

**Ashley Pollock**  
**2017 Building Healthy Places Forum Scholarship Essay**

I will forever be grateful for this opportunity as I reflect on the information and connections that I made at the 2017 ULI Fall Meeting in Los Angeles. I would like to thank Mr. Randall Lewis for his generous contribution and the Building Healthy Places Initiative for choosing me to be a part of the first cohort of Health Mentees. The unique exposure I had during this week of educational sessions, panel discussions, Product Council, and networking opportunities left me feeling inspired and energized on my return home to Chicago.

Although I have been a student member of ULI for a little over six months, I had no idea how I as a student, with very little work experience could contribute to my District Council and attribute to the revitalization of Chicago's built environment and people. Becoming a Building Healthy Places Mentee I was assigned a phenomenal mentor, Teri Frankiewicz, who divulged information that has assisted in shaping my career trajectory. Having an experienced ULI member as my mentor ensured that I would not only meet people but it also ensured that I wouldn't be or feel overwhelmed by the vast amount of information I was being exposed to at the Meeting.

Because of Teri, I was able to meet Cindy McSherry as well as Sarah Wick who are both in Chicago and were kind enough to take time out to listen to my story and experience as well as share theirs. Now, I have a better idea of how I can not only get involved with my home District Council but have a better idea of how I can continue on after I graduate. During the CDC Silver Product Council meeting, I gained a deeper understanding of Master Planned Communities and the challenges and successes of developers from across the country. From that meeting I was able to ask questions I normally wouldn't be able to ask in school as well as learn about the future of MPCs. I also had the opportunity to attend the Young Leaders Reception which connected me to young professionals across the country who like myself will be the next wave of influential leaders.

Overall, between the receptions, forums, meetings, and sessions I connected with people that were and are willing to guide me through the field, take my questions, and offer their expertise, which is more beneficial than a job opportunity. Because I desire to not only stop but reverse the damage to many citizen's health because of the deterioration of the built environment, it was essential for me to hear about the journeys and learned experiences. The Fall Meeting delivered a well-organized and educational range of industry topics, along with fun and productive networking events. I enjoyed touring the community of Pacoima and hearing about the non-conventional ways they are making a difference in their community. I look forward to staying involved with ULI and the Building Healthy Places Initiative as I believe the work and information that both are putting forward is truly needed to change the world.