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LEED Platinum rated pre-fab home; a LivingHomes living room

Q&A with Steve Glenn, Founder of LivingHomes, LLC

By Logan Sachon

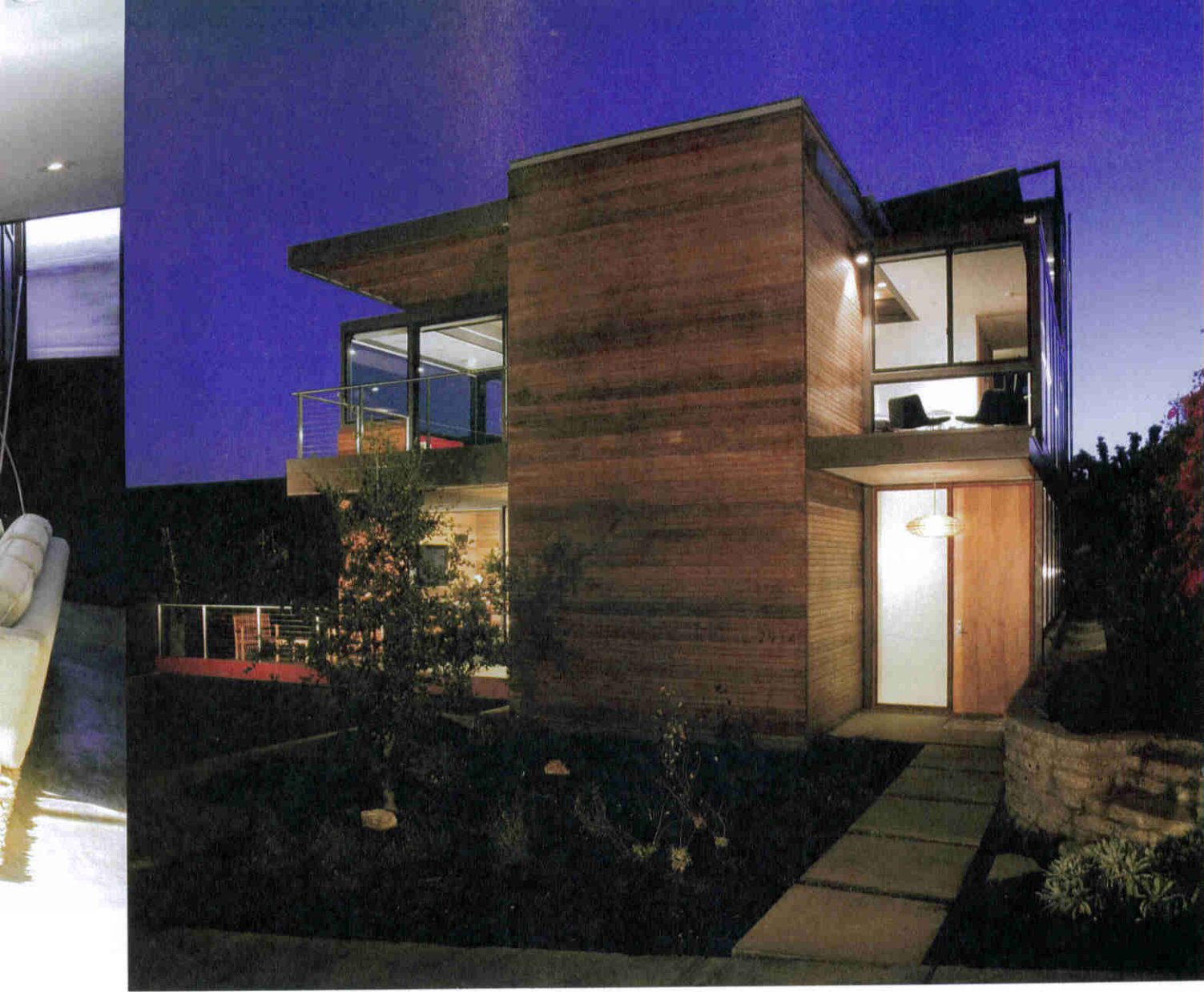
The jump from tech entrepreneur to green building developer might seem a bit drastic, but for Southern California-based entrepreneur Steve Glenn, it was the next natural step. Glenn had a solid, successful history in tech ventures when he founded LivingHomes, a development company that creates pre-fab homes that don't sacrifice form for function—or sustainability. The homes are designed by world-class architects Ray Kappe and David Hertz and, through their incorporation of sustainable and efficient materials, design elements, and energy systems, have been awarded some of the highest scores in the U.S. for sustainability. With these beautiful, sustainable, and affordable homes, Glenn aims to make green with green.

Can you give me a brief overview of your career? I know you had some history with tech startups. How did you get into building and development?

As a kid I wanted to be an architect, but one summer in college I did a design program, and I learned that developers were more influential in getting buildings made and communities shaped, which is what I was really interested in. I thought the world could use more developers who care about the social implications of their work.

I'm interested in a phrase on your website: "wedding profit and purpose." I find that pretty compelling, but I'm wondering why you do. Why is sustainability important to you?

I was born in Los Angeles, but I grew up in the woods in North Carolina. That is where I learned to be conscious of the natural environment. I've always been an environmentalist. I recycled in college before it was popular, and when it was



difficult, when there was one place to bring your stuff.

College was also when I learned about Jim Rouse, who really took an enlightened approach to real estate development. And I try to do that, too. He helped me feel I could do positive things through business.

Green is somewhat in vogue right now. Do you think this is a passing fad, or do you think there's really a change going on in the collective consciousness?

For some it's probably a fad, but if the predictions about global warming are true, it will become a fact of our life and our lifestyle whether we want it to be or not, whether consumers care enough to get on the frontlines to reduce their ecological footprint or because they have to, whether they have to move because their house will be under water or their livelihood will be affected by climate change. For all of us, costs will increase substantially through climate change and depletion of natural resources.

The choice is whether you are going to be part of a broader effort to lessen the impact or ... wait and have to deal with the results.

What advice might you have for other people who want to start a green company?

First of all, there is nothing specific about starting a green business. You have to do the same things as with any startup: get a clear idea about the people you're trying to target, the problems you think they have, the specific solutions you think you offer. The greater the disconnect between the problem and the solution, the less likely you will succeed. But there are significant and growing opportunities, from dry cleaning to computer carrying bags to household cleaning services that use healthy nontoxic materials. I think there's a great market opportunity to examine businesses across the board and do it in a healthier and more sustainable way.

www.livinghomes.net