English Avenue Community Celebrates a New Park!

On November 21, 2019, Park Pride, alongside the English Avenue community, the City of Atlanta, The Conservation Fund, the Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, and nearly 40 additional partners and funders, celebrated the long-awaited opening of Kathryn Johnston Memorial Park!

This new park represents an exciting milestone for a community that, just a few years ago, did not have a single park within the neighborhood. Kids didn’t have a safe place to play. No greenspace existed for community gatherings or picnics. On top of that, the neighborhood experienced devastating floods regularly.

That used to be the story in the English Avenue community. But today, that story has changed.

The third in a series of parks proposed in the Proctor Creek North Avenue Green Infrastructure Vision (Park Pride, 2010), Kathryn Johnston Memorial Park will manage up to 3.5 million gallons of rainwater per year through several green infrastructure amenities, mitigating the impact of flooding from stormwater runoff in the neighborhood.

More importantly, however, this park will provide English Avenue children and adults with a safe place close to their homes to relax, exercise, play with their families, and meet their neighbors.

The park includes a playground, fitness station, and an open field for soccer games, flying kites or holding community events. Specifically identified by the community through Park Pride’s 2016 Park Visioning process, these amenities will be enjoyed for years to come!

Nonprofit, government, and community partners officially opened Kathryn Johnston Memorial Park to the public with a celebratory ribbon cutting, November 2019.
“The kids now look forward to coming out and playing,” explained community member, Mr. Sims, “and being comfortable in their own environment instead of having to go somewhere else.”

“Kathryn Johnston Memorial Park is a special place,” reflected John Dargle, Jr., Commissioner of Atlanta’s Department of Parks and Recreation. “It is an example of the values of our parks and recreation system in social equity, environmental stewardship, and health and wellness.”

District 3 Council Member Antonio Brown honored the park’s namesake. Kathryn Johnston was tragically killed by members of the Atlanta Police Department, a sacrifice that resulted in the repeal of a law that allowed for the arrest of citizens without “probable cause.” Her loss will be memorialized within the park and ensure that Atlantans continue to work towards the prevention of future tragedies.

Speakers also remembered the late District 3 Council Member, Ivory Lee Young, Jr., who played a significant role in this park’s creation.

Kathryn Johnston Memorial Park’s celebration was memorable for all who attended. Park Pride is proud to have played our role alongside so many to make this park a reality!

Want to see more? Visit bit.ly/kjmp2019 for a great video highlighting the park’s transformation and ribbon-cutting celebration.

Decade in DeKalb!

This year, Park Pride, Friends of the Park groups, and DeKalb County are proud to celebrate a Decade in DeKalb and the accomplishments of the communities supported through capital improvements, volunteer engagement, and community building in DeKalb County parks!

“So many to make this park a reality!”
### Articulating a Shared Vision

**Andrew White** is Park Pride’s Director of Park Visioning and a professional landscape architect.

Parks are inherently political, each with its own minefield of competing constituencies and interests. To encourage unity within Friends of the Park groups or newly formed park steering committees, establishing a set of guiding principles helps to focus community members on a shared vision for their park.

The idea is simple. Take time to articulate the hopes of community members: their hopes for the visioning process, for the park, and for the community itself. Through this practice, people learn that many of their hopes are shared by others, and common ground is found. **Listening** is one of the most powerful tools we have to bridge divides and negotiate a path forward.

Guiding principles can calm fears that park improvements or projects will result in changes contrary to the desires of the community. Once established, communities agree that every decision made regarding the park must support one or more principles. They become a touchstone should conflict arise.

### Common Guiding Principles for Parks

Atlantans love trees and the many benefits they provide, including habitat, shade, erosion control, and beauty! Therefore, nearly all guiding principles include the protection of mature trees.

Communities also place a high value on safe pedestrian and bicycle routes to and through their parks, prioritizing welcoming and well-marked entrances, sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike racks over other infrastructure.

Adequate park maintenance is another common theme. Without it, parks can fall into disrepair, creating a backlog that never goes away.

By transforming community hopes into guiding principles, local leaders ensure the dreams that neighbors have for their park remain a top priority.

