



New York

Women's Leadership Initiative

October 2021 Newsletter

To the ULI New York WLI Community:



As I circle on the key goals for the year (writing this while sitting at the window in my apartment in Brooklyn, with my daughter playing Legos on the floor and the dog asleep on my foot), I keep thinking about how much has changed over the past year when I joined WLI leadership as Vice Chair and how much will continue to transition in this coming year. At this moment of

transition, where flux has become the norm in our lives, cities, and professions, having a solid grounding in what we as WLI do and why we do it becomes ever more critical. I find myself continually connecting back to why WLI was founded by a small group of women leaders and ULI members ten years ago, and that its mission remains ever so important: to promote the advancement of women in the real estate industry—at all stages of careers and professional development—with the goal of increasing, through generations, the number of women in leadership positions in the industry and in ULI.

While it feels in some ways like time had stopped for a period, in so many ways our work and world has accelerated. Facing a global health crisis together brought to the forefront long overdue challenges we need to address as an industry, from equity and inclusion to our environment and health, and all of the intersections between.

Our community at WLI has been devastated by the pandemic. Women in the industry, especially in leadership positions, have seen our progress in numbers knocked back decades, and these numbers are even more significant for minority women. (One great study, by McKinsey & Company September 27, 2021, can be found [here](#).) Disparity has increased in this time by gender, and again it is even worse for minority women. Many women are still struggling with childcare and navigating day-to-day changes at

schools. But the added stresses are not on mothers alone. Women are also disproportionately dealing with other pressures, responsible for the care of loved ones and navigating uncertainty daily.

As we think about the future, though, there is opportunity. With seismic shifts happening now in how we work, collaborate, inhabit, and build our cities, how can we help make sure we do it better and more equitably?

I came to know WLI through the encouragement of a couple of its founding members—incredible, successful women including Ronne Hackett and Bobbi Paley—who took the initiative to reach out to me to support me when I was still young in my career, and from there my network grew to include even more incredible women at ULI. It was exciting to connect with the WLI community, because we are stronger together when we have the support of each other, especially through challenging times. So what can WLI do? How can we continue to elevate women's voices? Can we lift each other through these significant challenges? Can we make space to listen and be of service to those who are struggling? Can we continue to grow a more diverse and inclusive community in real estate, carrying our responsibility as people who shape our cities? Yes, we can. Not alone, but as a group with a united purpose we can keep advancing the goals that are a shared commitment of our community.

As we sprint ahead this fall, we are excited to continue building on the work of previous years to engage and support more women as we continue to transition through this difficult time. Over the past year, I have seen women jump to elevate others in search of a job, or to get on a call to discuss how we address return to the workplace. Incredible leaders in our industry have dedicated time to discussing their career paths to inspire the next generation all while managing the many issues brought on by global pandemic. This was only reinforced by the incredible efforts and accomplishments of the WLI team last year, despite the challenges.

Some highlights include:

Our Scholarship Committee transitioned to the Foundations Committee, reflecting a broader scope that includes: founding a new fellowship initiative for undergraduate/graduate students, which will work to connect young people with ULI and offer greater opportunities to participate in the organization. The fellowship will be open to students beginning in January 2022. More details to come soon! In addition to the new fellowship initiative, and despite not being able to host events in person for fundraising, the committee found creative ways to generate support through engaging remote sessions.

The University Outreach team made a huge push to more than double the schools we engage with in order to reach a broader and more diverse student body. We are continually strengthening the relationships with these new schools as well as hosting student-tailored events this year.

The Programming Committee hosted multiple successful events remotely, including one of our most highly attended: *Learning from Leaders*. The committee is currently working to roll out this year's program offerings with both remote and in-person options.

Membership Engagement started a highly attended program of Coffee Chats to connect people in more informal ways; the sessions will continue both remotely and in person this fiscal year.

The Communications Committee expanded outreach via this newsletter and on social media and focused on elevating women's voices in the industry, including a beautiful series on historic and contemporary women leaders in our industry for Women's History Month 2020.

