

# Sharing Is Caring

ShareBuilt is a “‘dating service’ collaboration platform’ that connects charitable groups and people in need with construction professionals who can help them.

BY MAGGIE MURPHY



**I**n an industry that boasts some pretty big projects, from high-ways and high-rises to medical centers and mega manufacturing facilities, the construction needs of small nonprofit organizations can sometimes be overlooked in the name of “bigger is better.” ShareBuilt, a new nonprofit organization created with a mission to make a meaningful impact on the lives of those in need, aims to change that.

Steve Kuhn, ShareBuilt’s founder and executive director, always found himself “becoming the guy that gets pulled into the church building project, or the kids school building project. I mean, I loved it, but what I’ve learned through the years is that even if you have a design or construction professional like me around, everybody’s got a day job and there’s no such thing as too much help on a project.”

Over time, Kuhn realized that, for various reasons, nonprofits didn’t seem to get as much attention in the eyes of contractors as other longstanding commercial customers. “There are some contractors out there that love doing nonprofit work, and that’s just what they do,” says Kuhn, who in his own day job is founding partner and executive vice president of Sevan Multi-Site Solutions. “My gut feeling from what I’ve seen over the years is that most AEC firms do a ton of this stuff, but they do it under the radar and often do not receive well-deserved recognition for these projects.”

The other challenge is that there is little


information about the size of the national nonprofit design and construction market—and, on the client side, a lack of awareness about how to connect with contractors who can help them. Kuhn founded ShareBuilt with the goal of bridging that gap. “I couldn’t find anybody focused on helping align nonprofit organizations or individuals with construction needs to the AEC community,” he says. “I thought, ‘This is crazy.’”

ShareBuilt launched in April 2022 with a sharp, polished website (ShareBuilt.org) and federal recognition as a 501(c)(3) organization. It’s also registered as a nonprofit to raise funds in Tennessee—Kuhn is based in Nashville—while plans to expand to Ohio and Florida, where additional ShareBuilt board members are based, as well as Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Alabama and Georgia.

The key to it all, according to Kuhn, are the volunteers known as “Project Shepherds,” who essentially are owner’s representatives operating on a pro bono basis. “These are the folks we need to really connect the dots to make this happen,” Kuhn says. “We need someone from inside the AEC community to help each nonprofit share their story in a way that resonates with contractors, so they recognize exactly how they can help. We’re really sort of a ‘dating service’ collaboration platform—we just want to connect somebody who has a need with somebody who can help them meet that need and provide each trade contractor visibility to the projects in their

area that need their expertise.”

That’s the vision, and so far, Kuhn says, “it seems to be resonating.” Recently, ShareBuilt worked to connect Nashville resident Stephen Clinton—who was just diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)—with a local contractor, which helped renovate his home in just two weeks to accommodate the challenges he’ll face as the disease progresses. They’re also working to help GraceWorks, a Franklin, Tennessee-based ministry serving middle Tennessee neighbors with food, shelter and support. “They’re bursting at the seams, and they desperately need three times the amount of space they’re currently operating in,” Kuhn says, “so we’re talking to them about connecting them with contractor partners who we hope can work to help them to identify new site possibilities and make that a reality.”

And then, ShareBuilt will get out of the way. “We don’t prescribe what any particular contractor or partner is going to do for these groups [in terms of financial assistance]—that’s up to them,” Kuhn says. “We just make the connection and give them a basic set of guidelines—having a written contract, being insured, etc.—and the rest is on them. We just want to help them get more done for less through more project exposure and contractor response, so they can focus on keeping as much of their regular funding in their mission as possible.” 

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