



Sterling Strategic Advisor Environment, Parks, and Greenspace

What inspires you to do the work that you do?

I love Houston and its people, and I'm continually inspired by the community advocates who work tirelessly to make our city a more equitable, inclusive and resilient place. Taking a stand for what's just and right is tough work, particularly in these divided times. Houston's activists show incredible persistence, creativity and courage as they organize their neighbors to spur meaningful change.

What excites you most about your work at the Foundation?

The most exciting aspect of my work at the Jacob and Terese Hershey Foundation is supporting leaders dedicated to a healthy environment, reproductive justice, and nature conservation in Houston. The commitment to centering racial equity in governance, operations, and grantmaking is a privilege, and I am enthusiastic about integrating Trust-Based Philanthropy practices, streamlining processes, and providing comprehensive support to frontline partners. This involves connecting them with other funders and showcasing their work to amplify their impact.

What role has philanthropy played in the evolution of Houston's parks and greenspaces?

Philanthropy has played a pivotal role in transforming Houston's parks, supporting organizations like the Houston Parks Board and the SPARK School Park Program. Investments in revitalizing parks, creating new community spaces, and ensuring equitable access through projects like Bayou Greenways and SPARK Parks have been significant. Philanthropy also contributes to future planning, supporting initiatives, funding park system master plans for jurisdictions, and researching Houston's park funding through the Kinder Institute.

What are the greatest challenges facing parks and greenspaces in Houston today?

Houston's city parks face significant underfunding. Among U.S. cities with populations over one million, Houston ranks last in park department spending, investing less than one-third per resident compared to Austin, Dallas, or San Antonio. This lack of investment is evident in neighborhood parks with closed pools, locked restrooms, broken play equipment, and overflowing trash cans, impacting residents' access to essential park benefits.

What are you looking forward to in your role as a Sterling Strategic Advisor?

I am looking forward to working alongside the Sterling team to consider emerging trends, community needs, and helping to inform the fantastic work they do to build the capacity of Houston's nonprofit sector. I'm also looking forward to learning from the incredible group of Sterling Strategic Advisors, each of whom brings a diversity of skills, experience and perspectives. The cross-sector wisdom of this group is extraordinary, and the opportunity to partner with the entire Sterling team to surface new approaches to community challenges is a privilege.
