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RXR Realty hosts Project REAP Trade Association night

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Shown (from left) are: Felix Ciampa, ULI NY; Jeanette Mena, C.U.R.E.; Stephen Taylor, ICSC; and DeVon Prioleau, C.U.R.E.

New York, NY “We work with the engines that keep REAP going. The partnerships REAP has formed have been integral to our mission,” said Lamont Blackstone, CRX, chairman of the board of Project REAP (Real Estate Associate Program), introducing representatives from several leading international and national real estate organizations at REAP NYC’s 2019 Trade Association night held April 25th and hosted by RXR Realty at a Park Ave. office. The evening is one of the signature events for information gathering and networking offered to students and alumni of REAP, a nationwide initiative dedicated to increasing diversity and inclusion in commercial real estate for 20 years.

Rosemarie Subasic, director of facilities, Hines, and membership committee chair of BOMA NY, outlined the development, training, advocacy and support, and various levels of membership opportunities through the association whose members represent close to 650 million square feet of real estate in the NYC commercial market.

Felix Ciampa, executive director of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) New York, urged all to “get involved, show up, participate,” calling ULI “the pre-eminent association for people committed to building places for people to live globally and locally.” He spoke of global and local programs including groups targeted to emerging and mid-career professionals.

Sharmeen Dossani, incoming president of NAIOP NYC, a vice president with Zurich Alternative Asset Management, explored the organization’s multiple offerings including training, education, development forums, advocacy, mentorships and programs ranging from golf outings to panel discussions on opportunity zones.

Jeanette Mena, REAP ’17, real estate representative, Starbucks, and DeVon Prioleau, president of Pri-O-Leau Development Group, both board members of C.U.R.E., Council of Urban Real Estate, spoke of the organization founded in 1990 to advance professional and leadership development for persons of color through forums, development tours, power breakfasts and more. C.U.R.E. seeks to identify, said Prioleau, “the best, brightest and most diverse real estate professionals.” He said the

critical need for REAP and C.U.R.E. as CRE remains under-represented by diverse talent. Mena praised C.U.R.E. for taking her “to the next level” in her career.

Stephen Taylor (REAP '17), director, volunteer services, ICSC (International Council of Shopping Centers), and a REAP alumni, said that “Being a part of this community has been a career-altering experience.” Taylor outlined scholarships, advocacy, and education which is “building the talent of the future.”

Several of the organizations offer REAP students a free one-year initial membership.

Desiree Thomas, REAP '17, with HPD (Housing Preservation & Development), praised the networking organizations available to REAP graduates as “a step provided for us to make a difference in the industry.”

Will Lawyer, REAP '11, with Pliskin Realty & Development, applauded the event for introducing you to industry leaders and “put[ting] you in line with other professionals.”

Gabriella Aguirre, REAP '19, with Knotel, learned of REAP through ULI. She noted that the relationship between the organizations and others “expand[s] your opportunities to grow in the industry.”

Adeola Adejobi, Esq., REAP '13, with HPD, said, “The organizations that participate show that they have a commitment to diversity and want to make their organizations more inclusive.”

José Zapata, REAP '19, who works in NYC government, called the event “a connection to the relevant resources ...critical to success in the industry.”

Stanley Okoye, REAP '17, with JP Morgan Chase, called it “one of the best nights to expand the value of REAP” as it introduces all to “associations you can partner with.”