

Revolution Mill

Historic property upfits another building, continues evolution as business and residential center

The tall, north-facing windows at Alpha Omega Financial flood the offices with soft natural light all day long. Massive heart-pine beams and columns, plus bricks made of Carolina clay well over a century ago, testify to the structure's industrial past.



Scott Graham

"There's so much history here," says Scott Graham, managing partner at Alpha Omega and a GMA member.

When it was time for his company to seek new office space last fall, Greensboro's Revolution Mill won out.

Graham looked at options in downtown Greensboro and elsewhere once he decided to relocate from High Point, but nothing else offered the package that he found next to North Buffalo Creek just off Yanceyville Street.

"It's got a great vibe," says Graham, who recently brought his son, Pete, into the business. "There's a lot going on here. A lot of businesses of different types. A lot of social events and gatherings. It's been a very good move, and we're thrilled to be here."

Graham has emotional attachments to Revolution Mill, too. Wedding receptions for both of his daughters were held at the mill's events center.

The Grahams are just two of the more than 1,300 people who come to work in Revolution Mill's diverse companies and office spaces. Some, like the Grahams, are in small businesses. Some are in coworking spaces, where the amenities include conference rooms and access to Revolution Mill's fitness center.

More than 150 work for Kontoor Brands, the mill's largest tenant and corporate parent of Wrangler® and Lee® brand apparel.

Continues on page 4

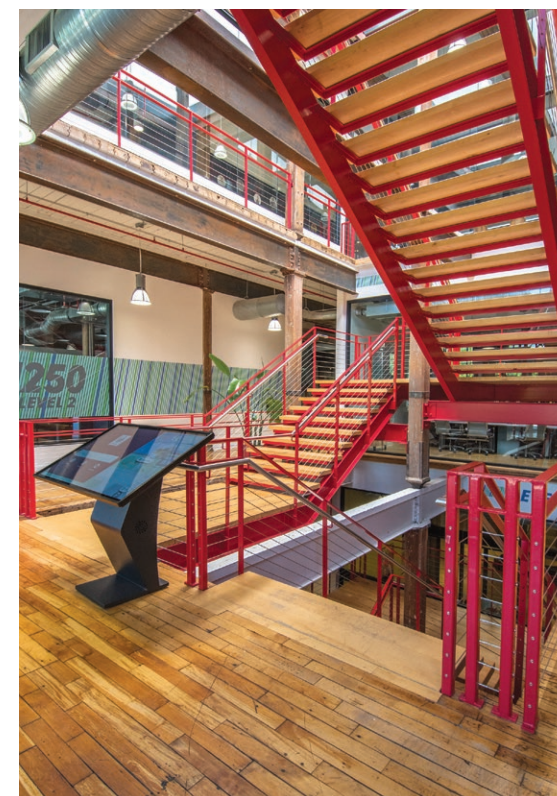


Karen Little, commercial property manager, in a newly upfitted apartment.



Revolution Mill's architectural features include large windows and three smokestacks.

Below: An interior staircase in the 1250 Building, home of Kontoor Brands.



LOOK INSIDE

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Trends is a publication of the Guilford Merchants Association.



Football's life lessons

Former NFL star Emmett Smith shared stories from his life in football at GMA's 117th Annual Dinner, which was attended by more than 600 GMA members and guests. More photos, page 6.

Meyer joins GMA as events and programs manager

Morgan Meyer has joined the GMA staff as events and programs manager.

Meyer comes to GMA from High Point University, where she was in the Office of Student Life.

There she worked with students and fellow staff on student activities, event planning, and program development.

A native of Central California, Meyer received her bachelor's degree in political science with a minor in business from Sonoma State University. She also received a master's degree in educa-



Meyer

tion from Holy Names University in Oakland, California.

In California, Meyer worked in marketing for a mortgage company. She also worked at Holy Names University, where she gained experience in disability support services, and residential life for undergraduates.

She moved to North Carolina two years ago.

