

# Employee Profile: Felicia Parker-Cox

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Felicia Parker-Cox joined Philadelphia Parks & Recreation as our Community Organizer on May 28, 2013. And though Felicia is new to the department as an employee, she grew up using our facilities. Raised in Mount Airy, she went to Ada Lewis Junior High School, next to the pool and tennis courts at Awbury Recreation Center.

Felicia's primary tasks are to directly support the creation and development of Park Friends organizations in Cobbs Creek and Tacony Creek Parks. Felicia will provide on-the-ground community work to build support for these watershed parks as well as for specific neighborhood parks and recreation facilities in response to strategic and specific objectives. Felicia will also be generating community support for PPR's 5K runs in those same watershed parks by organizing community groups for volunteer recruitment, sponsorship and outreach/publicity.

Felicia will be picking up on the work that Jean Hunt had done in Cobbs Creek around building relationships in that community and forming a united Friends group that addresses the needs of Cobbs Creek Park as a whole. The work in Tacony Creek Park is starting from the ground up, which Felicia describes as "truly grassroots organizing, identifying appropriate people who would be part of this stewardship group and then bringing them all to the table and to work with them on an ongoing basis to solidify vision and action."

The groups in both communities will require ongoing attention due to the size and geographic span of the parks, the diverse neighborhoods that surround these parks, and the differing uses and interests in the public land. So far, Felicia describes community interest in Cobbs Creek and Tacony Creek Parks as "willing but cautious."

Felicia brings years of community organizing experience to the job. As a teenager, she conducted community outreach as a volunteer for her state representative, as well as her church. In 2005, Felicia joined the American Red Cross and honed the formal community organizing techniques she uses today. She cites her decision to pursue community organizing as "the need to connect people to the resources... generally, people are willing to assist, but they've never been asked or approached in the right way." Upon seeing the PPR Community Organizer job opportunity, Felicia was "intrigued." While not a self-described environmentalist, she liked the idea of getting people engaged in what the department has to offer and suspected that she could connect with community members on issues beyond environmentalism. Felicia hopes to work with rec leaders and encourage their constituents to become involved in local parks.

Whether you see Felicia in One Parkway Building or in the field, feel free to introduce yourself and learn more about her work!