy Cuddy

Favourite weekend activity: Spending time in nature and camping