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**Adriana Garcia**

**Nature Accessibility Advocate**

In an urban environment, parks often provide our only connection to nature. In 2020, Park Pride will rally behind a vision of **nature for all**, helping people access and use parks and greenspaces.

With support from the Turner Foundation and in partnership with Trees Atlanta and the West Atlanta Watershed Alliance, I was hired to champion an initiative called **Nature for All – Atlanta**.

While one of the goals of this initiative is to advance the City of Atlanta’s Urban Ecology Framework and Tree Protection Ordinance, the broader focus is to build support, awareness, and appetite for equitable access to nature. **Everyone**—regardless of race, age, gender, socio-economic status, or ability—**deserves access to nature**.

There are, however, barriers that complicate support for this vision, especially for individuals in communities that have been historically marginalized.

Throughout 2020, I will organize a series of fun, free outings and events (nature walks, beginner birding, tree talks, etc.) to begin to break those barriers and empower a new cohort of local nature advocates. To make events inclusive, some will even be offered in Spanish.

 Invite your friends and family to join you at an event. Help us make nature a part of everyone’s daily life!

**Sign up for Nature for All – Atlanta events:** parkpride.org/events.
Park Pride Celebrates Its Largest Grant Cycle Ever!

In its 30th year, Park Pride awarded a record $1,385,000 in capital funding for park improvements to 30 Friends of the Park groups in the City of Atlanta (COA), unincorporated DeKalb County (DC), City of Brookhaven, and City of Tucker. To date, Park Pride has awarded $7.7 million to community-led park improvement projects, dollars that are matched by public and private funding. These transformative park projects will connect communities, improve residents’ quality of life, and support the health of our environment. Congratulations to all communities that received awards!

Small Change Grants  
(funded by The Home Depot Foundation)

City of Atlanta Friends groups: Atlanta Waterworks Greenspace, Choewood Park, Grove Park, Little Nancy Creek Park, Lindsay Street Park, Loridans Park, Pittman Park, Spink-Collins Park, and Vermont Park

Unincorporated DeKalb County Friends groups: Sugar Creek Golf & Tennis Center and Rehoboth Park

City of Brookhaven Friends groups: LaVista Park and Murphey Candler Park

City of Tucker Friends groups: Henderson Park, Kelley Cofer Park, and McKinley Peters Park

Community Building Grants  
(funded by The Home Depot Foundation)

The Friends of Coan Park (COA) will install an ADA-accessible “Musical Forest” with instruments and a train playscape to activate an unused area of the park.

The Friends of DeKalb Memorial Park (DC) will build a new deck around Parkview Community Center, a step towards implementing their 2019 Park Pride Vision Plan.

Historic Oakland Cemetery (COA) will install a new entrance on the east side of the park, opening access to the Cabbagetown neighborhood and to the Eastside Trail Extension of the Atlanta BeltLine.

The Friends of Pendergrast Park (DC) will renovate the park, adding new infrastructure, additional trails, and a new playground.

The Friends of South Bend Park (COA) will install a new gate and fencing, and enhance the dog park.

The Friends of Sunken Garden Park (COA) will install drainage and a retaining seat wall to remediate standing water and increase neighborhood usage.

Legacy Grants  
(funded by the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation)

The Friends of Anderson Park will install a new playground, fitness equipment, and welcoming park amenities like grills and benches.

The Candler Park Conservancy received a challenge grant to renovate its recreation field with a multi-use track, drainage improvements, and erosion control.

The Friends of Lang-Carson Park will renovate the Manigault Playlot with a new ADA-accessible path, embankment slide, and sensory garden.

The Friends of Lillian Cooper Shepherd Park will install lighting and a shade structure over the basketball court to increase use for play and community gatherings.

The Friends of Mattie Freeland Park will partner with Park Pride and The Conservation Fund to build a new park in the English Avenue neighborhood.

The Friends of Pittman Park will install new swing sets, play equipment, and park amenities to serve park users and the recreation center’s after school programs.

