

English Avenue residents, like Bailee pictured below, have a safe place to gather and play in Mattie Freeland Park.

park pride views

for the greener good

PARKPRIDE.ORG | FALL 2022

great parks for all

Mattie Freeland Park Opens in English Avenue

Mattie Freeland Park illustrates what is possible when a community—with the support and expertise of Park Pride—unites to make a difference in their neighborhood park.

On October 27th, Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens, City Council Member Byron Amos, Commissioner of Parks & Recreation, Justin Cutler, and representatives from Park Pride, The Conservation Fund, the Friends of Mattie Freeland Park, and family and friends of the park's namesake gathered to dedicate a new park to Ms. Mattie Freeland, a beloved English Avenue community matriarch who passed away in 2008.

The ribbon cutting marked a major milestone over a decade in the making for the Friends of Mattie Freeland Park. While Ms. Mattie lived, the derelict lot across from her home was filled with abandoned cars. She longed for the space to be beautified and activated for the benefit of her community. After her death, her neighbors dedicated themselves to making it a park—a *safe* place—in her honor.

Today, Mattie Freeland Park is a safe place for neighbors to gather. It is a charming community park, complete with a playground and musical instruments, a grilling area with a pavilion and picnic

tables, a rain garden, and artistic panels that celebrate local heroes.

During the ribbon-cutting program, Dr. Mironda Williams, Ms. Mattie's granddaughter, spoke to the commitment of English Avenue neighbors and to Park Pride's mission to engage communities to activate the power of parks. She said: "This is a community space: envisioned by community, championed by community, and then built by community."



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ENGAGING COMMUNITIES TO ACTIVATE THE POWER OF PARKS

Mattie Freeland Park "is a community space: envisioned by community, championed by community, and then built by community."

This simple yet powerful statement cuts to the heart of what makes the story of Mattie Freeland Park special. It also perfectly exemplifies how Park Pride engages communities to activate the power of parks.

Envisioned by Community

In 2015, a newly formed Friends of Mattie Freeland Park participated in **Park Pride's Park Visioning Program**. Through a community-directed process, our team of professional landscape architects created a conceptual park plan that responded to and reflected the desires of hundreds of neighbors who gave input.

What did English Avenue residents envision for Mattie Freeland Park? A safe place for kids to play, for the community to gather, and for honoring the natural and cultural experience of living in the English Avenue neighborhood.

Championed by Community

The conclusion of the park visioning process is often just the beginning of years of advocacy, fundraising, and collaboration necessary to implement the final plan. During this time, the dedication of community champions is critical to seeing a park's development through to completion.

The Friends of Mattie Freeland Park rose to the challenge. They rallied neighbors and strategized how to bring the park vision plan to life. They received two grants through **Park Pride's Grantmaking Program** to implement aspects of the park design and worked with the Office of Council District 3 to leverage the award dollars with additional funding. Park Pride and The Conservation Fund also provided fundraising support to complete the park's build-out.

Built By Community

At Park Pride, we believe that a park isn't a park without people. For years before the ribbon cutting, the Friends of Mattie Freeland Park activated their greenspace with a variety of activities, including neighborhood cookouts, movie nights, and concerts. They planted community garden beds and hosted volunteer clean-up projects. Because of their intentionality to activate and engage the community through inclusive events, Mattie Freeland Park was a "park" long before its grand opening. It is *a park built by community*.

Our Commitment to Parks for All

Stories like that of Mattie Freeland Park demonstrate Park Pride's commitment to a vision of great, accessible parks for all. We will continue to pursue this vision into 2023 and beyond, and we know that together—with the continued dedication of community champions and the support of those who believe in the power of parks—we can be successful in achieving it.



Your gift will advance our vision of great, accessible parks for all communities in Atlanta: parkpride.org/donate/today/.

Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens (center) officially opens Mattie Freeland Park, side-by-side with Ms. Mattie's descendants, Friends of Mattie Freeland Park, English Avenue residents, Commissioner Justin Cutler of the Dept. of Parks & Recreation, Council Member Byron Amos, Valerie Jackson (wife of the late Mayor Maynard H. Jackson, Jr.) and representatives from Park Pride and The Conservation Fund.



message from michael: Hitting Our Stride



Michael Halicki
Park Pride's Executive Director

What an amazing year it has been. Park Pride started 2022 with our

biggest grantmaking cycle in our 33-year history: \$2.3M awarded to 23 communities across the City of Atlanta and DeKalb County, with 60% of funding supporting parks in low-income neighborhoods.

Soon after, Mayor Andre Dickens announced the formation of the Mayor's Greenspace Advisory Council, and we welcomed a new Atlanta Parks & Recreation Commissioner, Justin Cutler, recruited from Seattle as part of a national search.

In March, our Parks & Greenspace Conference returned in-person at the Atlanta Botanical Garden. The tulips were in bloom, the speakers were inspiring, and our spirits were uplifted by spending time with our greenspace friends.

The remainder of the year has been a whirlwind filled with public meetings, park cleanups, ribbon cuttings, and so much more. We added two new team members, with two more on the way, and there are exciting program developments on the horizon.

Park Pride has hit our stride in 2022, and 2023 is full of promise as we aim to do *even more* to advance our mission to engage communities to activate the power of parks. Thank you for your ongoing support—with you on our green team, there is nothing we can't achieve for Atlanta's parks!

Sign up to receive the Park Views e-newsletter: parkpride.org/sign-up-form/.



Above: The conceptual plan for the new park in the South River Gardens neighborhood. See the full plan at: parkpride.org/visioning.

A Vision for Stronger, Greener Communities in 2023

In response to the multiple challenges of urban living in 2022—including climate change, health crises, and population growth—Atlantans are demanding that public spaces, like parks, play a greater role in enhancing our quality of life. Parks serve more than just our recreational needs; they provide health benefits, climate resilience, cultural enrichment, and more. Park Pride's resources and programs—like the Park Visioning Program—help communities tap into these benefits and create parks that are part of stronger, greener communities.

The Park Visioning Program

Each year, residents across Atlanta turn to Park Pride's Park Visioning Program for help designing parks that address current urban challenges and prioritize various community desires. Our team of professional landscape architects is committed not only to designing parks that meet multiple needs, but also to guiding neighbors through a process that strengthens relationships and community cohesion along the way.

While dozens of consultations are conducted annually to advise on smaller, specific issues (such as beautifying a park entrance, addressing erosion on a hillside, or a drainage concern), two parks in Atlanta and two in DeKalb are selected to receive *comprehensive park visioning*, a community-led approach to park planning that delivers an aspirational, achievable plan for the entire park.

Park Visioning in 2023

Park Pride is pleased to announce the two Atlanta parks that will receive comprehensive park visioning services in 2023: **Four Corners Park** in the Peoplestown neighborhood of Southeast Atlanta and **Falling Water Park** in the Southwest neighborhood of Atlanta. Both parks were selected because of their potential to play a multifunctional role in their neighborhood. Congratulations to the Friends of Four Corners Park and the Friends of Falling Water Park!

To read more about the selection process for this round of park visioning, visit parkpride.org/2023parkvisioning.

To learn more about the Park Visioning Program or to request a consultation, visit parkpride.org/visioning.



2023 parks & greenspace CONFERENCE

The Healing Power of Parks



SAVE THE DATE

Monday, March 27, 2023 | 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. | Atlanta Botanical Garden
parkpride.org/conference

The Parks & Greenspace Conference is the largest parks conference in the southeast, showcasing thought leaders from Atlanta and across the nation and uniting park advocates through a desire to improve parks and strengthen communities.

2023 Conference Theme: The Healing Power of Parks

The past few years have affirmed the importance of parks for our physical and mental well-being. The *healing power of parks*, however, goes beyond personal health. Public greenspaces are also where community bonds are formed, diverse ideas are experienced, and where cultural enrichment flourishes.

We also look to parks to heal and strengthen the urban environment—to manage stormwater, reduce flooding, cool and filter the air, and provide natural habitat.

A strong park system has the capacity to fulfill *all* these roles, creating resilient urban ecosystems while offering the personal health and community benefits we seek. In this way, parks are a natural healthcare system, ensuring cities and inhabitants thrive long into the future.

