

ICON BUILDING GROUP

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CHARLIE MURPHY, PRESIDENT AND CEO



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Building Icons

Icon helps its clients achieve their dream homes.

BY ALAN DORICH



PROFILE

ICON BUILDING GROUP

www.icon-group.com / **Specialties:** Custom homes, additions, renovations and interior design / **Employees:** 13

When Icon Building Group creates a space, it makes sure it uniquely fits the needs of its clients. “There’s nothing we won’t do to help somebody create what they want,” President and CEO Charlie Murphy declares.

Based in Kildeer, Ill., Icon builds custom homes in its own communities or on lots its customers own, and performs additions and renovations in existing homes. Icon also has strategic partnerships set up with architectural and interior design firms, thus creating a single point of contact, from concept to move in, for its clients. Murphy started the company in 2008 when he and a partner invested in a subdivision development.

They eventually parted ways, but Murphy pushed forward on the project, despite his own inexperience in the real estate world. “I had to figure out how to get the homes built and sold,” he recalls.

Murphy later pursued more projects by acquiring distressed real estate, primarily in the Stevenson School District area of Lake County, Ill. “Stevenson is one of the best in the nation,” he says.

The right locations are critical for Icon’s success, Murphy says.



One way Icon Building Group sets itself apart in the field is by performing custom work for its clients.



"No matter how good the company is, you have to own the right real estate," he asserts.

Icon also sets itself apart by doing custom work. "I had a problem with the idea of forcing people to buy from a stock list of plans," Murphy says. "Every client is unique, so why shouldn't they have the opportunity to create something that fits their needs perfectly?"

Over the years, Icon has developed lots, built homes, done a

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myriad of home renovations, and completed commercial build-outs. Although some advised Murphy against being so diverse in his work, "That didn't make sense to me," he states. "There were too many similarities in the business model required to execute these different kinds of projects. It made more sense to me to leverage our company's infrastructure and mitigate risk by diversifying."

Icon, which will celebrate a 10-year anniversary next year, also has built a strong staff. "I'm surrounded by people that live and breathe the same thing," Murphy says. "I don't have to worry about what's going on in the field."

Congratulations Icon Building Group on your success and growth in the industry. We appreciate the opportunity to work with you in the past and look forward to the future.

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TIME WELL SPENT

Icon Building Corp. donates its time to benefit charitable organizations, including the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. The company built a home in Vernon Hills, Ill., with the help of its trades and suppliers, which donated or provided discounted rates on construction materials.

"We sold the home and donated the entire amount to St. Jude," President and CEO Charlie Murphy says, adding that the company is about to do the same for the Wounded Warrior Project. "We have the lot picked out and we're just working on getting all of the details finalized."

A CRITICAL PROCESS

Icon works very closely with the owners when designing a custom home. "The first thing is to really understand what the customer's trying to accomplish," Murphy says, noting that his team looks at such elements as the size of home, overall budget, design finishes, planned length of home ownership and cultural requirements.

"The relationship between the company and the customer is the most critical part of the process," he says. "There [are] a lot of moving parts to a project, and for most, it is the single-biggest investment of their lives. Families are raised and lifelong memories are created. Trust and faith between us, and a platform that promotes healthy communication, are paramount.

"The building of these relationships [requires] a lot of collaboration," Murphy says, noting that the process can even span long distances. When Icon built a home in Vernon Hills for a family in Singapore, it used digital interfacing to stay in communication with them.



Icon recently finished a custom luxury home in Kildeer, Ill. "That was an example of what we do and the extent that we go to serve our customers," Charlie Murphy says.



Icon sees more opportunities ahead for innovation in the homebuilding process, and in the parts and pieces that go into the home.

The project managers also participate in the process so they can apply their expertise in form, functionality and flow. "All the while, we're making sure the design and budget are aligned," Murphy says.

Once the clients sign the contract, "We're off to the races," he says, noting that it is open to client changes. "There's not a place where you say, 'No more changes because we don't want to deal with it.'"

"The idea is to get the customer exactly what they want," he says. "If you get to a place where they want to make a change in something, we make the change."

BUILDING A DREAM

Icon recently finished a custom luxury home in Kildeer. "That was an example of what we do and the extent that we go to serve our customers," Murphy says.

The home's owners were moving from Dallas and wanted a custom home. "What we did essentially was help them design the home they had in their minds and hearts, in order to bring it to life, so they could start the next chapter of their lives," he recalls.

The finished project, Murphy notes, is a farmhouse-style home with lots of space connecting its kitchen, casual eating and family areas. "There's also a wraparound porch on two sides and a wrap-around deck on the other two sides," he says.

The company's design team worked closely with the family on the finishes on the inside and outside of the house. "Everything came together beautifully," he says.

Icon also helped the owners when it came to the schooling for their children. Because the local district did not allow students to be enrolled without living in the area for a specific amount of time, "We found a place to rent that would give them a short-term lease," Murphy says.

"Along the way, we developed a very close friendship, which we do with a lot of our customers," he says. "It's a feel-good story."

AT THE FOREFRONT

After a decade, Murphy still finds Icon's work satisfying. "I just love what I do," he says. "I feel grateful to have the opportunity to work with people to build a space they call home."

Some homes, he notes, will be summerhouses or used for raising a family. "Others are downsizing in the last 10 years of their life and that's where they're going to finish out their time here," he says. "I feel happy to be a part of that."

Icon sees more opportunities ahead for innovation in the homebuilding process, and in the parts and pieces that go into the home. "We're about to see a lot of change in the way in which people live in their homes and we are positioning ourselves to be at the forefront of this movement," he says. ■

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