



SUSTAINED MOMENTUM

NJIT Alum
Continues
To Revive
Downtown
Newark

Whole Foods Market,
Chipotle and Hotel Indigo
– Newark's first boutique
hotel – all have served
as signifiers of urban
revitalization
in New Jersey's
largest city.



Samer Hanini '99,'03



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And the establishments are all housed in buildings rehabbed and developed by the Newark-based Hanini Group, a firm co-founded in 2004 by real estate developer and NJIT alumnus Samer Hanini.

Since graduating from NJIT in 1999 with a B.Arch. and obtaining a master's degree in infrastructure planning in 2003, Hanini has made great strides to reinvigorate the Central Business District in Newark, which his alma mater calls home.

"I think the best thing for NJIT is it being in the heart of Newark," said Hanini, who received an Alumni Achievement Award from NJIT in 2015. "Newark has so much history. This is the third-oldest city in the

country. The amount of architecture and planning that's right here within footsteps of the school, I think, is a huge benefit."

The Hanini Group, which develops, owns, operates and manages real estate properties in Newark, has been celebrated for its preservation of Brick City's historic, century-old buildings.

The firm's crowning jewel is the Hahne & Co. building, a \$174 million, mixed-use property. Once an art deco department store, the 500,000-square-foot space now houses chic apartments, a Barnes & Noble, Petco, and Whole Foods Market, and recently welcomed Marcus B&P – a new eatery from restaurateur and celebrity chef Marcus Samuelsson.

"From where we started – from NJIT days to today – every year you're learning something new," said Hanini, who serves as a trustee on the nonprofit Newark Preservation and Landmarks Committee, Newark Regional Business Partnership, and has served on NJIT's Martin Tuchman School of Management Board of Visitors. "We definitely enjoy it. It's very stressful. But at the end of the day, I think you end up delivering something everybody needs in the city." ■

Author: Shydale James is an NJIT Magazine contributing editor.

