

Unreasonably BOULD: A Social Enterprise for Affordable Homes and Green Building Education

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LEED Gold-seeking home built by Fort Collins Habitat for Humanity

Imagine a world where potential is not governed by what we're told to be, the only fear is not giving enough, and business-as-usual, is a little more...unreasonable.

As a [USGBC Emerging Professional, Colorado Chapter](#) member, and young social entrepreneur, this is the world I'm working to create.

After a year serving [Flatirons Habitat for Humanity](#) (Boulder, Colorado) as an AmeriCorps VISTA, I approached a fork in the road. Do I confirm my acceptance to graduate school and pursue my Masters of Architecture? Or, do I pursue a slightly less conventional path: one filled with incredible potential, but also substantial uncertainty?

Two years later, after the completion of 17 LEED-registered affordable homes, the training of 115 now-qualified [LEED Professional exam candidates](#), and fundraising of \$20,000 for affordable housing builders, you will see that I chose the latter.

In 2010, at age 23, I co-founded a social enterprise, called [BOULD](#), with the ambitious mission to eliminate substandard housing through green building education.

Here's how it works. First, we train local affordable housing builders (AHBs), like Habitat for Humanity, to transform housing projects into structured, green building classrooms for career developing professionals and students. Our program, [EverbuildPRO](#), provides leadership opportunities at all phases of a project: from design development to LEED documentation to on-site construction. Upon program completion, participants have the project experience they need to qualify for [LEED accreditation](#), the world's preeminent green building credential. Then, in return for the opportunity, professionals pay a tuition fee that is shared between BOULD and the AHB, making "green" affordable and accessible for all. Take one of our recent partnerships: the Howard family home, built by Fort Collins (Colorado) Habitat for Humanity. This home is currently under review for LEED Platinum certification and annually, will save the homeowners 40% on utility bills and reduce carbon emissions by 10 tons. Not to mention, the project itself was a living laboratory, where nine local professionals learned LEED by applying LEED – and are now qualified for LEED accreditation.

Since our launch, we've been blessed with uncommon success, with programming now running in Colorado, Michigan, Alabama, and North Carolina, with many more locations going live this year. Now, our uncommon pattern is transitioning to an "unreasonable" one, as we compete with other social enterprises to earn new resources and support for BOULD through the [Unreasonable Institute](#).

One thing is for sure: As green builders, sustainability enthusiasts, or Emerging Professionals, we have incredible power to spread our message, even if it's on an unconventional path. How will you harness it?

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