

Hunton Andrews Kurth and Aria Development Group Announce Partnership With Project Destined for Virtual Internship Program

February 16, 2021 09:00 AM Eastern Standard Time

WASHINGTON--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP and Aria Development Group are proud to announce their partnership with Project Destined for a virtual internship program serving students from colleges including Howard University, the George Washington University, North Carolina Central University and the University of California, Davis.

During the eight-week program, students learned the fundamentals of commercial real estate and participated in biweekly “Shark Tank”-style competitions, presenting a live, local real estate deal to a panel of industry leaders. Their presentations involved an actual project that Aria is developing in the NoMa neighborhood in Washington, D.C.

Project Destined introduces diverse high school and college students, as well as military veterans, to business and real estate fundamentals. The program leverages a proprietary E-learning platform and the mentoring support of leading real estate executives to deliver the program. Project Destined has trained over 1,000 students across the country since its founding in Detroit in 2016.

Hunton Andrews Kurth attorneys [Laurie Grasso](#), [Brett Gross](#), [Rori Malech](#), [John McGranahan](#), [Rob Smith](#) and [Johann Pavri](#), as well as Aria team members Yuri Blazar, Jon Kardon, Jay Lee and Pawel Jankowski participated as mentors in the program. Mentors played a critical role in the success of the internship, serving as team leaders and valuable sources of knowledge as teams competed in biweekly competitions. They shared personal experiences working to build connections with the interns that will extend well beyond the eight-week program.

Aria Founder and CEO Joshua Benaim is passionate about teaching and mentorship in real estate and was inspired by Project Destined’s work to mobilize the Aria team in support of the program. Project Destined’s Executive Speaker Series featured a conversation between Benaim and Tricky Stewart, a Grammy Award-winning songwriter, producer, composer and experienced real estate investor. Benaim, a former opera singer, shared with the interns the ways music helped him learn what he needed to succeed in real estate.

Benaim also participated as a guest judge in the dramatic final session. He noted: “The level of excitement and preparation at the final competition was truly impressive—a sure sign the future of our industry is bright. An intern from the program has already accepted an offer to join Morgan Stanley. What a privilege to work with Project Destined and such a talented group of students from Howard University and across the U.S. to cultivate the next generation of real estate leaders.”

Three years ago, Hunton Andrews Kurth’s Grasso introduced Project Destined co-founder Cedric Bobo to Aria, the firm’s longtime client of more than 10 years, to discuss how they could all work together. The virtual internship program brings that partnership full circle.

The partnership continued Hunton Andrews Kurth’s longstanding relationship with Project Destined in which Grasso helped spearhead the firm’s involvement with the organization, volunteering in its successful New York internship program in spring 2018, coordinating a Veterans Program in its DC offices in 2019, and providing valuable client introductions (like Aria) as well as legal experience.

Grasso said: "We are proud to serve as Project Destined's sole legal partner in its efforts to deliver learning and professional development opportunities to students during this critical time. By providing them with real estate fundamentals and client introductions now, we are ensuring a pipeline of future, diverse leaders."

Project Destined was co-founded by Bobo, a former investor and investment banker, and Fred Greene, a leader in commercial real estate development. Bobo stated: "We are excited to partner with Aria Development Group and Hunton Andrews Kurth to prepare this incredible group of students for a career in commercial real estate. The real estate industry provides unparalleled opportunities to build a great career while also impacting your community and your city. This internship program will ensure that these students are ready to take on that challenge."

Hunton Andrews Kurth's real estate group advises clients on matters involving the full spectrum of commercial, industrial, retail, multifamily, hospitality and mixed-use properties. With more than 85 real estate development and finance lawyers in seven major markets across the United States, the group has handled transactions valued at almost \$50 billion in the past two years. The firm's lawyers are consistently recognized by publications such as Chambers & Partners USA and Legal 500 as leaders in the fields of real estate, real estate finance and construction law.

About Project Destined

Project Destined is a leading social impact platform that provides training in financial literacy, entrepreneurship and real estate. Project Destined partners with corporations, schools and nonprofits to deliver training using its proprietary e-learning platform and live courses. Project Destined leverages a work-based learning approach where students work with executives to evaluate live deals in their community and present them in a pitch competition to industry leaders. Scholars emerge with the skills, confidence, experiences and networks that prepare them to secure a solid first job and to become stakeholders in their community. For more information, please visit projectdestined.com.

About Aria Development Group

Aria Development Group is an award-winning real estate investment and development firm with a distinguished track record. Since its founding in 2009, Aria has been a leader in reimagining urban infill multifamily, developing more than 1,500 apartments in great neighborhoods across the United States. Aria Development Group was founded by Joshua Benaim with partners David Ardit and Timothy Gordon to pursue Aria's unique business philosophy, combining strong values, public-spiritedness and a willingness to "think different." Aria Development Group is behind such notable properties as 321 Ocean in Miami Beach, 465 Pacific in Boerum Hill, Brooklyn, and The Bond, The Alden and [The Clifton](#) in Washington, D.C. Aria is currently developing next-generation multifamily projects in premier locations in Brooklyn, New York, Miami, Washington, Kansas City and Charlotte. www.arialiving.com and www.ariadevelopmentgroup.com

About Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP

With 1,000 lawyers in the United States, Asia, Europe and the Middle East, Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP serves clients across a broad range of complex transactional, litigation and regulatory matters. We are known for our strength in the energy, financial services, real estate, and retail and consumer products industries, as well as our considerable experience in more than 100 distinct areas of practice, including privacy and cybersecurity, intellectual property, environmental, and mergers and acquisitions. Our full-service litigation practice is one of the largest in the country, with depth in key litigation markets such as Texas, California, Florida and the Mid-Atlantic.

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