



## Gina Schaefer

Founder

A Few Cool Hardware Stores

Washington, DC

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Gina Schaefer is a visionary entrepreneur, 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. 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.