Enlist Allies to Improve Your Park

Elected officials are powerful allies for park improvement projects. A strong rapport with elected officials, when leveraged in conjunction with the parks department, can play a major role in helping park advocates achieve their goals. Yet, relationships don’t form overnight.

The most successful park advocates, Friends of the Park groups, conservancies, and community associations devote significant time to engage their elected officials on behalf of the greenspace that they represent.

In early January, a new Mayor of Atlanta, seven new Atlanta City Council members, and a new council president were sworn into office. Though there is never a bad time to build or strengthen your relationship with city council members (or county commissioners for DeKalb County park advocates), right now is the perfect time to engage with your elected officials as they are establishing plans and priorities for the current term.

What can you do?

Below are steps you can take today to begin building relationships with elected officials to benefit your park:

1. Plan a tour of the park that highlights community investment and invite your elected official for a walk! Share the work your group has done, including community volunteer days, play days or meet-ups, and any citizen-driven park improvements that you’ve accomplished to date.

2. Learn about your elected official’s focus. How can their focus benefit the park? Align your park priorities and requests to match accordingly: present your park project as a solution to a shared concern for public safety, building a vibrant community, or engaging youth in positive activity, for example.

continued on page 2.
message from board chair:

a year of promise

Melody Darch  Park Pride Board Chair

Welcome to an exciting year for parks and our city. 2018 has blasted off at a sprint:

Mayor Keisha Lance-Bottoms has taken office, as have new Atlanta City Council members; several Friends of the Park groups have received Park Pride grants and are preparing for major park improvements (page 4); and Park Pride has entered the final year of its three-year strategic plan.

2018 is a year of great promise. I am humbled with honor and gratitude to assume the role of Park Pride’s Board Chair. I have big shoes to fill; under the leadership of the former Board Chair, Sadler Poe, Park Pride reached new heights of success in fulfilling its mission to activate the power of parks.

The 2017 Impact Report preview (page 5) speaks for itself—Park Pride has expanded its impact more than ever with the support of people like you: donors and funders, Friends of the Park group members, and nonprofit partners.

Yet, our job is not finished. As Atlanta’s population grows, there is an increasing amount of work to be done to ensure that our families and communities have access to great parks in all corners of the city. An undertaking of this scope requires engagement from all members of the community. I’m grateful that Park Pride has your support as we look forward to the challenges of this new year.

Thank you for being a part of the parks movement.

~ Melody Darch

pitch in for parks!

In 2017, more than 7,000 volunteers dedicated their time, strength, and sweat to making a difference in our parks—and what a difference they made! Volunteers created trails, built benches, footbridges and kiosks, expanded playgrounds, installed mountain bike paths, cleared greenspaces of invasives, planted native plants to rebuild habitats, mulched, hauled trash and tires, and so much more.

Join us this year at a Greener Good Volunteer Day and pitch in for parks!

Save these Dates

- April 21  Earth Day
- Sept. 15  Nat’l Clean-up Day
- Oct. 20  Volunteer Spirit Halloween Workday
- Nov. 10  Give Thanks for Parks

Visit parkpride.org/events for locations and project details.

Plan a volunteer project for your community or corporate group. Reach out to Volunteer Manager, John Ahern: john@parkpride.org.
Despite overwhelming research illustrating the mental health benefits of exposure to nature, children spend an enormous amount of their formative years confined to a four-walled classroom. Last fall, Park Pride and the Atlanta Botanical Garden explored whether parks could be the vehicle to bring education and the great outdoors together. They posed the question, “What can nature teach us?”

As it turns out, a lot!

In collaboration with the West Atlanta Watershed Alliance, community gardeners, and the Atlanta Public School System, Park Pride and the Atlanta Botanical Garden engaged over 200 students in fun-filled STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education events at the Grove Park and Gilliam Park pollinator gardens. STEM lessons create learning experiences that closely reflect real-world scenarios and professions, preparing students for the future.

Grove Park and Gilliam Park’s pollinator gardens, along with three others in City of Atlanta parks, are part of the Pollinators in Parks initiative, funded by The Home Depot Foundation through a Building Community Network (BCN) Grant. These gardens introduce native plants that provide foraging sites for nectar-loving pollinators in the spring, summer and fall. They are also host plants for pollinator eggs and larvae, sheltering sites for overwintering pollinators, and seed sources for birds. In other words, these gardens are teeming with life and biodiversity for kids to discover!

Education played a central role in the Pollinators in Parks initiative. Students engaged in hands-on activities that brought them up close and personal with pollinators and the mechanics of pollination. They explored different components of the local environment while building lifelong skills and having fun!

