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**PARK PRIDE HONORS SIX COMMUNITY LEADERS WITH
THE 2020 INSPIRATION AWARDS**

Atlanta – August 2020 – On Monday, August 17, 2020 Park Pride announced six recipients of the 2020 Inspiration Awards during the Parks and Greenspace Conference, *The Nature of Our City*, a theme that explored the importance of urban nature as a key component to leading a happy, healthy life.

The nonprofit's Inspiration Awards annually honor leaders who inspire others to expand and improve public parks and greenspaces and work to raise awareness about critical, relevant park issues.

"Turning a 'good' park into a 'great' park, or fostering the creation of a completely *new* park, doesn't happen overnight," explained Michael Halicki, Park Pride's Executive Director, "and this year's Inspiration Award winners have been committed for many years and into decades to nurturing progress within their respective greenspaces. Unwavering commitment overtime is a true testament to their passion for parks, and we were thrilled to highlight their achievements *virtually* in front of hundreds of park enthusiasts."

The winners, selected by a panel of past winners from a pool of leaders nominated by their communities across metro Atlanta, were chosen because of their substantial contribution to greenspaces. This year's Inspiration Award winners, announced at the conference by longtime nature champion, Wandi Steward, include:

Sofia Bork, for her commitment to authentic community building and engagement at the Sara J. González Park. "I think one of the most important things when you think about community building is that it's a marathon, not a sprint," Sofia says. "... when you build those partnerships, you need to let people know that you're not there just for the Instagram, the accolades, the recognition; you're there to help the community."

Annie Moore, for enthusiastically assuming the role of Park Ambassador at Lindsey Street Park in English Avenue and galvanizing similar efforts at near-by parks through her example and park stewardship. "What keeps me motivated to continue to work in my park," she states, "is the environmental issues.

This park truly helps continue our butterflies and our bees, and I want to be someone who keeps our ecological system stable.”

George Ickes, the 82-year old life-long park enthusiast who has committed decades of his time and volunteer efforts to the Olmsted Linear Park Alliance and to maintaining the beauty of the Olmsted Linear Parks. “We keep looking for what needs to be done, trees have to be planted, bushes trimmed,” explains George. “I just love to see when I start something... to see it done and continue to look around and see that we’re doing what we should do.”

Joe Peery, for his advocacy to increase awareness and protect the rich biodiversity within the South River Forest and Intrenchment Creek Park. “Fortunately, the beauty [of trees] is that they’re already there!” he exclaims. “You don’t have to *do* anything other than save them. You don’t have to build them. You have to keep people from building on them.”

Dan Calvert, for his deep understanding of the power of parks that he brought to his role within the City of Atlanta’s Department of Parks and Recreation, resulting in the realization of hundreds of park projects in collaboration with the community. “Parks are so powerful, they bring our communities together, they bring us together, families, friends.” He goes on, “Every time you go to a park, it’s a different adventure, a different experience, whether you’re doing it by yourself, or with your neighbors, friends.”

Keith Sharp, for his tenacity and perseverance on behalf of Riverwalk Atlanta, a 5-mile greenway that, once built, will open access to the river and to 500 acres of park land, connecting with other major Atlanta trail systems, such as the Proctor Creek Greenway and the Silver Comet Trail. “What excites me the most [about Riverwalk Atlanta] is the opportunity for urban dwellers to get out in nature and meet and see one another.”

“Park Pride is humbled by the incredible work of this year’s Inspiration Award winners,” stated Ellen Bruenderman, Park Pride’s Director of Community Building. “Their contributions to their local parks motivate us in our continued support of the entire Friends of the Park community. We are also grateful to the peer nominators and committee of past winners that helped make these awards truly special. Congratulations, 2020 Inspiration Award winners!”

For more details about each award recipient’s contribution to greenspace, and to hear more from the winners in their own words, view the video at bit.ly/2020inspirationaward.

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About Park Pride:

In 2019, Park Pride celebrated 30 years of engaging communities to activate the power of parks! Working with over 150 local Friends of the Park groups, Park Pride provides leadership, services, and funding to help communities realize their dreams for neighborhood parks that support healthy people, strong neighborhoods, vibrant business districts, a robust economy, and a healthy environment. Park Pride is active in greenspace advocacy and educating both civic leaders and the public about the benefits of parks, and annually hosts the Parks and Greenspace Conference, the largest parks conference in the southeast. Learn more about Park Pride at parkpride.org.