Join us at the 2023 Parks & Greenspace Conference, where we will discuss all this and more while exploring *The Healing Power of Parks*.



Support the Conference!

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Please reach out to Rhys Havens,
Corporate Relations Manager, to become a conference sponsor.
rhys@parkpride.org or (770) 284.6135.

Don't Miss the Conversation

Conference speakers will explore:

Parks + Health

Parks are critical to physical and mental well-being. Whether seeking respite from the demands of daily life or as an alternative to crowded gyms, parks are vital to city living. How do parks impact health, youth development, and quality of life for seniors? How can greenspaces contribute equitably to the health of residents?

Parks + Ecological Health

Parks are a critical part of urban ecosystems. They collect and clean rainwater, provide shelter and nursery sites for wildlife, produce food, cool cities, and trap pollutants. How can we strengthen park ecosystems? How do parks ease the impact of climate change and rapid population growth?

Parks + Social Healing

Parks are spaces for conversation about reconciliation and restorative justice. The reexamination of history and park investments raises questions about how to address persistent injustice. What role can parks play to increase awareness of our past? How can parks foster relationships between people and the land?

A Healthy Park System

Park systems must adapt to evolving needs caused by population growth, changing housing patterns, and the resulting infrastructure pressures of both. How can park systems adapt to deliver an equitable standard of care? How can we create a responsive and resilient park system that demonstrates that ALL communities are valued?



Conference registration will
open soon! Visit parkpride.org/conference for tickets.

Organizational Updates

park pride is growing!

Park Pride is increasing our capacity to engage communities to activate the power of parks. With support from the new team members below, we'll get closer to achieving our vision of an Atlanta where every neighborhood has access to a great park.

Join us in welcoming our newest staff!



Faria Khan joined staff as the Grantmaking & Fiscal Sponsorship Associate.



Hannah Wynelle Studdard will provide critical administrative support as the Executive Assistant.

staff news



Kayla Altland is now the Director of Grantmaking + Fiscal Sponsorship.



Rachel Maher participated in the Atlanta Regional Commission's Regional Leadership Institute.



Andrew White has been accepted into the 2023 class of the Institute for Georgia Environmental Leadership.

Park Pride will continue to grow our capacity to deliver our mission with two additional staff positions this year: Director of Education and Volunteer Program Associate.

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

project updates from around town

Great Parks for All!

Pittman Park

Earlier this year, Pittsburg community residents celebrated the installation of several new amenities at Pittman Park, proudly supported by Park Pride with over \$150,000 through our Grantmaking Program over two grant cycles. These awards funded a joint basketball/volleyball court, picnic tables, playground equipment, and a memorial bench. A local artist, *Art in the Paint*, created the Historic Pittsburgh and Pittman Park labels on the court.

Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens, City Council Member Antonio Lewis, Commissioner Cutler of the Department of Parks & Recreation, Park Pride's Executive Director, Michael Halicki, and Winfrey Young with the Friends of Pittman Park led the festivities that included popsicles, a pick-up game of basketball, and great fun for all!

