



KNOX PARKS FOUNDATION, INC.

MISSION:

Using horticulture as a catalyst, Knox Parks Foundation will work in partnership with residents, businesses and government to build stronger, greener and more beautiful communities in Greater Hartford, with a special emphasis on the Capital City itself.

SEARCH FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Position Profile

Background

The Knox Parks Foundation was founded by philanthropist Betty Knox in 1966 when she established a trust fund to help improve the City of Hartford. During its first decade, the organization developed two focus areas: funding community development and operating ‘greening’ programs. In 1976, the organization split into two separate organizations, both of which continue to this day. The Knox Parks Foundation focuses on horticulture and the second organization distributes funds to numerous community-based nonprofits serving the City of Hartford.

Throughout its forty-plus year history, Knox Parks has ‘greened’ the City and helped to build stronger communities by connecting people with horticulture, reestablishing the tree canopy, providing youth with job skills, establishing community gardens, and beautifying neighborhoods. The organization has enjoyed an excellent reputation among those in the community who have been touched by its programs. On the other hand, it has been one of Greater Hartford’s best kept secrets.

Knox Parks Foundation’s major programs are as follows:

- ***Green Crew*** – Partially funded through the AmeriCorps program, the Green Crew is a team of out-of-school youth trained in landscaping and gardening. The program teaches marketable skills while improving the appearance and productivity of Hartford’s green space. Twenty-one young people participate in the program each year.
- ***Green Team*** – The Green Team is comprised of volunteers from Hartford and the suburbs who come together to work on clean up, beautification, planting and graffiti removal projects in City parks, neighborhoods, business districts, vacant lots, etc. Members of the Green Crew also participate in Green Team projects.
- ***Community gardens*** – This program cultivates community spirit and strength through gardening. More than 300 families grow vegetables and flowers in fourteen locations throughout Hartford.

- ***Hartford Blooms*** – Individuals, corporations and others sponsor more than 400 beautiful flowering planters placed in various locations throughout the City during the growing season. The plants are grown in Knox Parks’ greenhouses and the planters are maintained by members of the Green Crew.
- ***Trees for Hartford Neighborhoods*** – This program began in 2003 to help reverse the trend of urban deforestation in Hartford. Originally funded by the Connecticut Department of environmental Protection and the National Tree Trust, this program has engaged neighborhood volunteers in planting more than 2,000 trees throughout Hartford.
- ***Hartford Cleans Up*** – In partnership with the City of Hartford, Knox Parks provides an average of 800 volunteers per year with tools, supplies and technical support as part of the *Keep America Beautiful* program.

Knox Parks has an operating budget of \$900,000, approximately 60% of which is related to the Green Crew AmeriCorps program. The budget is supplemented by a trust endowment, currently valued at approximately \$760,000. Other sources of revenue include fees for service, government grants, foundation and corporate grants, and fundraising events and contributions.

There are currently three full-time positions reporting to the Executive Director: Horticulture Director/AmeriCorps Green Crew Program Director, Finance Operations Manager, and Community Network Builder. The staff members currently filling these positions have been in their positions for at least five years. The Green Crew Manager, two Green Crew Supervisors and the twenty-one AmeriCorps program members report to the Green Crew Program Director. Knox Parks also enjoys the support of approximately 2,000 volunteers who participate in a variety of greening projects each year. The organization is located at 75 Laurel Street in Hartford, Connecticut, occupying land, a building, and greenhouses leased from the City at no cost.

Knox Parks is currently governed by an energetic, twelve-member Board of Directors, more than half of whom have joined the board within the past year. In addition to a commitment to the mission, directors bring a variety of skills, expertise, and personal and professional experiences to board deliberations. Developing and implementing a structure to facilitate the board’s ability to govern strategically and strengthening the board’s capacity to help raise money are high priorities.

To learn more about Knox Parks Foundation, please visit www.knoxparks.org.

The Opportunity

The previous Executive Director left Knox Parks in the spring of 2009, having served the organization for nearly thirty years. Since his departure, day-to-day operations have been directed by an Acting Executive Director appointed by the board from within the organization.

