

PROSPECT PARK ALLIANCE, Brooklyn, NY
President/Administrator

INTRODUCTION

Prospect Park Alliance and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation seek an exceptional individual to succeed the Alliance's iconic founder, Tupper Thomas, as President/Administrator to lead one of the great public parks in the country and one of New York City's major private-public cultural institutions. <http://www.prospectpark.org/>.

Located at the center of New York City's most populous borough, Prospect Park is a unique public area, where residents from all economic classes, cultural and religious traditions, and geographic neighborhoods come together for recreation and to experience nature. Designed by famed park planners, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux (the same team who designed Central Park), Prospect Park contains 250 acres of natural habitat areas, Brooklyn's only lake, last forest and the country's first urban Audubon Center. Prospect Park's 585 acres of meadows, waterfalls, forest, lakes and athletic facilities comprise a masterwork of urban greenery.

Founded in 1987, the Prospect Park Alliance is a unique public-private partnership with the city of New York that helps run Prospect Park by caring for the natural environment, preserving the historic landscape and serving the public by providing facilities and programming. Decisions made for the Park through this partnership consider three inter-related elements: people, nature and design.

Prospect Park has had an incredible rebirth over the past 30 years. The landmark Carousel was restored, the historic Parade Ground ball fields and all seven playgrounds were renovated, and the Park's native woodlands and natural areas were painstakingly restored. Partnerships have been formed with National Audubon to create the Park's Audubon Center, as well as with Brooklyn Botanic Garden and the New York City Department of Education to create the Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment, an innovative high school. The Park has earned recognition for excellence in park management with an emphasis on community involvement, and national attention has been paid to the Woodlands Management Plan, which has set standards for urban ecological restoration. Numerous awards for Design and Construction projects, Youth, Education and Volunteer Programs have been received. Free public programming and community events, such as family programming at Lefferts House, the Halloween Haunted Walk and the Macy's Fishing Contest, have become notable seasonal milestones and helped to make Prospect Park an essential component of daily life for millions of people. Visitation in Prospect Park has increased from almost two million to over nine million per year.

The Alliance launched the quiet phase of the Campaign for Lakeside in 2009. Lakeside is Prospect Park's ambitious new initiative to renovate 26 acres in the Park's southeast quadrant – restoring the lake front to the original Olmsted/Vaux design and replacing the aging Wollman Rink with the Lakeside Center, a year-round destination for recreation, fun and fitness within a beautifully restored natural environment. Designed by architects, Tod Williams and Billie Tsien,

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and the Alliance's landscape design team led by Christian Zimmerman, Lakeside will serve many diverse Brooklyn neighborhoods and bring 21st century architecture into a landmark 19th century park. The project will add a second rink, increase the ice skating season to six months, and add warm weather activities, such as water features and roller skating, making it a year-round destination. The current rink serves approximately 80,000 skaters each winter and sits idle in the warmer months. The Lakeside Center business plan projects 230,000 visitors annually after three years, and it is anticipated that the facility will draw an even greater number of visitors into the surrounding picnic area, meadow and nature trails. This project is in construction and is expected to open in late 2012.

While hewing to the spirit of Olmsted's classic vision of the urban park, Prospect Park has found creative ways of adapting to new usage patterns, partnering with user groups as disparate as dog walkers, bicyclists, barbecuers, bird watchers, baseball, softball, cricket, Frisbee and soccer players and Caribbean drummers. Prospect Park is a truly democratic space that is critical to, and deeply in tune with, the city around it.

BASIC FUNCTION

The President/Administrator will provide the leadership, vision and strategic direction for the Park, provide oversight and direction of the Alliance's partnership with the New York City Parks Department and manage Prospect Park's day-to-day operations and activities. Reporting to the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation and the Chairman of the Prospect Park Alliance, the President/Administrator will manage a dedicated staff and ensure that the Park is well managed, fiscally and administratively sound, its programs are appropriate and effective, and the public is both served and enthusiastically supportive.

The President/Administrator will have primary responsibility for Park operations, institutional development, initiating and implementing major programmatic and capital improvements when necessary, along with the fundraising strategies required to achieve these goals. The individual will be expected to heighten the visibility of Prospect Park to encourage broad-based support and represent the Park to its myriad constituencies. With an eye toward future opportunities, the ideal candidate should embrace the Park's role as an urban oasis within a diverse community that depends on the Park for recreation, exercise, socializing and relaxation.