Members are encouraged to introduce themselves to Meyer as she makes connections within the GMA community.



Jonathan Parisi of Spangler Estate Planning presents at the April 18 Teach Me Tuesday.

Learning at GMA

GMA's Teach Me Tuesday series bring experts in a variety of fields to share their knowledge with members. Events are free for employees of GMA member companies. Visit mygma.org to learn about upcoming events.



Members listen as D'Andre Clayton of Clayton Financial Solutions makes a comment.



| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
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The Guilford Merchants Association is a nonprofit organization founded in 1906. The Association is a business membership organization focused on supporting member companies with educational programming, lead generation activities, marketing opportunities, and overall enrichment while serving as a catalyst for community growth and prosperity.



Name: Will Chappell
Residence: Greensboro
Hometown: Julian
Age: 36
Education: Guilford Technical Community College
Business: Bankers Life
Role: Retirement Planner



On GMA Benefits:

It's been good to have other people in my industry to talk shop with, and meet people in other industries that may be a benefit down the road. I've really been enjoying Teach Me Tuesday events. I've been really happy to see GMA providing these educational events.

Personal:

I did a lot of hiking and camping in my 20s. Now I'm in the water swimming at 5:30 in the morning about four days a week. I'm also in a men's faith-based workout group called F3 (fitness, faith and fellowship). That group has done a lot to build and invigorate my leadership skills.

Will Chappell
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Responsibilities:

We are a holistic retirement firm. One of the responsibilities is helping folks transition from group health insurance to Medicare. I also meet a lot of people who are federal or state employees, and postal workers. I'm going to help them make that transition as smooth as possible.

On GMA:

At the beginning of this year, I got a membership to GMA and have gone all in with events and meeting people. I've really enjoyed the value of that networking. The sharper my social skills are, the better my job is for myself.

Sales pro leads June 20 Teach Me Tuesday

Joe Novara, a speaker, coach and author of best-sellers on networking and sales, will lead GMA's Teach Me Tuesday session on June 20.

Novara, a GMA member, will discuss his four-step process for a



Novara

steady, referral-based business.

Teach Me Tuesday sessions are free for all employees of GMA member companies. Topics include human resources, technology, finance, sales, customer service, and more.

Novara's Teach Me Tuesday session begins at 11:45 a.m., and lunch is provided. Register online in advance at mygma.org.

Making sure your website is accessible to everyone is good business

BY ADRIENNE CREGAR JANDLER

Most companies go to great lengths to ensure that their websites are not only great-looking sales tools but are also easily found within search engines and display properly across the gamut of popular browsing devices, such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, etc.

Ensuring that your website is accessible to everyone, including those with disabilities, is equally important.



Jandler

If you don't have a disability, you may not be aware that there are special measures needed to make your site accessible to all. Simply having a website does not mean everyone can access it.

In fact, there are a number of common practices and features which can impede the ability of a site visitor to utilize assistive technologies (like screen readers and magnifiers), or navigate using just a keyboard, as many people who are differently abled may need to do.

BUSINESS SUCCESS

Companies not familiar with web accessibility, or those using a web firm that isn't familiar with how to build according to accessibility standards, typically do not have fully accessible sites.

ADA compliance

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires businesses to provide equal access to goods and services for people with disabilities. While the act was initially focused on physical spaces, it has since been expanded to include digital spaces, such as websites and mobile apps.

ADA compliance for websites means that all users, including those with disabilities, can use a website with ease and access the content without any barriers. This includes people with visual, auditory, and motor disabilities, among others.

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) publishes Web Content Ac-

cessibility Guidelines (WCAG), which are widely accepted as the industry standard for site accessibility.

Why it matters

In addition to doing the right thing, there are three reasons to ensure that your website is ADA compliant.

1. Compliance increases your audience. If your website is not accessible, you are missing out on a significant number of potential customers who cannot access your site due to disabilities. According to the CDC, almost 1 in 4 Americans – some 54 million people – have some form of disability.

