When Lasenta Lewis-Ellis attended Midlands Technical College, Columbia, SC, as a single mom, she was living in income-based housing. “I was a welfare recipient at the time, but I wanted more. Now when I go back to MTC, I talk to single parents so that I can share my story. I want them to see I’ve been exactly where they are today, and this is what it took for me to get where I am now.”

Lasenta recalls that there were few women in her program when she attended MTC, and very few black women. “I’m still outnumbered in my field, but I never let that stop me.” As owner of a construction company, Lasenta’s goal is to take old dilapidated spaces and create something useable and viable for people. “We focus on K-12 schools, school districts, charter schools, private schools, and colleges and universities. To see students walk into a room that we have renovated is exciting. They leave for spring break or winter break, and they come back into their classroom, and it has new paint and new flooring. It’s good, because it contributes to their learning.”

Lasenta also runs Need-A-Lift Transportation Services LLC, which provides safe, reliable transportation for children to and from school, and to after-school programs. “It’s great for working parents who want their kids to be able to get to extracurricular activities.” Lasenta was recently named a 2016 Enterprising Women of the Year award winner by Enterprising Women magazine. The award spotlights women who are experiencing significant growth in their businesses and women who give back to the community through mentoring, says Lasenta. “To get that award meant the world to me.” *