



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Park Pride announces new board chair, welcomes nine new board members

Atlanta, GA – July 31 – This month, Park Pride, an Atlanta-based nonprofit that empowers communities to activate the power of parks, is excited to welcome the incoming group of park champions who are joining its Board of Directors. The nonprofit's board also elected **Omari Henderson** as the next Board Chair.

Henderson works in Innovation and Business Development at Chick-fil-A's Corporate Support Center. With a love for art and giving back to the community, Henderson is the co-owner of the ZuCot Gallery, a fine art gallery with the largest inventory of African American art in the Southeast. He is also the founder of the Youth Challenge Incorporated Foundation, a nonprofit that provides a mentoring program for young men. He serves on the Board of Directors for Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre, Elevate Atlanta and The Reach Georgia Foundation.

Henderson has served on Park Pride's board since 2021 and has shown a commitment to the power of parks through his involvement on the Executive Committee and the *Parks for All* Campaign Committee. With a passion for helping Atlanta's communities thrive, Henderson will provide strong leadership as Park Pride works to ensure that all residents have easy access to a quality park.

"I'm excited to chair the Park Pride Board because of the organization's focus on equity in parks within Atlanta," Henderson said. "This initiative is crucial for fostering inclusive and vibrant communities."

He continued: "Thanks to Former Board Chair Kristy Rachal's inspired leadership and by working with this great staff and talented board, we can help ensure that all neighborhoods, regardless of their economic standing, have access to well-maintained and safe parks. Together we will champion equitable development, contribute to public health by promoting outdoor activity, and enhance community cohesion through shared public spaces."

Nine new park advocates are also joining the Board, including:

Rae-Anne Alves is looking forward to bringing her expertise in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, executive leadership and strategic planning to Park Pride's board. Alves is the Partner/Principal of Supply Chain & Operations at Ernst & Young, where she provides strategic advisory, program leadership and client relationship management.

Annie Appleton has long championed the power of parks. In 2018, Appleton reactivated the Friends of Lang Carson Park and, in the following years, helped lead efforts to receive a Park Pride Visioning Grant and three Legacy Grants totaling \$430,000 for park improvements. Appleton is the Program Director for the Sartain Lanier Family Foundation where she oversees the day-to-day execution of grant partnerships.

Glianny Fagundo's favorite park activities are walking the Peachtree Creek Greenway and paddleboarding and fly fishing along the Chattahoochee River. Fagundo is a partner in the Labor & Employment practice group at Thompson Hine LLP, collaborating with clients to design and implement workplace policies. Fagundo is also a

State Personnel Board Member for the State of Georgia and an Advocacy Committee Member for the Latin American Association.

Shola Oni is the Senior Vice President of Business Strategy & Intelligence at Bank of America. On Park Pride's board, she will offer her expertise in financial oversight and strategic planning. Oni is Six Sigma Greenbelt Certified, designed for professionals who create, identify or improve processes.

Amanda Puché is happiest playing a round of disc golf with her friends and family at Perkerson Park and DeKalb Memorial Park. Puché is the Director of Development for the College of Sciences at Georgia Tech. She is a strong believer in park investment and access for all, with her master's thesis exploring access, equity, use and perceptions of Atlanta's urban greenspaces.

Maggie Reeves believes systems should serve people, not the other way around. Reeves is the Director of Program Development at the Urban Institute and is also a National Advisory Council member for the Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy. Reeves and her family enjoy spending the day exploring connected parks and trails, like Medlock Park to Ira B. Melton to Mason Mill.

Christina Rios has extra insight into Park Pride's programs on the community level through her time serving as the group leader for the Friends of Needham Park. Rios is the Program Resource Manager for the CDC Foundation. She also serves on the DeKalb County Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs Citizens Advisory Board.

Suzanne Sackleh has a passion for giving back to her community, serving as a trustee for the Chastain Park Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land Georgia and volunteering for The Sandwich Project. She is well versed in Park Pride's mission through her longstanding volunteer work with the nonprofit.

Steve Sanchez is no stranger to Park Pride and its mission, as he worked with the nonprofit and other partners to design and develop Kathryn Johnston Park. Sanchez is the Principal and Landscape Architect for HGOR. He also currently serves on Trees Atlanta's Program Committee and volunteers with Park Pride.

Several board members also concluded their terms of service in June 2024. These individuals were instrumental in helping guide Park Pride during a time of growth through its *Parks for All* campaign, a comprehensive campaign to address disparities in local park quality and access.

Park Pride's board members who are completing their terms of service include **Peggy Allumbaugh**, Retired, Deloitte LLP; **Sofia Bork Aun**, Truist; **Mark Balloun**, MultiCam Southeast; **Kirk Billings**, Bowline Investment Group; **Liz Gillespie**, Architect of Experience; **Daryl Smith**, Tempus; and **Jerry Travers**, Bank of America.

For a complete list of Park Pride's Board of Directors, [click here](#).

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About Park Pride:

A trusted Atlanta-based nonprofit for 35 years, Park Pride engages communities to activate the power of parks! Working with over 100 local Friends of the Park groups across 200 greenspaces, Park Pride provides leadership, services, and funding to help communities realize their dreams for parks that support healthy people, united neighborhoods, a resilient city, 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 & Greenspace Conference. Learn more about Park Pride at parkpride.org.