Third graders from Woodson Park Academy learned how cross-pollination occurs in nature when they became worker-bees in an exciting pollinator relay race. They used nets to safely examine bees and butterflies like real field scientists before releasing them. They learned about the water cycle, the Proctor Creek Watershed, and the amphibians that live in the area. Students also developed practical skills by planting winter vegetables including kale, chard, lettuce, broccoli and collard greens.

Ninth graders from Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School studied the chemistry behind composting, the mechanics of water catchment systems, and the science behind using herbs and fungi for food, medicine, and even cosmetics!

These STEM events only scratched the surface of what nature can teach us. We are convinced, however, that parks are indeed perfect classrooms for learning!

Great parks provide opportunities for kids to play, relax, AND learn! Support great parks at parkpride.org/donate

You don’t need to plan a STEM event to activate your park for learning! Plan a scavenger hunt or partner with a local organization to host a birding or nature walk. Reach out to Ayanna Williams, Director of Community Building, for more ideas on how to activate your park for learning: ayanna@parkpride.org.
Grants for the Greener Good

Congratulations to the 20 Friends of the Park groups that received funding through 2017 Legacy, Community Building, and Small Change Grants!

The 2017 grant cycle is the largest in Park Pride’s history, totaling $1,038,350 and drawing the attention of media outlet Inside Philanthropy (IP). IP recently highlighted the Grant Programs as a national example of funding that benefits parks across all areas of a city (read the story at bit.ly/parkpridegrants).

Learn more about Park Pride’s Grant Programs and application deadlines in 2018: parkpride.org/grants.

Legacy Grants (generously funded by the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation)
Available only to Friends groups in the City of Atlanta

The Friends of Armand Park will implement the first phase of a new park which will serve both as a much-needed community gathering space and as the trailhead to the South Fork Trail. The plan includes a playground, pathways, and landscape improvements.

The Atlanta Memorial Park Conservancy will create a nature trail through Atlanta Memorial Park with a boardwalk and footbridges. The project also includes rain gardens, landscaping and drainage improvements, and the transformation of a gravel area into an open lawn.

The Friends of Channing Valley Park will replace aging play equipment and add seating to create a safe and engaging play space for the neighborhood.

Little 5 Alive will implement a redesign of Findley Plaza at Little 5 Points to transform it into a vibrant, welcoming community space.

The Friends of Knight Park will transform a dilapidated brick building into a welcoming walled garden, creating a gathering space for this active community.

The Friends of Noble Park will add landscape and hardscape improvements, as well as a new playground.

The Friends of Sara Gonzales Park will implement a comprehensive redesign to optimize park usage. Improvements include an expanded playground, a playing field, and increased access to the surrounding community.

Community Building Grants (generously funded by The Home Depot Foundation)
Available to Friends groups in both the City of Atlanta (COA) and DeKalb County (DC)

The Friends of Briarlake Forest Park (DC) will implement Phase I of their master plan which includes a circular trail and park amenities.

The Friends of Frazier-Rowe Park (DC) will build a pavilion and trail that connects to other areas of the park.

The Friends of Hairston Park (DC) will add three fitness stations and a nature trail to provide activities for a broad range of users.

The Friends of N.H. Scott Park (DC) will implement Phase I of park improvements, which includes wayfinding signage and a community garden.

The Friends of Phoenix II Park (COA) will clean and refresh an existing playground and add toddler equipment to engage more neighborhood children.

HABESHA will upgrade the community garden at Rosa Burney Park (COA) with new raised garden beds and a solar-powered irrigation system that connects to an existing 3,000-gallon cistern.

The Friends of South Atlanta Park (COA) will add benches to provide seating in their newly installed playground.

Small Change Grants (generously funded by the Cecil B. Day Foundation) were awarded to Armand Park (COA), Callanwolde Gardens (DC), Little Creek Horse Farm (DC), Medlock Park (DC), Tucker Recreation Center (DC), and Whittier Mill Park (COA) for small-scale beautification projects.
2017 was Park Pride’s most successful year yet in improving parks and strengthening communities because of your support and involvement. Congratulations and thank you for your commitment to activating the power of parks! The full 2017 Impact Report is available online: parkpride.org.

23,614 volunteer service hours in parks and trails with support from 7,215 volunteers

$1,038,350 awarded to Friends of the Park groups through the Grant Programs

22 active community gardens in parks + 5 pollinator gardens!

117 Friends of the Park groups working in 124 parks - a new record!

33 community-driven park designs created through the Park Visioning Program

498 registered for the 16th Annual Parks & Greenspace Conference

Mission to engage communities to activate the power of parks

Gardeners plant winter greens at Grove Park Community Garden, October 2017.


Friends and community members gather in Four Corners Park, April 2017.

A Park Pride Community Building Grant helped fund a bridge and boardwalk at Henderson Park, November 2017.

Gardeners plant winter greens at Grove Park Community Garden, October 2017.