2. Compliance improves your SEO efforts and overall usability. Many of the practices used to ensure accessibility are also best practices for SEO and general web usability. If your website meets the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), it will likely appeal to users, search engines, and screen readers alike, ultimately helping improve your SEO.

3. Avoid Penalties. Failure to comply with the ADA's accessibility guidelines can result in significant legal consequences. The ADA allows for

private individuals to sue businesses for non-compliance, and penalties can range from fines to damages and legal fees. Lawsuits continue to rise against businesses over web accessibility, and the penalties can be in the tens of thousands of dollars.

What to do

If you are uncertain as to whether your site is compliant, try navigating the site without the use of your mouse. At a minimum, you should be able to fully navigate all aspects of your site that way.

Another approach is to have an accessibility audit performed on the site. Experienced web professionals can help by testing according to accessibility standards, make any needed adjustments, and help train your in-house team on how to ensure that adjustments made to your site over time adhere to best practices for accessibility.

Adrienne Cregar Jandler is president of Atlantic Webworks.

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Welcoming new members

GMA's recent orientation class for new members had 16 participants. Attending (from left to right) were Micah Carmony, PrimePay; Jo Heather Dodson, Your Christian Coach, LLC; Brent Howerton, Always Best Senior Care; Xavier Almonte, PrimePay; Darrell Nicholson, Kingdom Builders Associates; John Schilling, Superior Mechanical Inc.; Gabriela H. Parker, I Choose – I Am Not A Victim; Pat O'Neal, The Carolina Signsmith; Phydessa Lewis, Small Business Center of Alamance Community College; Salena Howard, Adecco; Rob Rynders, Bibey Machine & Fabrication; Rebecca Daniels, Allegacy Federal Credit Union; Srue "Melisa" Benjamin, Adecco; Bonny Bernat, Steel Hands Brewing; Amy Lawson, Lawson Financial Group; Ali Lamb, Bibey Machine & Fabrication.

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A water tower and smokestacks are among the mill's many architectural features.

Revolution Mill

Continued from page 1

New apartments, retail

Construction workers soon will finish upfitting the mill's most recent renovation, the 2005 Building, also known as the Mill House. The building, which most recently housed a storage rental facility, will have business tenants on the ground floor and apartments above. The addition

will accommodate business tenants. The mill became home to Greensboro's first business incubator, the Nussbaum Center for Entrepreneurship. Development efforts stalled in the early 2000s, with Self-Help eventually purchasing the site.

Self-Help, perhaps best-known for its Self-Help Credit Union, owns more than 30 properties around the nation, Piornack says. Self-Help's investment in Revolution Mill, ap-

proaching \$150 million, he notes, represents about 50 percent of its real estate portfolio.

Karen Little is commercial property manager for Revolution Mill, a GMA member.

Union Coffee Company, a current tenant, is moving to a new space in the Mill House. Restaurants Kau and Cugino Forno, plus The Bearded Goat bar, draw evening clientele and add vitality to the historic mill, Little says.

GMA member Jeff Shell moved his business, The Health Insurance Shoppe, to Revolution Mill in 2018. The well-known building has become part of his company's branding, he says. He loves that the property managers celebrate the mill's textile heritage with archival photos, wall graphics of ads for textile machinery, and even old looms and spinning equipment.

"It's very welcoming when you walk in," Shell says. "Something about it makes you feel comfortable and at ease, kind of like you're walking back into history."

Revolution Mill
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revolutionmillgreensboro.com



GMA member Jeff Shell says being in the mill is "like you're walking back into history."

will bring the number of businesses housed at Revolution Mill to 141, says Nick Piornack, general manager. Apartments will total 183.

Piornack works for the Durham-based Self-Help, a non-profit community development organization, which purchased the mill in 2012.

