



## KENDRA SOLER

### *Project Manager*

“Everyone deserves to be heard, listened to, and respected. No matter what, that element of sitting down with someone, learning from their experiences and understanding what they need is most important. That happens in every project, and it’s what I want to focus my career on.”

### Discovering Service-Based Architecture, Nurturing Authentic Relationships

As [Kendra Soler](#) would ride to and from school as a kid, she would peer out her window and notice the different buildings and neighborhoods going up in her Southeast Columbus school district. She noticed the differing qualities of buildings and began to question why these variations existed. This inspired her desire for everyone and every community to have access to quality spaces.

She never had the language for this affinity until she began the [Architecture & Construction Management \(ACM\) Satellite Program](#) at the [Eastland Fairfield Career and Technical Schools](#).

But once she did — she knew that she would become an architect.

### Discovering Service-Based Architecture

[Jason McGee](#), the director of the ACM program at the time, played an integral role in helping Soler hone her passions.

“The everyday conversations with McGee were a huge part of it,” she recounts. “Just the genuineness and realness of those conversations and getting exposure to the field through other people’s experiences — that was a phenomenal opportunity to have in high school.”

One of the most impactful connections Soler made through the program was her mentor for her capstone project. Through the capstone project, each student was assigned a seasoned engineer to serve as their mentor as they investigated a building project that most interested them in the build environment.

During the mentor assignments, Soler made a bold request; she asked to be paired with a female architect.

“At that time, there were only a handful of female architects,” Soler shared. “Requesting and receiving a woman architect was incredibly meaningful for both my project and for me.”

Soler’s capstone was a service-based architecture project geared toward helping survivors of domestic violence. She looked no further than the mall she frequented as a child, which was slowly closing down.

“The project tied together two things that hit close to home,” explained Soler. “Interviewing women and survivors of domestic violence was very impactful. Through that project, I knew that service-oriented architecture, or nonprofit architecture, was my passion.”

## Nurturing Authentic Relationships

After she graduated from high school, she landed an internship with Keiser Design Group. [Dan Keiser](#), the principal architect at KDG, was a frequent visitor in the ACM program, and McGee highly recommended Soler for the role.

As she became acquainted with the company culture, KDG's core value of relationships was a perfect fit for what she wanted. She could see herself working there full-time, but Soler was, first and foremost, focused on advancing her education.

She worked hard to receive a [B.A. in Architecture](#) from [Miami University](#), followed by a [Master of Architecture](#) at the [University of Michigan](#), before returning home to Columbus.

"I reached out to McGee to chat during that time, something we did periodically to stay in touch," said Soler, who was working a few side jobs at the time. "I didn't expect the conversation to turn into a job opportunity with Dan, but I was very thankful to return to the people who were there for me since the start of this. They brought me back in with open arms."

As a project manager, Soler coordinates all of the design information with other project elements. She works with engineers, clients, builders, and community entities to ensure the original drawings are completed successfully. At the core of all her interactions on the job is a high value on relationships.

"Everyone deserves to be heard, listened to, and respected," said Soler. "No matter what, that element of sitting down with someone, learning from their experiences and understanding what they need is most important. That happens in every project, and it's what I want to focus my career on."

Soler is now working on a service-based architecture project for homeless families in Knox County. She consistently brings fresh perspectives and a commitment to positive change to whatever project she is working on.

"My passion for service-based architecture has always been supported throughout my entire career, but especially in my relationships with Jason and Dan," said Soler. They have also always supported my ambition and desire to see positive change through the industry."

Looking toward the future, Soler would eventually like to become a teacher of architecture in Chicago or Detroit to make the field more accessible to youth in larger cities.

"Being mentored by previous teachers has been amazing," said Soler. "They have offered me not only professional experience but also teaching experience that I can use to pour into the next generation."

In the meantime, Soler frequently visits her old stomping grounds at the Eastland-Fairfield Career and Technical Schools to mentor a young architect, just like her, in the completion of her senior capstone project.

"Just to feel like I am continuing that legacy of mentorship, participating as a woman in architecture, and being supported by KDG to do so is not something I ever want to take for granted."

[Learn more about KDG's approach to service-based architecture](#), or get to know the [KDG team](#) and how each individual contributes to the company's authentic relationships.