

Press contact: Lucy Salwen: lsalwen@thecharles.org, tel (617) 300-8171

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Charles River Conservancy Gala for Renata von Tscharnier's Retirement

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Annenberg Hall of Harvard University is famous for Hogwarts-esque architecture, but on Saturday June 2nd, it wasn't Harry on his broomstick flying through the air, but a puppet of Renata von Tscharnier, founder of the Charles River Conservancy, on her bicycle in her signature yellow jacket.

The 19th century wooden space hosted over three hundred friends, family, and parkland supporters attending the Conservancy's *Ribbon of Blue, Ribbon of Green* gala marking von Tscharnier's retirement and the inauguration of the new executive director, Laura Jasinski. The celebration honored von Tscharnier's 18 years of leadership and accomplishments, and rallied support for the future of the organization.

Since its founding in 2000, the non-profit has distinguished itself through innovation and advocacy. In addition to the CRC's volunteer program, which enlists more than 2,000 landscaping volunteers annually, the organization is known for converting a brownfield under a highway into the Lynch Family Skatepark in North Point Park, and co-founding "RiverSing" with Revels, an annual musical celebration of the autumnal equinox.

Mirroring the organization's inventive track-record, the event program was unique and whimsical, with various artistic elements woven into the evening. Guests could meet and take pictures with Sariel the Charles River mermaid during the reception before a procession of large blue and green banners led guest into Annenberg Hall. After dinner and the program, guests got out of their seats for participatory singing and dancing led by Revels and the Elixir band.

"It was a beautiful night in a picturesque location," said C.A. Webb, President of the Kendall Square Association. "The Ribbon of Blue, Ribbon of Green gala was definitely one of the most memorable events I have attended."

Boston City councilor Michelle Wu served as MC. "I was honored to be a part of this amazing celebration and farewell to Renata," said Wu. "I have treasured my connection to the Conservancy, from serving on the board to joining the exhilarating Charles River swim day. Thanks to Renata's and now Laura's leadership along with countless volunteers and supporters, we will continue to see activation and access along the beautiful Charles River for generations to come."

DCR Commissioner Leo Roy also attended and spoke about the importance of the partnership between the Conservancy and the State.

The gala program also honored the urban river swimming success of Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo with the presentation of The Urban River Champion Award. French Consul Valéry Freland accepted the award on her behalf. The award recognized her innovative work launching urban river swimming in the Bassin de la Villette that flows

into the river Seine, which serves as a major inspiration for the Conservancy's urban swimming work.

Returning swimming to the Charles River has remained a central goal for Renata since founding the organization. To build community support, the Conservancy began hosting an annual sanctioned river swim, called "City Splash," five years ago. With expert analysis from a feasibility study conducted by Stantec, the group selected a site in North Point Park to pursue building a permanent swimming facility. A master swimmer herself, Jasinski is excited to advance plans for the swim park. She participated in the One Mile Swim put on by the Charles River Swimming Club in the river the same morning of the gala.

The event raised over \$800,000 for the future of the Charles River Conservancy and their mission to make the urban riverfront parks more active, attractive and accessible. Laura Jasinski has over ten years of experience in the creation and activation of urban open space and will carry on the Conservancy's efforts through programing, advocacy, volunteer engagement, the arts and partnerships.

If you missed the event and still would like to make a contribution for the future of the Charles River Conservancy, you can donate at www.thecharles.org.

Video and photographs from the event can be found on the Conservancy's website at www.thecharles.org/get-involved/gala/.

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About the Charles River Conservancy: The Charles River Conservancy is dedicated to the stewardship, renewal, and enhancement of the urban parklands along the Charles River, for the enjoyment of all. The Conservancy promotes the active use and vitality of the parklands, increases recreational and cultural opportunities, and works to ensure the beauty and integrity of this extraordinary public resource.

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