01 / A LIVING STORY

The thread that started it all.

Dear friends, neighbors, and fellow builders,

Built through trial and error.

I am an innovator, and I build through trial and error. I test an idea, see where it breaks, keep what works, and distill the next version. The feedback-and-refinement loop I associate with AI feels familiar: it is how my brain works.

This story and our Terms & Conditions are living documents. As I learn, our work and the way I explain it will evolve, with the aim of making each version clearer, fairer, and more useful. Updates are dated; changes to the terms follow their notice and acceptance rules and preserve existing commitments.

Where it began.

Shared Threads began with my friend from high school and musical collaborator. Helping someone I knew and loved find a way off the streets made the problem deeply personal. I wanted to build something that could keep creating opportunities for him and for others facing similar circumstances.

One of the earliest ideas was Juice Aid. The concept paired mobile cold-pressed juice trucks with food, interviews, and human connection. An executive ordering a juice could open an app and hear from someone experiencing homelessness who was sharing nourishment from the same fruits and vegetables. The trucks would put the day's produce to use, while the interviews gave people an opportunity to tell their stories. Eventually, those two people could meet online. The purchase created a connection. Someone who might otherwise remain invisible became a person with a voice, a history, and a future.

That thinking evolved into the Generous Payments concept. I focused on the profit generated when businesses accept card payments: the portion ordinarily earned by the independent sales organization, or ISO, and acquiring provider. My proposal was to dedicate an agreed share of that profit to a philanthropic purpose selected by the business owner.

The mechanics mattered. A customer would make a purchase. The transaction would generate processing revenue. A designated percentage of the resulting processing profit would be allocated to the owner's chosen cause. As the business continued serving customers, that activity could create recurring support. The merchant's everyday work and the recipient's progress would become connected through an ongoing commercial relationship.

Different versions became PhilanthroPayments™, but the principle stayed consistent: build human benefit directly into the way money moves. Support would come from the agreed processing-profit allocation, without asking the customer for an additional donation at checkout.

02 / HOW THE IDEA EVOLVED

A more direct connection.

That same thinking led me to explore a UBI-style sales-tax model, which I briefly developed into a white paper. I approached it through something I knew firsthand: merchant payment processing. What if the connection between a purchase and its public benefit could be built directly into the payment system, and people could have a more immediate say in where that money went?

In the model I envisioned, a business's credit-card processing account would be linked to its sales-tax registration. The owner could configure three funding choices on the payment terminal or online gateway, representing specific propositions, public purposes, or a basic-income initiative. Within that proposed framework, a designated variable portion of the sales tax would follow the selection made at checkout. The payment system would record that choice and route the corresponding funds. That was the granular part of the idea: connecting an individual transaction, a funding decision, and a destination for the money.

Generous Payments explored directing an agreed share of processing profits toward a purpose chosen by the business owner. This proposal carried that principle into public funding, giving people a direct role in allocating a defined portion of sales-tax revenue. A basic-income option could help return purchasing power to people, whose spending would support businesses and generate further taxable activity.

For me, the important connection was between participation and control. People could see a choice, make it, and have that choice guide the money through the transaction itself. It remains a concept I intend to revisit. Its influence is already present in Shared Threads: building a clearer connection between everyday commerce, individual agency, and practical support.

Across these ideas, I wanted to build an independently controlled business that could sustain its mission through its own work. My aim was to use capitalism deliberately for human benefit, without making tax-exempt status the foundation of the project. Paying for production, compensating contributors, and maintaining operations would make continued support possible.

Those earlier processing-profit and sales-tax ideas describe the path here. Today's PhilanthroPayments model connects apparel purchases, recipient support, paid journalism, and referral compensation. Actual funding, payments, permissions, and responsibilities are defined in the accepted campaign documents and Terms & Conditions.

03 / PEOPLE BEFORE AGENDAS

Open to people. Firm on purpose.

Shared Threads is open to people across the political spectrum and to people with no political affiliation. Bring your experience, your relationships, and your audience. You do not have to agree with my politics, and I do not have to agree with yours, for us to help someone move forward.

I have spoken firmly about keeping politics out of this work. That conviction remains, but I have learned to separate a person's beliefs from what they actually do. Shared outlooks, an existing political audience, or choosing a story that speaks to you do not by themselves misuse the program. Honest stories can include political experiences without turning into recruitment.

The boundary is how we treat people. Assistance, coverage, paid work, or commissions must never depend on a vote, endorsement, ideological agreement, or loyalty to anyone, including me. Campaign funds, information, branding, and official channels stay focused on the person's story and practical support.

When conduct is unclear, we explain the concern and allow reasonable correction. A strike requires a knowing violation or repetition after clear notice. Confirmed strikes progress from a written warning, to a final warning with a defined suspension, to a lifetime ban after the third strike. Each finding requires documented reasons and an opportunity to respond. Earned payments and committed recipient funds remain protected. Separate serious safety, fraud, or legal misconduct follows the immediate-action provisions in the terms.

I make the final internal decisions under those published rules, with room to hear people, reconsider evidence, and correct mistakes. Everyone, including me, is held to the same neutrality standard. Where politics ends, healing begins.

Political-neutrality summary: Terms & Conditions v3.0, Sections 2 and 13.

04 / WHAT WE BUILD FROM HERE

Ten years. Still building.

For ten years, I tried, failed, reconsidered, and tried again. I kept returning to the same problem with another version of the answer. Failure was frustrating and sometimes exhausting. Each attempt gave me a clearer understanding of what needed to change, what deserved to survive, and where to begin again.

I believe success can grow from that repeated willingness to fail and keep learning. Shared Threads carries ten years of those lessons. Something beautiful gradually emerged as pieces developed through different ideas and experiences finally began to fit together.

Today, its six components connect personal stories, referral income, practical assistance, Causational Journalism™, apparel production, and the operations that keep the work moving. Each part has a purpose. Together, they form a model intended to create opportunities for the people sharing their experiences and those helping bring those experiences to the world.

An individual or family can help shape a shirt that expresses something meaningful about their life. Someone wears it, a conversation begins, and another person has an opportunity to learn, participate, or help the story travel further.

My ambition is to build something communities can carry forward through their own relationships, creativity, and effort. Every conversation at a business door is an opportunity to introduce that possibility.

For me, Shared Threads is ten years of friendship, failure, persistence, and hard-earned lessons coming together. The shirt is where that work becomes visible.

Thank you for taking the time to understand where this began. I hope you will find your own place in what comes next.

With gratitude and determination,



Gordon Rose
Founder, Shared Threads