



NEWGROUND

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Experts @ work | javier fernandez

Javier Fernandez was born and raised in Puerto Rico and one year after graduating high school, he changed curriculums and moved to the States to pursue his dream of becoming an architect. He learned English and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in architecture from the New York Institute of Technology. Javier has 12 years of experience in the architecture field - both commercial and residential - and 10 years of experience acting as a project manager. Javier loves to spend time with his family in Long Island, NY, listening to live music, and spending time exercising activities near the ocean. We caught up with Javier in between his busy schedule to ask him some questions for our very first installment of our Experts@NewGround series.



NG: "What is your position with NewGround and what does that entail?"

JF: "My position in NewGround is Project Manager. It is my responsibility to oversee all phases of a commercial construction project including everything from the initial planning of proposed expansions/new facilities to the completion of the project. I search for local talent/subs, interview them, qualify bids, stay up-to-date with my Project Coordinator/Engineer on all required project documents, coordinate and document all the daily activities of a construction project, make sure project stays on schedule and/or below budget, maintain jobsite safety and yes: negotiator, counselor and psychiatrist. I make sure that all specifications are maintained, and also identify any defective or inadequate materials or labor, (Quality Control) and much more. In my opinion, my biggest responsibility is to stay in constant contact with our client and address all good/bad news or issues that may arise, satisfy our client's needs, objectives and deliver a high quality project. After all, that is what our clients are paying for and expecting of us."

NG: "What is your favorite part of your job or your favorite part about working for NewGround? Why?"

JF: "My favorite part of my job is meeting people from all walks of life. Getting to know them. Getting to learn some of their skills. The fact that no two projects are exactly the same. That construction building materials are often being redeveloped and that NewGround is staying in touch with the latest and greatest financial industry finishes/technology and strategies. I feel that working for NewGround is much like working with a huge family - individuals who truly care for each other."

NG: "What do you think sets NewGround apart from other design/ build firms?"

*JF: "The over 100 years of experience in the financial industry. That we are the complete package. The unmatched talent of all NewGround in-house team members. By being impactful members of the communities we serve. Our commitment to deliver and collaborate throughout the entire process, to ensure that our client's visions are carried from concept to implementation: **BRAND – PLACE – CULTURE**"*

NG: "Lastly, Tell us about the special project you are working on with NewGround right now."

JF: "One of NewGround's commitments is to give back and help the community we serve. Therefore, NewGround has partnered with The Pujols Family Foundation and members of Edward Jones to help people in need. Collectively, the teams have decided to renovate an existing central church plus build a new Kit House, (a house that perhaps in the future can be built multiple times in a single location and improve the way people live in a community), for a single mother with a very large family in a very poor village in The Dominican Republic, called: Batey Aleman

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Over

400

families live in Batey Aleman Village

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Less than

\$1

On average, the people in this village are living on less than this a day, per person

—

About

50%

of the adults in Batey Aleman are unemployed

The Pujols Family Foundation has built a long-standing relationship with many of the villages in the Dominican Republic that are in extreme need. Many do not have clean water, safe housing or access to medical care. In many situations, they must walk for miles to find work. However, the moment you step into their world, you will discover the secret. Pure happiness, the kind of peace only God can give, comes from a deep level of gratitude. They are thankful for every meal, every expression of love and this is what sets them apart from the rest of the world. Batey Aleman is a hidden well of joy.

The Central Church of Batey Aleman is a Christian hub of the community. Through Pastor Nani, the lead female pastor, God breathes life and hope into this third-world village. The Church was built many years ago and was only partially completed. For seven years, Pastor Nani has led the Church and prayed vigorously, asking God to show her the way to finish the remaining portion. But despite her best efforts, with many village bake sales, letters to the government and years of praying, she has not been able to raise the funds. We are very grateful that our teams from Edward Jones and The Pujols Family Foundation were able to generously raise the necessary funds to complete renovating the existing church and build a new "Kit House" for a well deserving family.

In building a Kit House, our teams are focused on building strong communities around the

world and we are equally committed to bringing safe housing to the Dominican Republic. "Kit Houses" are homes structurally sound with several rooms. Homes that can be built by small teams within one or two months. Providing safe housing for the people of the Dominican Republic will leave a lasting impact on the receiving family, construction teams as well as the individuals and family who generously donated financially and their time to complete same the construction team.

*For me, I have always wanted to help my community. Unfortunately, as you can imagine, very seldom we find or make the time to participate in such opportunities. When I was asked to join the teams, I jumped to the opportunity. I immediately thought that I could really be an asset to the teams given my experience and the obvious, bilingual/Spanish. Once again, I am just an individual who is part of a very talented and generous team. When you arrive on-site/village, all of your hard work is immediately rewarded by seeing all the happy faces, beautiful smiles and receiving hugs of gratitude. Being in the Batey really grounds you. It really makes you realize what's important in life. You suddenly realize that your problems are not so bad. I will return in July to help complete both projects and for the opening celebration. This time my wife will join me as she also cannot wait to lend a hand. I am very thankful and honored that NewGround has given me the opportunity to participate in such project given how busy we currently are. I know it is not easy and we are all busy, but I would recommend everyone to at one point or another, sooner rather than later, make a difference, **VOLUNTEER, SPREAD: HOPE, LOVE and FAITH.**"*