

The Crooked Forest Project: Shared-Equity Solutions for Healthy and Affordable Housing

Holly Noonan and Joseph F. Kennedy

History of CFI

- Joseph Kennedy and Holly Noonan founded Crooked Forest Institute in 2022.
- Joseph has been an earthen architect, builder and educator for 40 years.
- Holly is a social worker, health coach and project manager.
- Systemic problems require systemic solutions.
- Don't use the same logic that created the problem



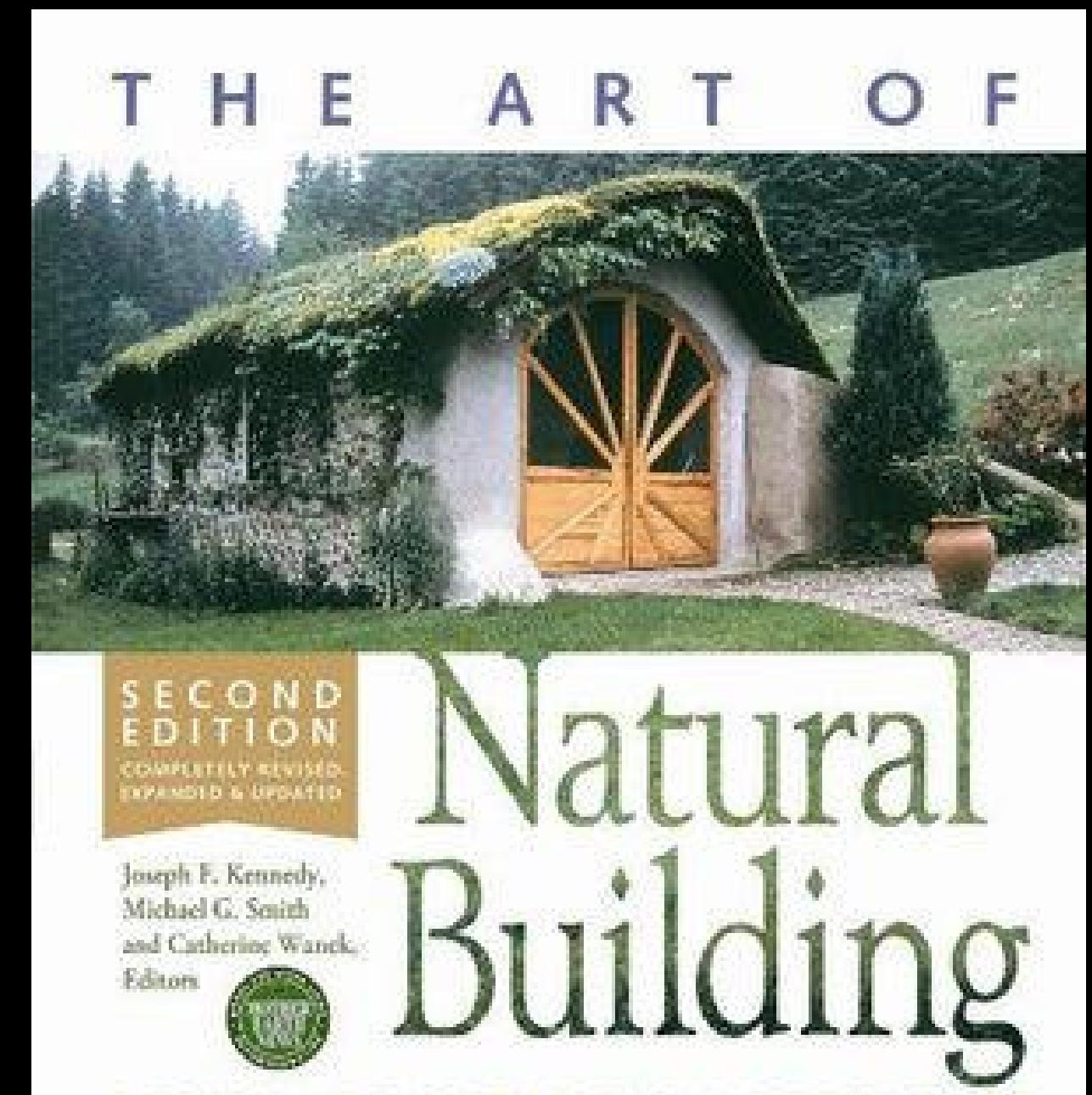
Holly Noonan

- Holly Noonan is a social worker, functional medicine health coach, property manager and small-scale real estate developer.
- She is a 2025 Lincoln Vibrant Communities Fellow.
- She experienced environmental homelessness herself, starting in 2016.
- She built the first Crooked Forest prototype in 2025 and the second one will be built in 2026.
- Holly is passionate about economic justice for disenfranchised, BIPOC and disabled populations.



Joseph F. Kennedy

- Degrees in Architecture and International Peace Studies
- Taught architecture for many years
- Pioneer in natural building
- Written two books
- Joined Crooked Forest Institute in 2022
- Wants to create business to help community development



The Problem

- Deteriorating affordability (housing 6x median income)
- Trend towards increasingly disposable homes.
- Negative health outcomes follow.
- Housing reliant on international supply chains/non-local economy.
- Naturally-occurring affordable housing=low quality structures and financial vulnerability.
- Lack of consumer protection and social justice for lower-income Americans.
- “Permanent Affordability” is not required.



The Solution

- Earth-based construction
- Disability-forward design
- District Utilities
- Small footprint homes
- Fireproof and Non-toxic
- on Community Land Trusts

- Vocational training (CTE)
- Paired with NonProfit Housing Developer
- Local materials/ manufacturing
- Local economy/ businesses



Adobe Architecture

- Historical precedents
- 2015 NM Earthen Building Code
- SFCC, Adobe in Action
- Mesilla, Luna CC, Cornerstones
- Modest square footage
- Design for long term durability and affordability
- Statewide offering of Adobe Construction as a CTE program
- Pairing with Nonprofit Housing Developers



Cost Comparison

- Manufactured Housing: \$85/sqft, lifespan of 30 years.
- Adobe Housing: \$200/sqft, lifespan of 300 years.

However...

Cost Per Square Foot Per Year:

Manufactured = \$2.83/sqft/yr

Adobe = \$0.67 /sqft/yr

Adobe is 4.25x more cost-efficient.



