

2024 WCU Women's Entrepreneurship Conference

Keynote Speaker



Gina Schaefer is a visionary entrepreneur and dynamic keynote speaker, best known as the founder of a chain of Ace Hardware stores.

With nearly 22 years of experience, she has transformed a single hardware store in a neglected neighborhood into a thriving enterprise with 13 locations across Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. Gina's business not only provides essential services but also empowers the community, including the recovery community, by fostering an inclusive and supportive workplace.

Her passion for business ownership as a tool to combat inequality led her to sell her business to her employees, creating over 130 co-owners. Gina's journey is chronicled in her book *Recovery Hardware*, which highlights the power of second chances and community revitalization.

As a keynote speaker, Gina captivates audiences with her compelling stories and practical insights. Her talks focus on key areas such as creating positive corporate cultures, effective succession planning, and empowering women in business. Gina's presentations are designed to inspire and equip her audience with actionable strategies to drive change and achieve success.

Gina has been honored by several organizations for her leadership and contributions to business and community development. Her message resonates strongly with those who defy the odds and pursue entrepreneurial endeavors, especially women.

In addition to her speaking engagements, Gina enjoys making greeting cards, kayaking, traveling, reading, and mentoring other small business owners. Join Gina on a journey of empowerment and discover how you can make a difference in your community and business.