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Newton Community Pride Board Elects New Leadership Team

The non-profit supports arts/culture/community events in Newton

Newton, MA --January 22, 2021—[Newton Community Pride](#) (NCP) announces the election of new leadership to continue to strengthen its organization to support arts, culture and community programming the city of Newton has grown to love and enjoy. For more than three decades, NCP has financially supported service and beautification projects as well as a wide range of arts, culture, and community events and programs in the City of Newton including NewtonSERVES, The Linda Plaut Festival of the Arts, July 4th fireworks, and the beloved Halloween Window Painting contest.

New Board leadership includes:

Gloria Gavris: Chair

Gavris is the past chair of the City of Newton *Community Design for Arts and Culture Committee*, which published the CREATE Newton Arts & Culture Strategic Plan in December 2019. She is a City of Newton Parks, Recreation & Culture Commissioner. Gavris served as past chair of the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Greater Boston and past chair and current board member of the West Suburban YWCA.

She is a retired lawyer and lobbyist.

"I am thrilled and honored to take a leadership role with Newton Community Pride and continue the rich tradition of favorite arts, culture and community events the city has grown to love as well as bring new innovative programming and public art initiatives to support the vitality of our village centers." Gavris said.

Gavris replaces Howard Sholkin who served as Newton Community Pride president and chair since 2018. "The board is grateful for Sholkin's leadership since 2018 maintaining the continuity of leadership in programming for the City of Newton as well redesigning the NCP web site, boosting our social media presence, and leading fundraising efforts to maintain a dozen events and programs each year." Sholkin said: "I look forward to continuing on the Board and working with the new leadership team that will add a deeper level of arts, culture and non-profit experience to our organization."

Dinny Starr: Vice-chair

Dinny Starr has served on the NCP board for three years. She is a glass artist and craftsperson who works in various media including mosaics and textiles. Starr's artwork has been featured at the Rhode Island School of Design's annual auction and at various galleries and craft markets. She works at the Women's Foundation of Boston serving on the leadership team as co-manager of partner relationships, volunteer manager, and grant committee manager.

John Zaya: Treasurer

John Zaya studied arts and humanities in Florence, Italy, which drives his interest in arts and culture programming. He is on the board of the Wakefield Food Pantry. Zaya is analytics manager at The Village Bank in Newton. For 20 years, he provided financial planning, analysis, and strategy consulting for multinationals, startups, and pre-IPO companies across industries in Europe and the US.

Zaya replaces Tom Boyd.

Meryl Kessler: Clerk

Meryl Kessler recently retired as executive director of the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts. She is a long-time advocate for public art and co-founded and helped run for several years the Newton Halloween Window Painting program in 1999. It was organized in conjunction with the then Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs led by Linda Plaut. Last year, Kessler organized the [28 Austin Street Mural Competition](#) in Newtonville. Kessler serves on the Newton Sustainable Materials Management committee. She is a former lawyer.

NCP works closely with Paula Gannon, director, Newton Cultural Development.

About Newton Community Pride

Newton Community Pride, formed in 1989, is a 501(c)(3) non profit organization promoting volunteerism, supporting beautification projects and building community through arts and culture programming for all to enjoy. For more information: www.newtoncommunitypride.org,