Park enthusiasts gather at the Parks & Greenspace Conference, March 2017.

Knight Park community members give input to determine the final conceptual park plan, June 2017.
Board of Directors

Park Pride’s success would not be possible without the dedication of its board of directors. In January, nine new board members were welcomed whose leadership will help the organization achieve its ambitious goals!

Park Pride also extends its deepest thanks and appreciation to eight board members who completed their terms: Barbara Borczak, Louisa D’Antignac, Edrick Harris, Sandra Jiménez, Dorothy Yates Kirkley, Blake Lyons, Anita Strickler, and Ellen Wickersham.

Staff

Four new staff members joined the Park Pride team to expand the reach of programs and services to communities throughout Atlanta.

**Ariane DeLong** | Development Director  
Favorite park pastime: Walking, picnicking, people watching  
Ariane comes to Park Pride with 16-years of mission-driven experience and will use her expertise to increase the resources available to the organization.

**Joy Hinkle** | Program Coordinator  
Favorite park pastime: Bird watching with her daughters  
Joy has a background in water resources management. She looks forward to sharing her passion for the natural environment through her work with the Historic Fourth Ward Park Conservancy.

**Chad Nash** | Development Associate  
Favorite park pastime: spending quality time with his dog, Ralph  
Chad joins Park Pride from EARTH University. His previous experience in development offices will bring additional capacity to Park Pride’s donor outreach and stewardship.

**Austin Tadlock** | Program Associate  
Favorite park pastime: hiking and finding new trails  
Austin joins Park Pride from our friends and partners at the Atlanta Community Food Bank and will manage the matching Grant and Fiscal Partner Programs.
an insider’s perspective:
a conference for the community

Linda Cotten Taylor
Friends of Chapel Hill Park, six-time Parks & Greenspace Conference attendee

My name is Linda Cotten Taylor, and I’m the leader of the Friends of Chapel Hill Park in DeKalb County. In just a few weeks, I’m looking forward to attending my seventh Parks & Greenspace Conference.

You might wonder why I come back year after year. The conference keeps me abreast of trends, changes, and resources available in the parks and greenspace field that support my efforts to improve Chapel Hill Park.

One word that describes the conference: informative. I encourage you to attend!

As an attendee, you’ll learn something new about the benefits of parks for both the community and environment, how to develop greenspace, ideas for maintenance, and how to get your neighbors engaged.

The conference is also great for networking and learning about how other parks have dealt with challenges related to park development and enhancement.

Join me at Parks & the Resilient City this March. Enhance your knowledge of how to support your park, or—depending on how you look at it—for playing in the dirt!

~ Linda Cotten Taylor

17TH ANNUAL PARKS & GREENSPACE CONFERENCE

Parks
AND THE RESILIENT
City

Monday, March 26, 2018
Atlanta Botanical Garden
parkpride.org/conference

This year’s conference, Parks & the Resilient City, will focus on the relationship between parks and urban resilience. Over 450 park professionals, greenspace advocates, and community members from across the country will gather to discuss ways to make our parks better able to withstand the acute crises and chronic stressors that accompany a growing urban population. Come explore how a robust park system contributes to the overall resilience of a city!

Keynote Speakers

Otis Rolley
100 Resilient Cities, Regional Director, North America

Ken Leinbach
Executive Director of the Urban Ecology Center in Milwaukee

Kate Orff
Founder of SCAPE Studio; recipient of MacArthur "Genius Grant"

Featured Speakers

Ryan Gravel
Founding Principal at Sixpitch; urban planner and visionary behind the Atlanta BeltLine

Nathaniel Smith
Founder and Chief Equity Officer / CEO of the Partnership for Southern Equity

Community members are encouraged to attend! Contact Ayanna Williams with questions: ayanna@parkpride.org.

Conference Sponsors

Presented by

Cox Enterprises

With support from

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Atlanta Botanical Garden
Spring for Early Pollinators

Teri Nye,
Park Pride’s Park Visioning Coordinator and resident botanist

Signs of spring are around us! Mayapples and bloodroot are pushing up out of the soil with leaves wrapped around should there be a chill. Dogwoods are unfurling creamy white bracts and redbuds are parading fuschia flowers on each still-bare branch. What welcome sights! As temperatures consistently warm, we’ll see more and more flowers and more and more pollinators.

One of the first pollinators to venture out in the spring is the bumblebee. Native bumblebees are colonial bees with a life cycle lasting one year. These bees demonstrate why year-round pollinator plants are essential.

In the fall, young female bumblebees—destined to become the next year’s queens—will mate and begin stocking up on nectar and pollen gathered from late-flowering asters, goldenrods, and ageratum to last through the winter. The queens alone will survive the winter but first must find a safe place—in the leaf litter under a shrub, in a tangle of last summer’s grass stems, or in an abandoned rodent’s hole—to enter into a resting state called diapause.

