



Park Foundation Welcomes New Executive Director: Rachel Leon

After a lengthy search process, the Park Foundation is thrilled to announce that Rachel Leon has accepted our invitation to join us as our new Executive Director. She has extensive experience in the areas that the Foundation focuses on: democracy, media, environment, social justice and sustainability. Her track record in these areas is impressive, and we welcome her to Ithaca and to the Park Foundation. "We are so excited to have Rachel Leon join us as our new Executive Director. She is an accomplished leader, an idea person, and a fighter for the causes that our Foundation represents. Her philosophy and experience will help magnify the difference we can make in the world," said Adelaide Gomer, President of the Park Foundation.

Rachel has held leadership positions for more than 25 years, most recently as the Executive Director at the Environmental Grantmakers Association (EGA), a position she has held since 2009. EGA is comprised of over 230 diverse foundations. At EGA she managed a staff of 12, overseeing their financial operations, organizing annual retreats, and serving as their spokesperson in the press. One of the innovative achievements she helped create at EGA is a collaboration between EGA and the School for Environment and Sustainability at University of Michigan with Dr. Dorceta Taylor (now a professor at Yale University) launching a fellowship program to develop a new generation of environmental leaders.

Prior to EGA, Rachel worked as a Senior Program Manager at the JEHT Foundation on Participatory Elections. From 1997 to 2007 she served as the Executive Director of New York Common Cause. While there, she lobbied, organized, and tracked money in politics, created significant fundraising events and served as a spokesperson for the organization. During her 10-year stint there, she strengthened the New York Chapter, increased their budget, and led successful legislative efforts on local, state, and national levels.

Before Common Cause, Rachel spent six years at Hunger Action Network, as a lobbyist, advocate and then as Associate Director. Hunger Action Network addresses the root causes of hunger and poverty and advances economic justice and food security. While there, she was responsible for advancing their legislative and programmatic priorities and helped manage staff, finances, and infrastructure.

Rachel has a BA from SUNY New Paltz and an MPA from Baruch College graduating from both with Honors. She is a lifelong New Yorker and was born and raised in Schenectady, NY. She will begin at the Park Foundation on November 1st.

For questions, please contact: Amy Panek, Interim Co-Director/Senior Program Officer, at abp@parkfoundation.org