



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

20th ANNIVERSARY OF EMERALD NECKLACE CONSERVANCY'S PARTY IN THE PARK LUNCHEON TO TAKE PLACE MAY 15, 2024

*The "Must-Attend" Event Raises Funds to Restore and Improve the Emerald Necklace Parks for All;
Event Features Presentation of Liff Spirit Award to Byron Rushing and Frieda Garcia*

Boston, MA March 27, 2024 – The [Emerald Necklace Conservancy](#) announces that the 20th Anniversary of [Party in the Park](#), the city's beloved annual luncheon to raise awareness and funds for the Emerald Necklace parks, will take place on Wednesday, May 15, 2024 at Franklin Park. All proceeds from the fundraiser support the 1,100-acre park system that serves as a backyard for residents and a destination for more than one million park users each year. The Conservancy stewards the Emerald Necklace through advocacy, maintenance and restoration, education, access improvements, public programs and the promotion of park stewardship through youth education and volunteer programs.

Party in the Park will feature the presentation of the **Liff Spirit Award** to former Massachusetts House of Representative Byron Rushing and activist and community organizer Frieda Garcia. Over the decades, their extensive work organizing communities, speaking up for those in need, and advocating for racial justice make them exemplars of public and civic service. The award is named in honor of the late Boston Parks Commissioner Justine Mee Liff, who served from 1996 until her passing in 2002. *Party in the Park* benefits the Emerald Necklace Conservancy and continues Liff's legacy of bringing people together to support and champion these vital urban green spaces.

Founded in 2003, Party in the Park attracts the area's most generous greenspace supporters and civic leaders for a stylish tented luncheon in the Emerald Necklace. Guests don their finest millinery at this "must-attend" fundraiser to herald the coming of spring to Boston. For the upcoming fundraiser, [table sponsorships and tickets](#) are now available.



Mailing Address: 350 Jamaicaaway, Boston, MA 02130 | 617.522.2700 | www.emeraldnecklace.org



"This will be the 20th Anniversary of *Party in the Park*, marking a milestone year. We're looking forward to welcoming public park supporters to help raise funds for the vital work the Emerald Necklace Conservancy does to maintain Boston's largest park system," shared Alex Ablon, Caroline Balz, Gabi Crimaldi and Georgia Lee, Co-Chairs of the 2024 *Party in the Park*.

"*Party in the Park* is our signature fundraising event which funds essential tree care and capital projects in 1,100 acres of parks," noted Karen Mauney-Brodek, President of the Emerald Necklace Conservancy. "It also supports our education programs, free public programming, resources for park users, advocacy efforts and special initiatives. We are extremely proud of the work the Conservancy has done for the past 25 years to steward and improve the Emerald Necklace, connecting all Bostonians and visitors alike over a dozen neighborhoods stretching from Dorchester to the Back Bay, and to be honouring Byron Rushing and Frieda Garcia with the Liff Spirit Award this year."

For more information and tickets, visit www.emeraldnecklace.org/party-in-the-park.

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About the Emerald Necklace Conservancy

The Emerald Necklace Conservancy is a community-supported non-profit founded in 1998 to steward and champion the Emerald Necklace, Boston's largest park system of seven distinct parks designed by Frederick Law Olmsted to connect over a dozen neighborhoods with 1,100 acres of meadows, woodlands, waterways, paths and parkways. Working with civic and neighborhood partners, the Conservancy strengthens parks, people and policy by advocating for the Emerald Necklace and advancing access, maintenance and restoration, park stewardship and education through volunteer and youth programs and inclusive public programming. The parks serve as a healing respite from the city, a valuable commuting connector and a community convener for more than one million residents and tourists each year, and have taken on a special significance as a safe and socially distanced destination for recreation and reconnection since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. www.emeraldnecklace.org

Byron Rushing Bio

For over six decades, Byron Rushing has been a revered champion for social justice in Massachusetts and across the country. Beginning with his groundbreaking work in the 1960s, he has dedicated his entire adult life to expanding civil rights and advocating for social equity. Rushing's dedication to his community ultimately led to him serving as a Massachusetts Representative for over thirty years, advocating for progressive policies on issues ranging from housing and healthcare to LGBTQ rights and addiction treatment. Alongside his partner,





fellow community activist Frieda Garcia, Rushing's legacy serves as a testament to the power of community-centered leadership.

Frieda Garcia Bio

Frieda Garcia has dedicated her life to serving and empowering her community. Throughout decades of tireless advocacy, she has been at the forefront of numerous grassroots initiatives, advocating for immigrant rights, education reform, mental health care, affordable housing and many more causes. Garcia led the campaign to create a statue of Harriet Tubman in the South End's Harriet Tubman Park—Boston's first statue dedicated to a woman on public property. Elsewhere in the South End, Garcia's own lifetime of achievement was honored with the creation of Frieda Garcia Park in 2013, a public playground with art and equipment for youth of all ages. Alongside her partner, fellow community activist Byron Rushing, Garcia embodies the dedication and spirit of Justine Mee Liff.

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