Visit a Park & Improve Your Health!

John A. Steward, M.P.H.

Do you take a multi-vitamin for your health? If you are truly health conscious, you may decide to skip the pill, lace up your shoes, and visit a nearby trail or park.

Most of us would agree that parks and outdoor green, natural areas are important assets to any community. We readily acknowledge how parks enhance the value of our neighborhoods, increase the beauty and provide venues for recreation and social activities.

But how often do we consider the park's ability to improve people's health?

Health scientists have compiled an impressive amount of research results showing that parks and trails are good for health and for avoiding adverse health outcomes, like cancer, heart disease and diabetes.

Besides the obvious opportunities for physical activity, studies have found that being in nature itself provides many health benefits, physically and mentally. Stress is reduced and mental function is improved. Soil, trees and landscaping address environmental pollution, which also supports good public health. Parks provide a place for interacting with community members and building social ties, which is important to improving health, too.

Briarlake Forest Park is a newly-established 21-acre park in DeKalb County. Its woods are home to a substantial number of old growth trees and the headwaters of several streams that lead to Peachtree Creek.

Earlier this year, the Friends of Briarlake Forest Park wanted to find out how park visitors felt about the park. The Friends group conducted an online survey with questions that asked people how frequently they visited, how long they stayed, what kinds of activity they participated in, how they traveled to the park and who usually accompanied them.

The park survey asked how likely it was that the presence of the park had benefited their personal health. The results were compelling, as 83% (of the total 177 responses) stated that it was likely that the park had a positive impact on their health.

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Parks Need Your Voice!

Michael Halicki,
Park Pride’s Executive Director

Atlanta is at a critical juncture for the future of its parks and greenspace. Park Pride is making the case for increased funding for park maintenance under the next administration.

The facts behind the need are compelling: increases in park spending are not keeping up with inflation, and the parks inventory continues to grow. This is not a sustainable approach as our city attracts more residents (Read more on the Saporta Report: bit.ly/parkbudget).

Park Pride has partnered with nine like-minded nonprofits to focus the attention of Mayoral candidates on parks and related issues in advance of the November election.

Partner groups have met one-on-one with nearly all the candidates and hosted the Mayoral Forum on Greenspace. Candidates discussed their views on parks, greenspace, trees, waterways and watersheds. They examined how the emerging trail network is creating a new way of living. These assets positively impact the quality of life of every resident. Ensuring that they are a top priority for the incoming administration is vital for a more connected and resilient Atlanta.

I encourage you to read the recap on our blog: bit.ly/2017mayoralforum.

Parks matter, and as one park advocate put it: “Parks need a voice.” Park Pride is that voice. With your support, Park Pride can create a larger, stronger voice. To achieve a world-class park system, more must be invested in parks, greenspace, waterways, trees and trails.

All politics are local. I encourage you to pay attention to what candidates say regarding issues that matter to you, and consider those candidates who support the greener good.

Help Park Pride elevate the need for a maintenance budget that keeps pace with the increasing demands on parks. Get involved with your local Friends of the Park group and attend a monthly Park Meeting. Join the movement and raise your voice for parks!

Read the unabridged article on Saporta Report: bit.ly/parks_health
#GetYourPlaidOn at the

1st Annual Plaid Palooza

Saturday, November 4, 2017 | 9 A.M. - 2 P.M.

Historic Fourth Ward Park
Learn More: parkpride.org/plaid

work hard, play hard, transform parks!

Don your plaid, wrangle your friends, and put your park passion to work at Park Pride’s fall-and-plaid-themed volunteer experience! Team up to raise funds for Park Pride and transform part of Historic Fourth Ward Park in a matter of hours. “Out-plaid” your friends, compete to win prizes and celebrate the difference you make!

how it works:

1. **team up.** Gather a team of up to ten to have fun and do good work!

2. **raise funds.** Work with your team to reach out to your networks to raise funds for the only nonprofit in Atlanta supporting all parks and communities across the city.

3. **wear plaid.** Get creative and #getyourplaidon!

4. **transform parks.** Give a boost to ALL parks in the city with the funds you raise and make an immediate difference in Historic Fourth Ward Park on November 4th.

5. **compete.** Win prizes for fundraising, costumes and volunteer projects conquered!

6. **celebrate!** Enjoy food, fun, games, music and good company in a beautiful park you helped to improve!

get started:

to participate:
Visit plaidpalooza.causevox.com, set up your personal fundraising page and invite folks to join your team.

to donate:
Visit plaidpalooza.causevox.com to give to the cause or find an individual or team to support.
How Pollinator Gardens Help Our City to Thrive

Did you know that pollinator gardens have the power to improve the resilience of urban environments? Park Pride and the Atlanta Botanical Garden have tapped into that power through the "Pollinators in Parks" initiative. With the support of The Home Depot Foundation’s Building Community Network Grant, this partnership’s goal is to improve Atlanta’s long-term biodiversity, ecological health and sustainability through the stewardship of pollinator gardens in city parks.

"Pollinator gardens are like small pockets of ‘home-cooking’ for native pollinators," explained Teri Nye, Park Pride’s Park Visioning Coordinator and resident botanist. "Other animals benefit as well, using gardens as food sources, nesting and overwintering sites, and as host plants for their young. All these things are important to a healthy ecosystem, especially an urban one."