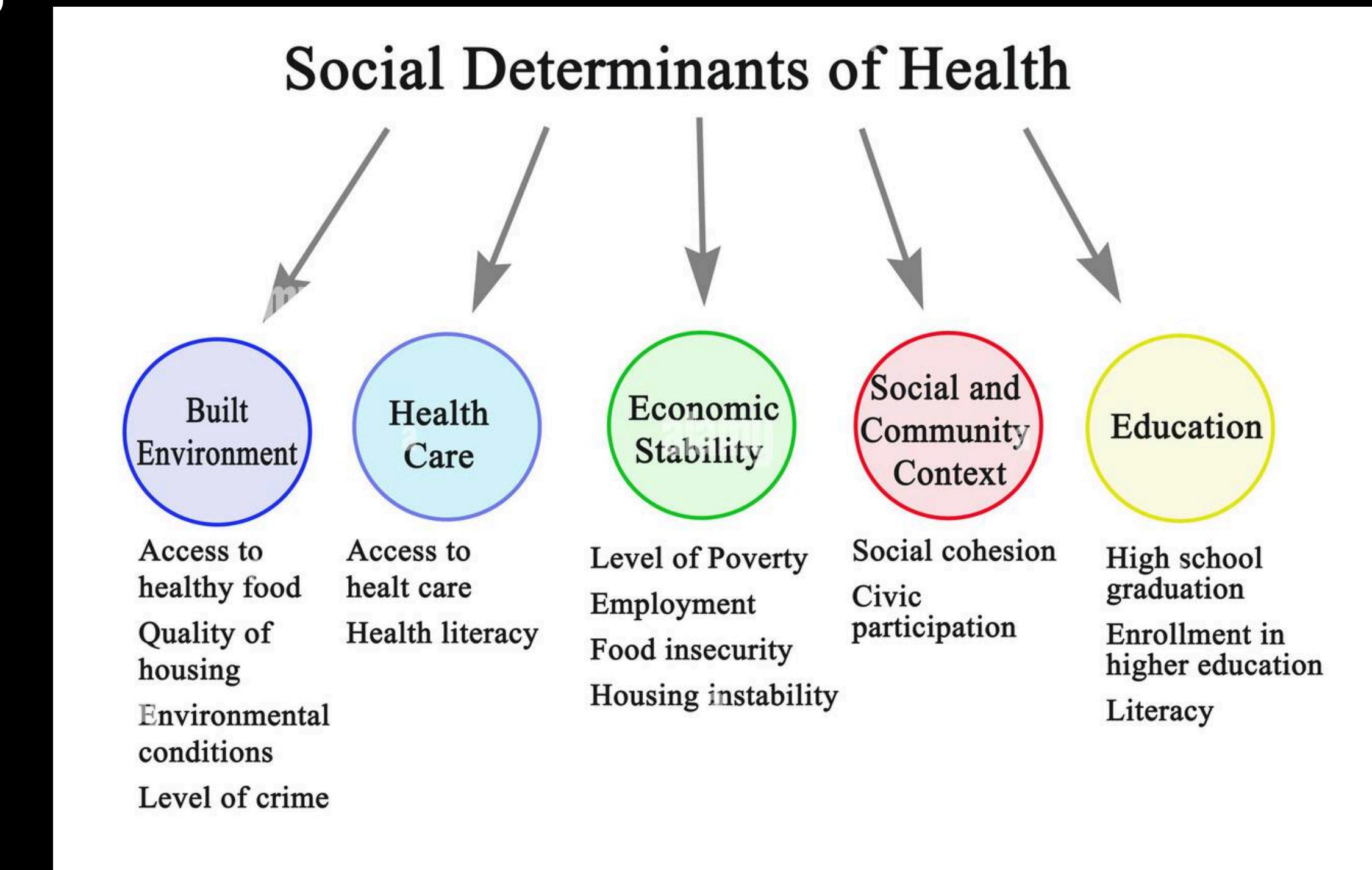
Models

- Community Rebuilds (UT)
- Chicanos Por La Causa (AZ)
- Colorado Earth (CO)
- Thistle and Nest CLT (OR)
- Newtown CDC (AZ)
- Square One Villages (OR)
- InOurHands.love (MA/NM)
- Mobile Loaves and Fishes (TX)



Social Determinants of Health

- Health built on the basics:
- Safety, clean indoor air, filtered water, clean food. Plus:
- Economic and educational opportunities
- Social Cohesion
- Civic Participation
- Stability



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Policy Changes are Needed

- Only 2 NM counties allow permanent structures to be built at RV parks for workforce housing.
- We need by-right land use changes that allow for district utilities on/off CLTs. (village zoning?)
- Housing NM has a 900 sq ft minimum to finance new builds. That's too big.
- We need “Permanent Affordability” to be required by the NM Housing Trust Fund, like VT.
- Statewide CLT like VA or MT or TheBrightway.org in FL
- Opportunity to Purchase (OTP) Legislation to secure manufactured housing communities.

Future Possibilities

- Casita/ ADU design
- Vocational training center and prototype development site
- Adobe brick/CEB factory
- Focus on innovation
- 3D printed adobe homes
- Humble/Radical
- NM becomes leader in affordable/fireproof/healthy adobe development at scale.



Community Land Trusts

- Partners with local stakeholders (nonprofits, government, housing advocacy groups, etc.)
- Establish a 501(c)3 CLT entity.
- Receive land donations and bequests (can be non-contiguous.)
- Protect land in perpetuity for the benefit of the community.
- Build perpetually affordable neighborhoods on them.



**GROUNDED
SOLUTIONS
NETWORK**

Opportunities to Collaborate

- Contribute to our work
 - Catalyze Community Land Trusts
 - Become an advisor to CFI
 - Volunteer
 - Join the Board of Directors
- Connect us to funding.
- Feasibility and Engineering
- Policy changes needed.
- Legal and code assistance.
- Design and construction partners.
- Education partners. (CTE +)
- Help develop new legal and financial models (CLT, cooperative businesses)
- Promotion and outreach



Contact us

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