

# Benevolent Fact Sheet

Founder & CEO, Megan Kashner, and her team are early in the development and deployment of this platform. Launched officially on December 1, 2011, they are first testing and developing the site in the Chicago market and are gearing up now to add on the functionality and support necessary to expand into other geographies.

## The Benevolent Model

- Sharp focus on critical one-time needs that represent progress towards personal sustainability
- Scalable and transparent model for validation and partnership, providing more than cursory assurances
- Individuals telling their own stories, with dignity and pride in their accomplishments and plans, leaving pity and shame behind
- A two-sided marketplace in which those in need are not paradoxically expected to attract their own donors
- Small-dollar donors can be transformative givers
- Building a community across strata and roles - expanding mutual understanding

## Benevolent connects three different types of participants:

- Prospective donors: contributors who funnel funds to a specific need while also furthering Benevolent's mission
- Individuals in need: individuals with a specific one-time need
- Partner organizations: a local nonprofit or congregation that validates the needs of their constituents and fosters the secure transfer of funds

## Mission

The mission of Benevolent is to bring dignity and self-determination to both sides of the giving equation, illuminating the realities of life on the edge of sustainability.

## Organization Profile

Benevolent is an online site through which individuals with specific and one-time needs can describe and request help in meeting the financial portions of their needs. Donors on the Benevolent site determine which individual needs they wish to help meet and which local nonprofit organizations' clients or members are most compelling.

## Benevolent's Statistics

**33** needs fully funded by **323** contributors with **\$16,705** donated.

## **Fast Facts**

- Founded in Spring of 2011 by Megan Kashner
- Early version of site launched December 1, 2011 and set to scale beyond the Chicago area by Summer of 2012
- The average donation is \$50
- The average amount of a funded need is \$485
- The average amount of a posted need is \$575

## **Future Features of Benevolent.net**

- The back-end software to allow individuals and their nonprofit validators to enter and validate needs easily from their local computers
- Additional information for visitors to learn about the public policies and economic forces impacting those in low income circumstances
- A “shopping cart” that allows donors to contribute to more than one need per transaction, purchase giving certificates and contribute to benevolent partner nonprofits
- A more robust and interactive interpersonal messaging system
- Smart site functions that bring to each visitors’ new feed those stories and highlights most of interest to him or her

## **Company History**

In February of 2011 Megan created the idea for Benevolent. Soon afterwards she explored, crafted and fine-tuned the concept with the help from seasoned professionals in finance, software development and entrepreneurship. By early summer of 2011 Julie F. Simpson signed on as Vice President of Strategy and Operations, bringing her leadership expertise from the nonprofit and philanthropic arenas. Together the two enlisted some of the brightest minds in their respective professions to sort out legal details, web development and serve on the Board of Directors.

By Autumn of 2011, Benevolent recruited team of volunteers and began developing partnerships with area nonprofits to capture the needs of individuals who live on the edge of stability. On December 1, 2011 Benevolent launched its pilot site, [www.benevolent.net](http://www.benevolent.net) in the Metro Chicago. Within a month 10 different individuals had their needs met by 113 donors, creating a personal connection in giving and receiving. As Benevolent scales and grows beyond the Chicago community the organization will increase the number of successful needs met and donors.

In regards to her multifaceted background and her vision for the future, Megan states, “I always say I’m a Social Worker first. As we develop the Benevolent platform and community, though, I’ve had the opportunity to bring both my social service background as well as my MBA skills to bear. If we can use these two competencies and focuses to bring support to core needs for individuals, we’ll have achieved something both remarkable and sustainable.”



**Megan Kashner, Founder & CEO**

Megan is Benevolent's founder, CEO, tea-kettle refiller, blogger and overall chatterer. She is also a seasoned nonprofit leader with over 20 years of strategic management, community partnership building and organizational planning experience.

Megan has spent her career leading organizations and programs dedicated to bringing innovation to the nonprofit sector and to improving social service support for women and families living in poverty and at risk. She has served as Executive Director for the Taproot Foundation and earlier for the Infant Welfare Society of Evanston, Chief Development Officer for Chicago's Deborah's Place and Program Director for organizations including the Howard Area Community Center, Methodist Youth Services and the Heartland Alliance.

Megan is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with a BA in Public Policy and American Civilization from Brown University, a master's degree from University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration and an MBA from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management. A frequent panelist and presenter at conferences, Megan most recently presented a session introducing Benevolent at the Independent Sector conference, on a panel about achieving scale at Kellogg's Innovating Social Change Conference, at the Axelson Symposium presenting a new approach to service enterprise for nonprofits and on a panel about corporate commitments to skilled volunteerism at the National Conference on Volunteering and Service. Megan was also named one of the top 100 local innovators at Techweek 2012.

A New York to Chicago transplant, Megan and her partner live in Evanston, IL where they raise their two children, attend more than their fill of soccer games and play frequent games of Mario Kart before bedtime.

### **Company Headquarters**

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