



## YLG Spotlight

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**How did you find your way into the industry?** I had the idea at an early age that I wanted to be an architect. I loved art, math and building things – Lego’s were a favorite. My architectural education certainly provided the basis for my ability to enter the profession, however it has been the relationships with mentors and colleagues that has shaped and guided my career.

**What advice would you give to an emerging young leader just starting their professional career?** Build relationships and do good work. Both take a lot of time and effort but are key to being successful.

**What traits do you think define a successful leader?** The most successful trait of a leader is their ability to serve others, leading by example and inspiring others through their vision.

**What is your current job and what types of projects are you working on now?** I am currently an Associate at SWA and project manager of three new communities on the west coast, Rancho Mission Viejo planning area two, an infill development in Los Angeles and Butternut Creek, part of the South Hillsboro community outside of Portland. These communities total about 1400 acres together and over 5,000 dwelling units plus significant commercial and mixed-use areas. In addition, I am working on two projects in China, both in Changsha. One is an extension of their new city core called Changsha Axis. It combines a strong ecological framework with super dense walk-able urban districts. The second is a much smaller project, developing an island in Changsha’s river where we are getting to design not only the framework but also the architecture and landscapes. This has allowed us to create an environment that really integrates different scales in a cohesive project.

**What do you find most challenging about your profession on a day-to-day basis?** The most challenging—and fun—part is jumping between projects of different scales and pace. This keeps me very agile and my skills honed which I enjoy immensely. The ability to work on a diverse range of projects at the same time is incredibly engaging and helps us to continually bring innovation to the work we do.

**What are you looking for in terms of career development OR In what areas would you like to professionally develop further?** I’m continually looking for opportunities to take on more complex projects that deal with the intersection of urbanism and ecology. Projects that deal with complicated relationships between stakeholders, urban challenges and environmental issues create fascinating problems that can lead to innovative design solutions.

**Describe a situation that was a great learning experience?** Coming from an architectural background, the last three years of working at SWA has been a fascinating learning experience. SWA has a landscape architectural legacy, so they focus on urbanism from a land-based approach, which is not something that I had directly experienced. Learning their methodology has enriched my design skills and complimented my experience of urbanism that has come more from an architectural, development and transportation viewpoint.

**How do you deal with stress at work?** At work, music is a great escape and helps the creative juices when its crunch time. After work, exercise is a great stress reliever. I’ve picked up two modes of exercise enthusiastically since moving west – running (which wasn’t as much fun in the snow) and surfing (even if I’m just sitting out beyond the waves) have become mainstays.