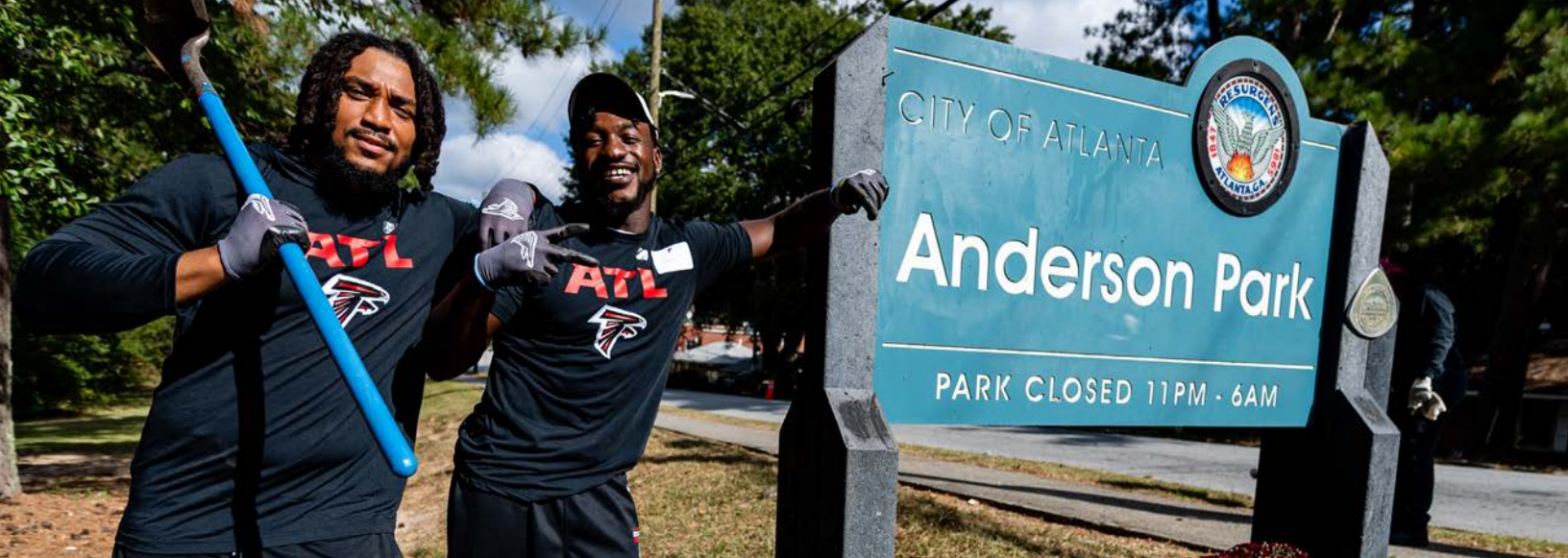


Sara J. González Park

During Hispanic Heritage Month, neighbors in northwest Atlanta gathered at the Sara J. González Park to celebrate the installation a new youth soccer field! The field was funded by a \$50,000 grant through Park Pride's Grantmaking Program and represents a culturally affirming touchpoint for Latinos while also providing a play space for community well-being.

Mayor Dickens led a ribbon-tying ceremony, a tradition in this park that elevates the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion. The Mayor was joined by Congresswoman Nikema Williams, City Council Member Dustin Hillis, Isabel González Whitaker and Sofia Bork of the Friends of Sara J. González Park, Commissioner Cutler of Parks & Recreation, Director of the Mayor's Office of International Affairs, Vanessa Ibarra, and Park Pride's Michael Halicki.





The Atlanta Falcons worked with Park Pride to coordinate their 15th Annual Hometown Huddle, a day of service where players, staff, and season ticket holders come together to give back to the community.

Digging In for the Greener Good

Local businesses and corporations support Park Pride's mission year-round, making a big impact on Atlanta's local parks. Corporate groups can tap into team building opportunities such as custom, private volunteer projects to address urgent park needs while supercharging employee engagement. Recently, our corporate partners have dug in for the greener good across the city. Shoutout to a long-time supporter, HGOR (joined by Collins Cooper Carusi Architects), as well as one of our newest supporters, the Atlanta Falcons, for giving back to local communities and parks by volunteering with Park Pride this fall!

HGOR at Chosewood Park



After clearing overgrown brush and invasive plant species, volunteers spread mulch to prevent erosion.



Volunteering with Park Pride is an excellent team-building opportunity!

Atlanta Falcons at Anderson Park



Falcons players rejuvenated benches at Anderson Park with fresh coats of paint.



Trees and garden beds were prepped for winter with an extra layer of mulch.



To learn more about becoming a corporate partner or to plan a custom volunteer experience for your corporate group, contact Rhys Havens, Corporate Relations Manager: rhys@parkpride.org.

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Mission

To engage communities to
activate the power of parks.

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Great parks are powerful.

They improve our health, mental well-being, and combat feelings of social isolation. They create habitats for wildlife, capture stormwater runoff that would otherwise flood surrounding streets and homes, and make our city cooler. Great parks transform *neighborhoods* into *communities*.

Together, we can ensure everyone has access to a great park.

Make your gift today: parkpride.org/donate