PRIORITIES

The President/Administrator's priorities during the first 12 to 18 months will be to:

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- Thoroughly understand Prospect Park – its history, mission, programs, constituencies, structure, finances, fundraising and operations, as well as its role in enhancing the quality of life of Brooklyn residents.
- Reach out to establish collegial relationships and work with Park constituencies and stakeholders, City and State elected officials; reach out to local and regional community leaders, building strong networks to secure and increase support for the Park from its various constituencies.
- Working with the Development Office and the Board, establish contacts with funders, both individual and foundations, through meetings, events and outreach in order to continue to raise money for the capital and expense budgets.
- Work with the Board to maximize its best efforts and expertise to help the Alliance achieve strategic and fundraising goals; help to identify and recruit new Board members as needed.
- Get to know the staff and understand their strengths and concerns; build upon an existing commitment to collaboration; understand the Parks Department's priorities, such as the park rating system and understand the funding of the public and private sectors and the personnel issues of both.
- Lead and conclude the ongoing Lakeside campaign; supervise construction of the \$70 million Lakeside project, prepare for and execute the opening of the new facility.
- Establish new concessions agreements with the city of New York based on the new contract between the City and the Alliance. Further develop the Alliance's capacity to manage existing concessions operations.
- Together with the Board and staff, initiate a review of the Park's core mission, strengths and weaknesses, as well as its overall focus and direction in preparation for the next phase of strategic planning.

ONGOING RESPONSIBILITIES

The President/Administrator will be expected to:

- Direct and oversee day-to-day administration of the Park so that it continues to anticipate and meet the needs of a diverse, dynamic and devoted community.
- In collaboration with the Development team, plan and execute a comprehensive fundraising strategy that enhances existing means of raising funds from public and private sources, including earned revenue; maintain donor stewardship as a priority.
- Monitor the financial status of the organization, including the budgetary process, financial reporting and analysis, expenses and profitability of concessions and other revenue centers, and levels of funding and cash flow; direct and work closely with the chief financial officer and other staff to maintain the organization's financial wellbeing and develop strategies for growth.

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- Initiate, maintain and enhance relations with other organizations as appropriate.
- Increase awareness and visibility for Prospect Park to secure its support and future; maintain the Park's position and stature as a model for public/private parks across the country; serve as a persuasive spokesperson with the government and with the Park's many constituencies; engage new ones.
- Regularly brief the Board, City and the community on the status of the Park and its operation; ensure stakeholders' participation in strategic planning, advocacy and fundraising.
- Contribute to a team-oriented and integrative approach to management, developing and encouraging cross-programmatic collaboration.

EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

Ideally, the President/Administrator will have the following:

- Leadership and senior management level experience and/or a measurable track record in an organization known for quality; knowledge of public-private partnerships a plus.
- A record of success in working with diverse individuals/agendas to achieve common goals; adept at balancing internal management with external presence.
- Knowledge of City and State government, with the capacity to build productive relationships between Prospect Park and key players in the public sector; especially important is an awareness of the impact of changes in the political landscape on the Park's funding and opportunities.
- A successful track record in raising money with a demonstrated ability to attract financial resources from foundations, corporations, individuals and government sources, with the essential ability to personally interact with and cultivate donors.
- Familiarity with capital campaigns a plus, preferably in a leadership role.
- Experience working in partnership with a board; with government and with outside partners.
- Ability to command respect from the urban parks community on a local, regional and national level.
- Familiarity with financial, legal and human resources practices.
- A history of communicating effectively, verbally and in writing, including excellent public speaking skills for formal and extemporaneous presentations, and the ability to represent the Park to a broad public.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The President/Administrator should have or be:

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- A wholehearted champion for the Park.
- Politically astute.
- A manager; a seasoned professional who is organized, strategic, financially aware and holds self and others accountable; able to remain focused on the big picture without forgetting the importance of detail, setting priorities and delegating to dedicated team members.
- Enthusiastic about Brooklyn, its unique character and how the Park reflects it.
- Someone who is creative, flexible, yet decisive; capable of creating and sustaining a vision for the Park; an individual of personal integrity and credibility who shares information readily, listens as well as counsels, and respects the abilities of others.
- Adept at creating and maintaining relationships that are critical to the success of the Park; able to develop and maintain on all fronts a sense of common purpose.
- The constitution and talent for navigating bureaucracies when necessary.
- Emotionally mature and self-confident, with a sense of humor and the ability to maintain balance and perspective.

Applications and nominations should be sent to the attention of Sarah James and Mark Tarnacki at PPA@PhillipsOppenheim.com