

# Re:Vision Architecture

Owners: Jennifer Rezeli and Scott Kelly | Philadelphia, PA

Founded in 2003

Staff of 6

Member of SBN Philadelphia

## **What inspired you to start your business?**

Coming from two very different professional backgrounds, we both reached the same conclusion: that development has a tremendous impact on the issues that we care most deeply about—environmental sustainability, distribution of resources, education, and the health/happiness of communities. As an architect, Scott was becoming concerned over the fact that thousands of years of thinking about buildings had been abandoned over the past fifty years, particularly in terms of how buildings interact with natural elements (sun, wind, light, land). As a planner, I was in tune with the social and environmental costs associated with wasted resources, such as land, energy, and intellect. The business emerged suddenly when a former colleague called Scott to ask for help with a green building project. Scott said “why not?” and I joined several months later, “just get things started.” We’d love to say we started with a business plan but it was more a matter of, “right time, right place, right thing to do.”

## **How have you grown your business to what it is today?**

Re:Vision Architecture is an architecture, planning and consulting firm committed to re-visioning and restoring the balance between natural and built environments. From fundraising for green buildings to executing the design, RVA provides a unique range of services that has been compiled to remove the most common barriers to completing environmentally responsible development. Strategically, RVA is a small firm (currently six staff) and plans to grow to about a dozen...big enough to secure large-scale projects but small enough to remain hands-on and choosey about clients. Each year since the company incorporated in early 2003, our firm’s annual income has doubled, primarily through repeat clients, word of mouth referrals, and a staggering amount of volunteer work within the green building community. A low rate of staff turnover is key to our viability and long-term growth. Working in such a specialized niche market with rapidly emerging technologies, we invest a ton of time and energy in professional development.

## **What ecologically sustainable, socially responsible or community-minded business practices have you incorporated into your business?**

Every single staff member at RVA is a committed environmentalist who consciously walks the talk. From simple actions like collecting single-sided paper from our friends’ corporate offices to hard-core actions like converting cars to bio-diesel, we try to live and work with a high level of consciousness about our everyday choices. For transportation, employees often use public transit, a PhillyCarShare hybrid, or the office bike. Our firm also participates in a City of Philadelphia program that matches employer contributions toward a staff member’s mortgage if they purchase a home within the city. Our firm gives the maximum amount for employees who purchase within five miles (biking distance) of the office. Of course, we also think about how to spend our purchasing dollars locally, particularly with companies that value the triple bottom line.

## **What are the challenges or opportunities you currently face, and what are your future goals?**

Great architecture is often defined only in terms of aesthetics...this is such a limited view of what design can achieve. Our ultimate goal is to have a key role in transforming the building marketplace (both suppliers and consumers) into one that values and demands that great architecture also aspires to environmental sustainability and social equity. Working towards our big goal is both our biggest opportunity and our biggest challenge

because it requires that we educate our colleagues, clients, and our competition. Sharing your core technology a doubled-edge sword and only time will tell how it serves us in the long-run. But as long as we've changed the marketplace, created wonderful places and had a good time along the way, we don't think we'll have any regrets.

Find out more about Re:Vision Architecture  
116 E Moreland Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19118  
(215) 242-1866