Flannel for clothing

Revolution Cotton Mill was founded as a flannel production plant in 1898 by Benjamin and Caesar Cone and their business partners, the Sternberger brothers. Revolution was the South's first flannel mill, and expansions over the following decades made it the largest exclusive flannel producer in the world. But dwindling demand for flannel, as well as international competition, led to the mill's closure in 1982.

The site was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.

A developer purchased the 45-acre property and began renovations to

Seeing effects of poor financial planning spurred pharmacist to switch careers, join family business

Being a member of any organization is a two-way street, Pete Graham says. Before joining, a person ought to consider what benefits membership will bring to the individual.

"But it's also important to think about what you can provide to the organization," he says.

In February 2022 Graham joined his father, Scott, as a financial advisor at Alpha Omega Financial, an affiliate of Equitable Advisors.

Alpha Omega is a longtime GMA member and volunteer. Getting involved with GMA was part of the natural order of things when the younger Graham joined the family business.

"It was just one of those things," he explains. "They raised us in a sense of volunteerism."

Graham has assisted with registering members and guests attending GMA events. He's also been a facilitator for "the sticker game" that takes place at every After Work and Noontime Network event. The game helps newcomers and old-timers get introduced to one another and is an effortless entrée to networking, GMA-style.

So far, Graham says, "those are the types of opportunities that have presented themselves. I'm always looking to get more involved."

Graham spent nearly a decade working as a pharmacist before making a career change to join Alpha Omega Financial. He had worked for a company that provided consulting services to hos-

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

pices, many in rural areas.

That experience, he says, gave him new perspectives on the importance of financial planning.

"I was privy to seeing the unfortunate circumstance of a number of people who have not done any sort of financial planning," he explains. Add to that "the burden of end-of-life care and everything that's going on emotionally." The experience, along with the pandemic, caused him to reevaluate his own circumstances.

He listened to "the bird in my ear" and decided to accept his dad's invitation to step into financial planning.

"I was ready for a change, to have some more flexibility, and the ability to create my own trajectory and still be helpful," he says. Graham completed his financial planning certification exams in fall 2021.

The experience has been great so far, he says.

"It's obviously been great to work with my dad, and to see what organizations he's been involved with, and he's had a lot of involvement with GMA. To see it first-hand and experience it makes you want to volunteer and help."

Pete Graham
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Financial advisor Pete Graham, outside his office at Revolution Mill.

GMA consistently offered opportunities through changing times and an evolving career

Some people know Abby Donnelly as an authority on networking. She's the creator of a program called Networking Works and a book of the same name.

Networking Works training, a methodical approach to fast-track networking skills, has been cosponsored several times by GMA.

Some may know Abby Donnelly as a business coach. At one time she was associated with Sandler Training.

And some may know that her Leadership & Legacy Group is focused on helping CEOs and companies navigate the final stages of executive careers with coaching on succession and exit strategies.

Donnelly's business focus and career track have evolved significantly since she launched her business in 2001. Through it all, she's maintained an active membership in GMA.

She recalls taking a hard look at the membership fee when she first joined. Would she get a fair return for her investment?

LOYAL MEMBER

"I did the calculations and figured that if I attended 12 events, and counted them as breakfast and dinner, it would be worthwhile," she says, laughing at the thought.

"I quickly found that GMA offered a lot more than that."

Donnelly, who prior to starting her own company worked with Procter & Gamble as a quality assurance manager and internal consultant, plunged into GMA opportunities.

In addition to volunteering at networking events, she joined a GMA volunteer group that selected speakers for Workplace Workshops. Donnelly sensed an opportunity for establishing another leads networking group under GMA sponsorship. The BIZ-Links group, which meets on Thursday mornings, is still going strong.

'I just keep finding ways to get involved.'

– Abby Donnelly

Abby Donnelly of The Leadership & Legacy Group.

"I just kept finding more ways to get involved," she says.

Over the years she has regularly directed new acquaintances to GMA. Only by visiting, she says, can someone "get a sense of whether GMA might be right for them. I can send them and know they will be well taken care of."