Our work on the Hines Grant—creating an educational module designed to bring to light career options in the real industry for female students from underrepresented minority high schools—is nearing completion and will also be rolled out this fiscal year.

We have lofty goals for the coming year, continuing the great work of the many women that have built WLI up to what it is today. But we also know we need to continue to grow to address the challenges of the future, and we want your input. Together with WLI-NY Vice Chair Anne-Sophie Hall, I invite you to get involved. Share your thoughts with us, your suggestions, time and support. Please feel free to reach out directly to either of us to learn more. If you are a woman-identifying member of ULI, you are already a part of our community. We hope to see you virtually soon and in person in the near future!

Best regards,
Dana Getman
WLI-NY Chair, 2021-2022
Principal, SHoP Architects

Member Spotlight

Helen Hwang, Senior Executive Managing Director at **Meridian Capital Investment Sales**, has added another title to her name: organic food entrepreneur. She and her siblings, Wendy and Joon, bought a farm in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania. Channeling their love of Korean food and desire to combine entrepreneurship and social consciousness, they started producing the only US grown and certified organic Gochugaru, Korean red chili pepper flakes. This proprietary blend goes well in kimchi, meats, pastas, and more. **Lakehouse Farms Gochugaru** launched this August!

Why Korean red chili peppers? The Hwang family always loved and ate tons of spicy food, but unfortunately, they learned that most of these pepper flakes contain red

coloring chemicals (to brighten the color) and metals (to increase the product weight). Importing from a reliable source in Korea was their only means to get healthy and clean pepper flakes. After years of importing, it got too expensive. They soon realized many Korean families experienced the same issue. This spawned their idea to begin the farm.

Helen says, "Gochugaru, Korean red chili pepper flakes, are the heart of Korean cooking and my family would like to share them in their purest form with everyone all around the country." You can sample the Lakehouse Farms [Gochugaru on Amazon](#), check out their [website](#) for more on the family farm story, and follow them on [Instagram](#) for recipes and food inspiration. Helen also serves on the **ULI New York Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee** as a Senior Advisor.



Organic Korean peppers *via Lakehouse Farms Instagram*

ULI New York WLI Member Shout-Outs

WLI congratulates **Jasmine Gurreri**, one of the **Student Outreach Committee** members, for graduating last semester with her Master's in Real Estate from **Fordham University**. Jasmine accomplished this academic achievement on top of caring for her three daughters and mother! Check out her [Fordham profile and her story](#) of rising from an unlikely background to mastering complex real estate legal and transaction work.

Like so many of her high school friends, Jasmine says, limited exposure to higher education limited her aspirations. Her mother came from a rural part of Puerto Rico and her father was from a rural part of the Dominican Republic. Neither had the opportunity to go to college. When her older brother and sister graduated from high school, they went straight to work. Reflecting about her service on the University Outreach Committee today, she says that she was overjoyed to be chosen as a committee member of the WLI's University Outreach Committee. She has not only expanded her professional connections with her fellow committee members as well as having the opportunity to make some really great friends while simultaneously assisting on the preparation of exceptional educational events for other real estate students. "This was a triple win!" she said.

Nadine Penkovsky recently joined **Unlock Real Estate**, a venture backed startup, to serve as their Director of Real Estate. Unlock's mission is to simplify real estate for small & medium business owners by using technology to help originate sale leasebacks in the sub \$5mm space.

Lauren Amicucci recently closed on \$290M of Opportunity Zone financing with **Goldman Sachs** for **Archer Towers 1**, a 24 story, 542,000 SF, 605-unit mixed-use development in Jamaica, Queens. Within the building, 30% of the units will be designated affordable, with a wide range of affordability, as well as contain 14,000 SF of retail space, 200 parking spaces and expansive amenities. The land was secured as an Opportunity Zone investment in 2018, and over the last three years, Lauren has worked to secure construction financing and as well as project managed the pre-development phase. Lauren will continue to manage the project through construction and lease up, which is expected in early 2024. The project is **BRP's** first start-to-finish opportunity zone project, and second large-scale development in Southeast Queens.

