
Branding for Greater Impact: An Interview with Julia McGee and Tony George

by Sabine Kortals Stein

“Community Food Share was extremely committed and hardworking throughout our work together.” says Tony George on the three-year [Catapult](#) program partnership between SVP Boulder County and Community Food Share.

Specifically, George – a longtime SVP Partner – worked alongside [Community Food Share](#) to meaningfully modernize, refresh, and refine the organization’s brand and related communications to create greater awareness and organizational impact across our community.



“It makes all the difference to work with people who care, and who are willing to dedicate time and resources to do things right,” continues George. “Community Food Share was ready to accept help from SVP toward reaching its full potential.”

Upon gathering input from key stakeholders through surveys and interviews, George and Julia McGee – Director of Communications, Community Food Share – worked together to evaluate the data, and to synthesize the findings into key themes that would elevate the organization as a community leader.

“Along the way, we kept the board and staff of Community Food Share informed,” says George of his work with Vermilion Design + Digital to create refreshed brand assets for Community Food Share. “I learned a lot about how to push things along in ways that accommodate the different interests of board members, staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders. And I learned so much about perceptions of Community Food Share, both inside the organization and in the community. It was incredibly rewarding to connect my for-profit job with the needs of an awesome nonprofit.

“The two main deliverables that resulted – a new visual identity and a messaging suite – not only serve as a ‘toolbox’ to align all Community Food Share departments around the same look and feel and tone of voice, but also as a portfolio piece for the agency [Vermilion].”

Agrees McGee, “When I think about the long-term impact of the re-brand project – in addition to the skills I learned in executing a project of this scope – I’m thrilled to orient and usher in oncoming board and staff members better than before. When someone new joins our team, I can explain right from the get-go who we are and what our language is.

“I better understood how our brand sets the tone of our organization, and how much it impacts everything we do. It provides a roadmap that we didn’t have before, and it’s the common thread that keeps everyone in our organization on the same page.”



photo: kengo tomatani

She adds, “I had never done a rebrand before. Through SVP Boulder County, I had the opportunity to work with a seasoned professional who guided, informed, and advised me according to best practices ... every step of the way. It was an incredibly gratifying learning experience for me that also resulted in our clients feeling more welcome and respected.”

Like George, McGee notes the importance of learning how to gain broadly-based buy-in. “I was new in my role on the leadership team, and – throughout the rebranding project – I learned how to work well with board members,” she says. “They’re not in our work every day, so they don’t see through the same lens. Understanding what information was most relevant to present for their buy-in was crucial in creating consensus and building relationships.

“In the nonprofit sector, we’re working at hyper speed all the time, and it’s easy to skip some steps when you feel confident about making changes. Through SVP, I learned the discipline of extending project timelines to ensure stakeholder buy-in, which ensures the strength and sustainability of overall outcomes.”

As a participant in SVP’s Catapult program, Community Food Share also worked on strategic planning, as well as board development, leadership coaching, and more. [Click here](#) to see a detailed report on our relationship.