In the spring, the new queen bumblebees emerge to create new colonies. They urgently need early-flowering plants rich in nectar and pollen to rebuild strength and raise their first broods. Enter redbuds, maples, hawthorns, anemone, trillium, violets, early blueberries, and vines such as native coral honeysuckle and yellow (or Carolina) jessamine.

For bees, nectar is their primary carbohydrate and pollen is an essential source of lipids and protein. Both are essential foods for the workers, the queen, and the growing larvae.

The first brood of bees born will all be female worker bees who will collect pollen and nectar for the growing colony while the queen lays eggs throughout the spring and summer. As the colony grows larger, the bees visit and pollinate more plants.

Not until mid-summer are reproductive bumblebees born, including males and the females that will be next year’s queens.

By offering a variety of plants that flower from March until the first hard frost, pollinator gardens provide nutrients for the entire lifecycle of bumblebees and other pollinators.

Only when pollinators are sustained throughout their entire lifecycle can they fulfill the most important ecosystem service we rely on: crop pollination.

"What’s the life cycle of an insect pollinator?" The educational sign below was created by the Park Visioning Team as part of the Pollinators in Parks initiative and will appear in parks this spring.

Keep your eyes open for the first pollinators you see this year! Post a photo to Instagram and tag @parkpride!

"What’s the life cycle of an insect pollinator?" The educational sign below was created by the Park Visioning Team as part of the Pollinators in Parks initiative and will appear in parks this spring.

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save the date:  
*Pints for Parks* returns on May 1!

**2018 Corporate Champions**

Thank you to the following organizations for their extraordinary generosity in support of Park Pride’s annual operating needs, programs and events!

- **benefactor**
  - The Home Depot Foundation

- **guardian**
  - Kaiser Permanente

- **sustainer**
  - Arborguard Tree Specialists

- **activator**
  - Perez Planning + Design, LLC

- **gold**
  - The Conservation Fund

- **silver**
  - HGOR

- **green**
  - Arborguard Tree Specialists

- **Supporter Circles**

**Visionary Circles**

*Pints for Parks*, a favorite annual Park Pride social that unites park and beer enthusiasts, returns to Orpheus Brewing on Tuesday, May 1, 6-9 p.m.!

**A Party with Purpose**

*Pints for Parks* will support the expansion of Park Pride’s Visioning Program to provide more communities with resources needed to articulate their park dreams and build consensus around a park plan.

**Great Value for a Great Cause**

With each $45 registration, you’ll enjoy:

- Six complimentary beer tastings and a brewery tour
- Chef’s tastings
- Games
- An amazing view of Piedmont Park and the great company of park and beer enthusiasts!

Registration is open now! Visit parkpride.org/pints to purchase.

**Join the Host Committee!**

Becoming a member of the *Pints for Parks* Host Committee illustrates your passion for and commitment to making a difference in our park system.

Contact Chad Nash for more information about joining the host committee: chad@parkpride.org.

**Become a Champion for Parks!**

Please reach out to Jane Zoellick, Development Manager, to learn more. jane@parkpride.org or 404-546-6855.
Thank You 2017 Park Pride Supporters

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mission
To engage communities to activate the power of parks.

park views online
bit.ly/parkpridenews

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Suite 1600
Atlanta, GA 30303

park pride events & deadlines

March
17 Finding the Flint Tour
24 Chattahoochee River Paddle Tour
24 Green Line Tour of Atlanta Parks
25 Biodiversity in Atlanta Parks Tour
26 Annual Parks & Greenspace Conference, Parks & the Resilient City

April
12 Park Pride’s Monthly Park Meeting
21 Greener Good Volunteer Day: Earth Day
29 Workshop: Community Gardening

May
1 Small Change Grant Application Deadline
1 Pints for Parks (benefitting the Park Visioning Program)
10 Park Pride’s Monthly Park Meeting
19 Workshop: Community-Driven Fundraising

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mission
To engage communities to activate the power of parks.

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233 Peachtree St NE
Suite 1600
Atlanta, GA 30303

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park pride events & deadlines

March
17 Finding the Flint Tour
24 Chattahoochee River Paddle Tour
24 Green Line Tour of Atlanta Parks
25 Biodiversity in Atlanta Parks Tour
26 Annual Parks & Greenspace Conference, Parks & the Resilient City

April
12 Park Pride’s Monthly Park Meeting
21 Greener Good Volunteer Day: Earth Day
29 Workshop: Community Gardening

May
1 Small Change Grant Application Deadline
1 Pints for Parks (benefitting the Park Visioning Program)
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19 Workshop: Community-Driven Fundraising

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