Lauren and the Archer Towers 1 Team are proud to partner with Goldman Sachs' **One Million Black Women** initiative and are committed to working alongside the initiative throughout the life of the project. See coverage in [Real Deal](#) and [Commercial Observer](#).

Kemi Areke is not only hitting the books at Columbia's MBA program but also dominating the catwalk for **New York Fashion Week** this fall! Check out her interview and profile in Yahoo: [Finance Whiz Columbia MBA student and Model Kemi walks New York Fashion Week](#)

Announcements

Can't-miss Speaker Event: Join us for [Learning from Leaders](#) on **October 26th from 6:00-7:00PM**. Each fall, ULI New York's WLI hosts a highly anticipated professional development program called *Learning from Leaders*. This year's event will feature four women real estate executives from different branches of the industry and will provide a virtual forum in which WLI members can hear from these executives in an intimate setting and ask them thought-provoking questions. Learn more and [register now!](#)

Looking for advice or to give back? Our **WLI University Outreach Committee** will host a virtual fall [Career Development Night](#) on **November 11th from 6:30-8:30PM** with optional informational interviews with participating companies to follow at a later date. If you know a current student (undergraduate or graduate), please be sure to pass the event along to them. In addition, if you or your company are interested in providing informational interviews to students, please contact Co-Chairs [Lauren Amicucci](#) or [Kendra White](#). [Register now!](#)

Coffee Chats & Member Engagement Mixers:

Our ULI New York WLI Membership Engagement Committee has finalized the dates for our upcoming virtual and in-person Coffee Chats for fall 2021!

- Plan to join us for this series in person at **8:30AM** on **November 4th or December 2nd!** Locations TBD; to be shared upon RSVP.

and/or

- Plan to join us virtually via Zoom at **8:30AM** on **November 19th or December 17th!** Zoom link shared upon RSVP.

ULI NY will be sending out eblast notifications to all WLI members a week before each Coffee Chat encouraging interested folks to sign up. Ready to RSVP for a specific date? Send an email to [WLIcoffeechats@gmail.com!](mailto:WLIcoffeechats@gmail.com)

The Membership Engagement Committee is also responsible for hosting ULI New York's **WLI Holiday Breakfast**, which will be held the morning of **Wednesday, December 15th**. Format (virtual or in-person) is still TBD, but will be announced as soon as info is available!

About ULI New York's WLI

The mission of ULI's Women's Leadership Initiative is to raise the visibility and number of women in leadership roles in ULI and the real estate industry.

Any woman-identifying ULI member is automatically a WLI member here in NY. There is no additional fee or application to be a member of WLI. Only our WLI committee and leadership positions are application based.

Here are ways you can get more involved in the WLI community:

- To keep your ULI member profile updated, visit my.uli.org
- To post a job: Join the [LinkedIn Group](#) and share your post
- To network: [attend a WLI or ULI event](#), happening monthly
- To recognize a fellow WLI member's achievements, submit a [Member Shout-Out](#)
- To volunteer: [apply](#) for a committee or leadership position - application window is open annually January - March
- To connect with WLI Committee Members to learn more about what we do, find us on [LinkedIn](#) or the [ULI Member Directory](#)
- To suggest a story for our next newsletter: email [Vivien Wu](#) or [Alison Coen](#), WLI Communications Committee Co-Chairs

ULI Provides a Variety of Resources to Support its Members, Including:

WLI Mentor Circles - WLI National has organized a new program for peer mentoring circles that connects Full Member ULI women from around the country. [Learn more here!](#)

Digital Programming From Around the World – Explore industry insights within the largest global real estate library through an easy-to-use, intuitive search tool - ULI's Knowledge Finder. [Learn more here!](#)



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