GMA membership provided an environment that helped Donnelly establish her business in 2001.

"I didn't know anybody outside of the Procter & Gamble world except the neighbors on either side of me," she says. "That's where GMA

was really helpful. And it continues to be, she says.

"GMA is this steady, reliable engine, and you always know there's going to be something interesting going on. You always know you're welcome to come. You open the door to the event venue, and there are a hundred of your closest friends."

Abby Donnelly

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FirstPoint Background Screening provides critical info for decisions

Second in a series

Good information is crucial to being able to make good decisions. Providing critical information to customers is what FirstPoint Background Screening Resources is all about.

"We are in the information business," says Scott Hall, senior vice president of the division and a FirstPoint employee for more than 20 years.

The division's customers ask FirstPoint Background Screening Resources to search public records and other databases for information about individuals who typically are prospective employees or residential tenants.

Specifically, Hall explains, clients are looking for "red flags" that indicate the prospective hire or tenant may not be a good risk.

The four primary areas of

concern are criminal convictions, sex offender status, a prior history of eviction, and credit record.

The division has more than 40 certified staffers, all compliant with Fair Credit Reporting Act standards. The reports they prepare for customers provide information about an individual, but not judgment.

The report provides "everything you need to make an intelligent, educated decision" regarding employing the person or entering into a lease agreement, Hall says.

FirstPoint Background Screening Resources has more than 1,200 competitors across the nation, he notes. But only 120 are accredited by the Professional Background Screening



Hall

Association. The FirstPoint division is in that elite group.

"It's kind of like our Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval," Hall says.

"It means we've had a third-party, independent auditor come on-site, review what we do and how we do it, and say that we're doing it the right way."

The division has its own compliance department, making sure that staff are up to date on regulations affecting its industry in all 50 states as well as major cities, which can have their own regulations affecting consumer privacy.

What does accreditation mean to the division's clients? They can "trust that we're following all the laws, all the regulations, and that we're doing it the right way," Hall says.

Ultimately, "we bring peace of mind to all the clients we work with; that they can be comfortable in the

decisions they're making about these individuals."

FirstPoint Background Screening Resources has more than 1,000 clients, he says, including international organizations.

The division's largest client is based in India. Clients include property management firms, government employers, healthcare, and school systems.

"We tend to work well in professions where reputation matters," Hall says.

The division's revenue is "invested back into the Triad community" through employee salaries and by further developing FirstPoint and GMA, Hall says.

FirstPoint Background Screening Resources
800-288-7408
info@firstpointresources.com

Young entrepreneurs bank on finding value and treasure amidst junk

Sustainability drives the mission at T.C.C. Junk Removal

Nikolas Grundseth and Mason Eades always look carefully at the stuff they've been hired to clear out and haul away. Sometimes there's treasure hiding amidst the trash.

There was the time they were cleaning out a house for a real estate investor and Grundseth, who while in college had created an online business reselling vintage and lightly used fashions, spotted an interesting skirt hanging in a closet.

Though the house was a hoarder's mess, the skirt was pristine.

Most items in the house were headed for a landfill or recycling. The skirt went to the partner's online marketplace, where it fetched \$200.

On another residential clean-out job, they found a first-edition volume of Robert Frost poetry, autographed by the poet. The fact that it was somewhat tattered apparently didn't matter to the collector who purchased it. Price paid: \$500+.

Grundseth and Eades own T.C.C. Junk Removal. Whether your junk is con-



Mason Eades (left) and Nikolas Grundseth own T.C.C. Junk Removal, LLC, based in Greensboro.

scious shoppers. Ebay is another outlet. Very little actually gets sent to a landfill. T.C.C. Junk Removal knows what to do with it.

Cookware that has seen better days might be donated to Goodwill or another similar agency. The same goes for other goods whose value is probably less than \$25.

