

FOCUS: 20 IN THEIR

Why he lives in metro Detroit:

“Detroit drives a lot of individual creativity. There is so much culture and history here. People always talk about Detroit reviving itself like Cleveland, but what our city offers is more in line with Chicago and New York. Our town is very unique and we need to learn how to embrace that.”



ROB HUEBEL

Paul DeBono, 29

Assistant vice president, NAI Farberman, Southfield

Education: Bachelor's degree in economics, University of Michigan

Claim to fame: Part of a team that created a design for a low-energy light to be installed in Corktown this summer.

Next step: Work on more real estate redevelopment opportunities and grow Farberman's investment group.

Paul DeBono's family lived in Corktown in the early 1900s. When DeBono was a senior at the University of Michigan, he decided to move there even though other family members had moved out.

Despite his long commute to college, DeBono said the rich history and culture of the neighborhood was appealing, and he quickly got involved with community redevelopment.

He was a board member of the **Corktown Consumer Housing Cooperative**, and then became treasurer. This group was merged into the **Greater Corktown Development Corp.**, where DeBono put his financial expertise to work. He then became president for about a year.

“There had been many groups working on different things. So really what we wanted to do was combine the talent pool,” he said.

DeBono next founded the **Design Think Tank** with a group of architects, graphic designers, urban planners and industrial designers. The group developed a modern art deco-style LED light. The low-voltage light was created using automotive stamping techniques and is scheduled to be installed initially around Corktown. About 50 of the 200 lights created will be installed this summer. The light is meant to add another aesthetic element to the neighborhood, he said.

DeBono's day job is as an assistant vice president at **NAI Farberman**. He specializes in real estate dispositions and repositioning. For example, he worked on the sale of the Detroit DEA building, which sold for about \$25 million. In addition to relationships, DeBono relies on his financial background to provide options and analysis for redevelopment properties or assets in foreclosure.

— *Jennette Smith*