In April, Park Pride and the Atlanta Botanical Garden, side-by-side with community volunteers, built five pollinator gardens with over 350 pollinator plants. Pilot garden sites include: Blue Heron Nature Preserve (Buckhead), Four Corners Park (South Atlanta), Gilliam Park (East Atlanta), Grove Park (West Atlanta) and Welch Street Park (Southwest Atlanta).

Pollinator gardens are not just great for the bees, butterflies, birds and other insect pollinators that they support; they also provide multiple benefits to the community. The insects attracted to the gardens support nearby vegetable gardens, leading to healthier, more productive harvests. Not only do pollinator gardens nurture our bellies, "they also nurture our connection to nature," points out Melina Lozano Durán, Pollinator Garden Coordinator with the Atlanta Botanical Garden.

Additionally, the maintenance of these new gardens includes a workforce development component that builds lifelong job skills. Urban Greenscapes, a landscape company formed by a cohort from the Greening Youth Foundation (with training provided by The Conservation Fund and the Atlanta Botanical Garden), has been hired to maintain the pollinator gardens over the first growing year.

“We’re proud to bring these groups together for this project,” said Catherine Stodola, who oversees Atlanta giving for The Home Depot Foundation. “We believe strongly in the collaborative atmosphere of Atlanta’s nonprofit community, and The Home Depot Foundation is committed to investing in outdoor spaces in our hometown.”

You can play a role in improving the resilience of our urban environment! Give a donation to Park Pride and support programs that enhance pollinator habitats, helping birds, bees, butterflies, our gardens, our neighbors and our neighborhoods thrive: parkpride.org/donate-pollinators.
Celebrating Spring in Our Parks

This spring was packed with Park Pride events that brought friends, volunteers, community gardeners and park enthusiasts into parks for workdays, education and FUN!

Find more photos on our Facebook page: facebook.com/ParkPride. If you see yourself, tag yourself! Check the Park Pride calendar online for future event details: parkpride.org/events.

- **gathering for the greener good**
- **community garden tour**
  Four community gardens in Northwest Atlanta inspired tour attendees on May 20th.
- **pints for parks**
  Over 300 gathered at Orpheus Brewing on May 2nd to support Park Pride’s advocacy efforts.
- **earth day**
  Volunteers restored the streambank at Blue Heron Nature Preserve on April 22nd, planting hundreds of native plants.

Find more photos on our Facebook page: facebook.com/ParkPride. If you see yourself, tag yourself! Check the Park Pride calendar online for future event details: parkpride.org/events.
The 16th Annual Parks & Greenspace theme, “Connecting with Parks,” explored how parks and greenspaces bridge the gaps between individuals, communities and political jurisdictions. On March 27th, speakers challenged us to expand our thinking about parks and public spaces, shared wisdom about creating community spaces that will withstand the passage of time, made bold predictions about the future of Atlanta’s trails, and gave us marching orders to carry the message of the power of parks forward!

"Roadways are public space. How can we rethink how they’re used to transform them into vibrant, connected spaces?"
~ Becky Katz, Chief Bicycle Officer, City of Atlanta

"Places that we love are places we will take care of over time."
~ Kaid Benfield, Author, People Habitat: 25 Ways to Think about Greener, Healthier Cities

"By 2025, we are going to have the most trail-connected city in the United States."
~ Ed McBrayer, Co-Founder, PATH Foundation

“Take someone who doesn’t yet have a passion for parks to a park. Introduce them to our resources and how they hold us together.”
~ Audrey Peterman, Co-author, Legacy on the Land: A Black Couple Discovers Our National Inheritance & Tells Why Every American Should Care

Save the Date!
March 26th, 2018
17th Annual Parks & Greenspace Conference
parks & the resilient city
Visit parkpride.org/conference to tell us your interests and to suggest session topics, or to become a conference sponsor!
2017 Corporate Champions

Thank you, Champions, for supporting Park Pride’s operating needs, programs and events!

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activator

Supporter Circles

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green

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park pride receives accolades

Fulcrum Award

In March, Park Pride accepted the Fulcrum Award from Southface Energy Institute for the Proctor Creek North Avenue Watershed Basin Green Infrastructure Vision on behalf of our project partners, including: West Atlanta Watershed Alliance, Metropolitan Atlanta Urban Watershed Institute (MAUWI), Community Improvement Association (CIA), The Conservation Fund, ECO-Action, American Rivers, Eberly & Associates, Perkins+Will, City of Atlanta, and of course the communities within the Proctor Creek North Avenue Watershed.

Outstanding Member Organization of the Year

EarthShare of Georgia recognized Park Pride as the 2017 Outstanding Member Organization of the Year. “Park Pride is an exemplary member group,” said Madeline Reamy, Executive Director of EarthShare of Georgia. “The whole staff has been excellent in advancing our mission to connect people to trusted non-profit organizations dedicated to conserving and protecting our air, land and water.” Learn more about EarthShare of Georgia at earthsharega.org.
mission | To engage communities to activate the power of parks.

park views online | bit.ly/parkpridensens

facebook “f” Logo CMYK / .eps

to engage communities to activate the power of parks.

park pride events & deadlines

August
  1  Deadline: Small Change Grant Applications
  10  Park Pride’s Monthly Park Meeting

September
  9  9/11 Volunteer Day of Service
  14  Park Pride’s Monthly Park Meeting
  29  Deadline: Legacy + Community Building Grant Applications

October
  12  Park Pride’s Monthly Park Meeting
  7  Fall Volunteer Project

November
  4  Plaid Palooza!
  9  Park Pride’s Monthly Park Meeting

Visit parkpride.org/events for more information.

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