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Press Contact: Rebeca Ramirez, Rebeca@myrtleavenue.org, (718) 230-1689, (917) 860-9686

Twitter Handle: @MyrtleAveBklyn

Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership Announces New Executive Director

August 11, 2014, Brooklyn, NY- The **Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership Board of Directors** announced **Meredith Phillips Almeida** as the organization's new **executive director**. In this role, Meredith will serve as the organization's chief executive officer for the Partnership's two entities, the **Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Business Improvement District** and the **Myrtle Avenue Revitalization Project Local Development Corporation (MARP)**. Meredith will oversee the organization's day-to-day operations, including financial management, fundraising, and work with the organization's Board of Directors. She will oversee the organization's program areas: Commercial Revitalization, Business Assistance & Attraction, Historic Preservation, Urban Planning Advocacy and Food Access & Health, and Arts & Culture, as well as direct operations of the Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Business Improvement District. Meredith joined the organization in 2007, and has served as the acting executive director since May of this year, and as Deputy Director since 2010.

Founded in 1999, the Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership is a not-for-profit, 501(c) 3 organization with the mission to restore the "Main Street" of the Fort Greene and Clinton Hill community to a bustling, economically vital neighborhood commercial corridor that provides entrepreneurial, cultural, recreational, and employment opportunities for all those who live, work, study or visit the area. Over the past decade, the Partnership has achieved tremendous results such as lowering the retail vacancy rate from over 25% to 5%, and spearheading the Myrtle Avenue Plaza, a \$7M capital project to reconstruct the streets and sidewalks of a four-block stretch, bringing 25,000 square feet of new public space to the avenue in 2015.

Myrtle Avenue serves as the neighborhood's local 'main street' and offers unique dining, shopping and cultural experiences, serving both long-time and newer residents. The Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership is working to leverage the healthy transformation of the Avenue to benefit all residents, local business owners, and property owners. Meredith's extensive experience in urban planning, community engagement and placemaking make her well suited to lead the Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership's next phase as its executive director.

"We are excited by the leadership and experience Meredith Phillips Almeida brings to advancing the very important mission and vision of the Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership," said Pratt Institute President Thomas F. Schutte, chair of Myrtle Avenue Revitalization Project and the Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn BID. *"Over the past 15 years, Pratt Institute has worked closely with the Partnership to stimulate growth and development in the neighborhood. Meredith has already secured many achievements in her past roles at the organization, and we know that she will inspire and lead key community planning programs and initiatives with great success in her new role at the helm of the Partnership."*

"Choosing Meredith to lead the Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership is the right move. She has demonstrated her knowledge of the avenue and will bring the commitment and creativity that is essential for the continued growth of the Myrtle Avenue corridor," said John Dew, Vice Chair of the BID Board & MARP Board member. *"We welcome her in this new role as Executive Director."*

"Thanks to a tradition of strong local leadership, the energy of the district's small businesses, an appetite for innovation, and a community-driven vision, the Partnership is viewed as a model for organizations across the city. I look forward to continuing this tradition while working to develop new initiatives that address an evolving set of needs, and to reaffirm our commitment to improving Myrtle Avenue for all stakeholders," said Phillips Almeida.

Under new leadership, the Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership is poised to strengthen its model of working closely with stakeholders to help shape its programs and inspire new initiatives that serve the district's diverse businesses and residents. During Meredith's tenure, the organization has deepened its reach into the community, engaging residents

from all backgrounds in the Partnership's programs as volunteers, advisors, advocates and leaders, resulting in broad-based support for the organization's impactful programs.

Meredith's vision and leadership have broadened the scope and impact of Myrtle Avenue's footprint over the past seven years, specifically in the areas of food and health, arts and culture, public space and community services. She developed the renowned *Food Access Initiative*, which has expanded access to healthy food for thousands of local low-income residents of Fort Greene and Clinton Hill by creating a pathway to affordable healthy food and nutrition education. She conceptualized and directs the *Arts & Culture Initiative*, which represents a larger effort to establish Myrtle Avenue as an access point to cultural activities for community members of diverse socio-economic backgrounds, with cornerstone programs like *Black Artstory Month* and *Temporary Public Installations*. She spearheaded the Partnership's planning efforts on *Park Avenue/Under the BQE*, a cutting edge program aimed at transforming underutilized public space into beautiful, usable and safe places for residents to enjoy. She is currently directing the development of new initiatives in the area of *Neighborhood Safety*, as well as *Age-Friendly Environments*, which will improve Myrtle Avenue for older adults. Meredith currently serves on Brooklyn Community Board 2's Youth, Education & Cultural Affairs committee, and on the board of the Greene Hill School.

For more information on the Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership, please visit: www.myrtleavenue.org.