The new Executive Director will be passionate about horticulture, the environment, beautifying the community, and providing opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to learn about and impact these issues. S/he will actively translate that passion into the generation of the revenue needed to ensure the sustainability of the mission both now and in the years to come. S/he will also be action-oriented, creative, a leader ***and*** a manager, and willing to roll up his/her sleeves to “dig in”, both literally and figuratively.

Immediate organizational priorities include the following:

- Design and implement an organizational infrastructure to ensure that Knox Parks has the capacity to deliver programs, services and administrative support efficiently and effectively (e.g., policies and procedures, financial management, human resources, volunteer management, etc.).
- Develop and implement realistic short and long-term plans for raising the funds needed, both earned and contributed, to cover operating expenses and build reserves.
- Engage internal and external stakeholders from throughout the community to confirm the organization's strategic direction and to identify funding and other strategies that capitalize on strengths, respond to community needs, and respond to current and future economic realities and opportunities. Develop annual business plans and budgets to ensure that the identified outcomes are achieved.
- Strengthen existing relationships, collaborations and partnerships and cultivate new ones in order to increase visibility and position Knox Parks as the community's 'go to' greening organization.
- Maintain high levels of employee morale and volunteer engagement; foster a spirit of teamwork among staff, volunteers and other stakeholders; strengthen internal communications and decision-making; and ensure accountability for results.
- Work in partnership with the Board of Directors to establish open and frequent lines of communication, to strengthen the board's ability to govern strategically and effectively, and to engage individual board members in the process of attracting financial and other resources.

The Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate will have the following professional background and personal characteristics:

Professional background, skills and knowledge:

- At least 5 years of successful senior management experience in a small nonprofit or small business environment, including supervision and management of staff, volunteers, revenue generation and fundraising, strategic and operational planning, budgeting and finances, and programs/services
- Demonstrated success raising money and other resources from a variety of sources, including individual donors, local and national foundations, corporations, all levels of government, etc.
- Working knowledge of horticulture, urban agriculture and/or greening industry
- Experience working with urban youth and/or job training programs
- Demonstrated experience designing and building an organization's administrative infrastructure
- Experience delivering high quality programs and services with limited resources
- Demonstrated experience building and nurturing teams, creating coalitions and sustaining effective relationships with board, staff, customers, volunteers, donors, community leaders, political leaders, policymakers, grassroots organizations, business leaders and other stakeholders
- Successful experience developing and providing leadership for a Board of Directors
- Demonstrated commitment to staff development and experience recognizing and nurturing staff potential

- Bi-lingual (English/Spanish) a plus
- Knowledge of AmeriCorps program a plus

Personal characteristics and leadership attributes:

- Ability to effectively and enthusiastically ask others to donate money and other resources to support a cause for which s/he has great passion
- Ability to articulate a vision and inspire others throughout the community to embrace, fund and achieve it
- Ability to galvanize people from a variety of cultural, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds to work together toward common goals
- Demonstrated ability to inspire self and others to thrive in an environment of limited resources and continuous change
- Creative, resourceful, well organized and proactive
- Excellent management skills
- Can effectively prioritize and juggle multiple demands without compromising quality
- Demonstrated commitment to making urban environments better places to live
- Ability to develop and maintain relationships with elected officials, policymakers and other people of influence at state and local levels
- Excellent communicator, with demonstrated ability to communicate clearly, openly and regularly with staff, board, customers, funders, and other stakeholders
- Excellent listening and interpersonal skills
- Ability to achieve the right balance between involving relevant stakeholders in decision-making and being decisive

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Knox Parks Foundation is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer and actively seeks a diverse pool of candidates. We encourage all qualified candidates to apply, especially applicants from ethnic, gender and other groups historically underrepresented in nonprofit management.

Competitive salary and benefits, commensurate with experience.

Application information:

Ann E. Thomas, Third Sector New England Transition Consultant, is coordinating the search for Knox Parks Foundation’s Executive Director. For more information about Third Sector, go to www.tsne.org.

In order to apply, please visit www.tsne.org/employment/ed_Knox to submit cover letter, resume, salary requirements, and where you learned of the position. Only electronic submissions will be considered. All other inquiries regarding this search may be directed to Ms. Thomas at knoxparkssearch@snet.net.

Interviews are expected to begin the week of August 17.