The Friends of South Atlanta Park will install new playground equipment and transform a tennis court into a lawn that can be used for soccer, picnics, and play.

The South Fork Conservancy will construct a pedestrian bridge across the north fork of Peachtree Creek, connecting over 25 acres of greenspace, PATH400, the Atlanta BeltLine, and the Peachtree Creek Greenway.

Learn more about Park Pride’s Grant Program and application deadlines in 2020: parkpride.org/grants.
For many, urban parks are one of the few places to escape the bustle of city life and to experience the regular and replenishing joys of nature.

Join us on Monday, March 23rd at the Atlanta Botanical Garden as we explore the nature of our city and its importance as a key component to leading a happy, healthy life. Everyone needs and deserves access to nature!

Keynote Speakers

Diane Jones Allen
Program Director for Landscape Architecture, University of Texas at Arlington; Principal, DesignJones, LLC

David Haskell
Writer, scientist, and sound recordist; Author of The Forest Unseen

Drew Lanham
Birder, writer, and naturalist; Certified wildlife biologist; Professor at Clemson University

Kristine Stratton
President and CEO of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)

Register Today!

- Regular: $170
- Late: $190 (March 16 - March 19)
- Walk-Up: $200 (March 23)

Get your seat next to over 450 park advocates, enthusiasts, and professionals from across the country at the largest parks and greenspace conference in the Southeast!
Corporate Champions

Thank you to the following organizations for their extraordinary generosity in support of Park Pride’s mission!

**visionary**

![The Home Depot Foundation](image)

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![The Conservation Fund](image)

Become a Champion for Parks!

Please reach out to Chad Nash, Corporate Relations Manager, to learn more. chad@parkpride.org or 404-546-7984.

Visit [parkpride.org/team](http://parkpride.org/team) for staff contact information.

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**board of directors news**

Mark Balloun was elected to serve as the Board Chair.

Former Board Chair Melody Darch, will continue to serve on the executive committee as Treasurer and Past Board Chair.

Park Pride welcomes three new board members:

- Luis A. Avila of Cox Enterprises.
- Atiba Mbiwan of The Zeist Foundation.
- Susan Stainback, Founding Principal of Sylvatica Studio.

Park Pride extends our deepest appreciation to the board members who’ve completed their terms: Courtney Fletcher, Carlos Perez, Gwendolyn Smith, Tamara Stewart, Esther Stokes, and Caroline Vroon.

**staff news**

Sabina Kasumova joined staff as the Public Engagement Specialist.

Emma Nortje is supporting Park Pride’s marketing and communication efforts.

Dakota Mitchell will support the Community Building team as our Spring Intern.
mission

to engage communities to activate the power of parks

1 BRAND NEW park, Kathryn Johnston Memorial Park, on Atlanta’s westside.

189 park projects completed with support from 4,376 passionate volunteers!

27 communities received park design support through the Park Visioning Program.

50 national and local presenters at the 18th Annual Parks & Greenspace Conference.

146 Friends of the Park groups engaged in activating their parks!

a record $1,385,000 awarded to 30 Friends of the Park groups through the Grant Program.

All smiles on the playground of the English Avenue community’s new Kathryn Johnston Memorial Park, October 2019.

The complete 2019 Impact Report will be available online soon!

Tireless volunteers remove invasive plants at Kittredge Park (DeKalb County), February 2019. Photo: Luke Beard

Mitchell Silver, Commissioner of New York City’s Dept. of Parks & Recreation, delivers a powerful keynote presentation on equity and parks, March 2019.

Community members give input into the conceptual plan for Mozley Park, August 2019.
To engage communities to activate the power of parks.

Mission

Park Views Online bit.ly/parkpridenews

@parkpride #forthegreenergood

Happiness is contagious when you’re getting a good dose of “Vitamin N”! Birders enjoy a silly moment together during Birding + Storytelling with Jason Ward, the first Nature for All - Atlanta event at Cascade Springs Nature Preserve.

Photo credit: Jenny Burdette, Georgia Nature Photographers Association.

Make your gift today: parkpride.org/donate

for the greener good

Mission | To engage communities to activate the power of parks.

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