Items that the pickers predict will bring \$25 or more are put up for sale online. Items too big to ship are likely to be placed on Facebook Marketplace, where buyers are usually local. Designer-label clothing is routed to Poshmark, a site for brand-

NEW MEMBER PROFILE

conscious shoppers. Ebay is another outlet.

Very little actually gets sent to a landfill. T.C.C. Junk Removal takes its mission seriously.

"Our sustainability mission revolves around reselling and donating as well as recycling," says Grundseth, who launched The Treasure Chests as an online reseller in 2019.

Eades partnered with him soon. "We were going to flea markets, Goodwill. Buying low, selling high," he recalls.

The chance opportunity to

clean out the hoarder's house came just as the pandemic was settling in. Many of the usual sources of goods for the online store had dried up. The partners quickly realized that junk removal presented an opportunity.

"We just decided to go for it," Eades says.

"We started working with other real estate investors and then opened it up to residential services. Now we are full-service junk removal and light demolition, able to take care of residential and commercial," Grundseth says.

The Community Chests, a name inspired by similarly named cards in Monopoly

board games, has been shortened to T.C.C.

The partners are Guilford County natives who share a love for soccer. Grundseth, 25, played for N.C. State before earning his diploma from UNC Greensboro. Eades, 23, attended UNC Charlotte for a couple of years, studying architecture, before giving in to his entrepreneurial leadings.

T.C.C. Junk Removal now employs several persons in addition to the founders. A business coach suggested joining GMA, where the networking opportunities fit well with the company's core values: professionalism, productivity, integrity, and community.

Grundseth had been reselling goods online for five years, he says, when he "stumbled upon junk removal," which provided the partners with a steady stream of products ready for new owners.

"It's just really enjoyable to take those items and give them a second life," he says. "Otherwise, they would have been just tossed into the landfill."

T.C.C. Junk Removal, LLC
tccjunkremoval.com
 336-916-9169
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Greensboro Police Chief John Thompson; Greensboro Council Member Marikay Abuzuaiter; Jenny Caviness, community engagement director, Greensboro Police Dept.; Andy Womack, River Landing; Mebane Ham, Ham Bone & Associates.



Marcus Thomas, Charmiya Elliott, Sasha Sullivan, Josh Morgan, all with Truliant.



David Kolosiekie, Habitat for Humanity; Mac Sims, East Greensboro NOW.

Annual Dinner Scenes

Koury Convention Center
 March 27, 2023



Grimsley High School's Blue Steel drum line set the tone for the evening's football theme.



Srue "Melisa" Benjamin, Adecco; Lexy Moran, TRC Staffing.



**Hanes Lineberry
Funeral Home**
March 7, 2023



Rob Thomas, Doody Calls; Dean Campbell, GTCC; Nikki Corbett, Precise Creative.



Bill Price, Carolina Connections; Maribel Tapia, HRMAG.



Alison Schwartz, All Pets Considered; Alison Huber, Dynamic Quest; Jody Clayton, Kisco Senior Living.



Heather Gwyn, Hanes Lineberry; Gene Dolan, Culinary Visions Catering.



Hilton Garden Inn
April 21, 2023



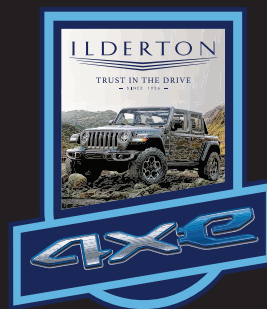
Kimberly Vaughan, The Triad Relocation Guide; Holly Holliday, Holliday Creative; Peter Graham, Alpha Omega Financial.



Ellie Harduk, Four Oaks Insurance Agency; Derek Carte, Allegacy Federal Credit Union; Cecil Mills, Coeco.



Tom Pullara, Dream Vacations; Lindy Fuller, Summit Credit Union; Kathy Cates, Brand Connect; Alison Huber, Dynamic Quest; Mark Podolle, Wireless Ventures. RACERS the cheetah is the Membership Council mascot.



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