



Photo by Maggie Kane

Profile: Sohna Harneez

Sohna Harneez is a young adult living in Pittsburgh. She purchased a home in Pittsburgh four years ago when she moved from Maryland to Atlanta yet she already feels like Pittsburgh is her home. Sohna loves Atlanta for its rich history and sense of familiarity. She says she values, "the feel of the city and the people...I know all my neighbors, from one end to the next...and I value that. I value being able to walk up and down the street and say hello, get a hello back."

It was Sohna's neighbor who originally helped her get involved in community organizing and volunteering in several community initiatives such as builders' groups, cleanups, porch parties and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day activities. Furthermore, Sohna has become a leader in formal organizations like the Pittsburgh Community Improvement Association and the Pittsburgh Neighborhood Planning Unit and she aspires to be on the city council in the future. Sohna's purpose is to get her voice and her neighbors' voices heard so that development is equitable and representative of the diversity of her neighborhood. "Pittsburgh has a good mixture of families, single people, older couples that are retired, children, adults, and teenagers."

Sohna experienced gentrification before and she can see signs of it happening in Atlanta. "I feel like at first the BeltLine was a great thing, an amazing thing... and then as the process has been going on, I really feel like it is kind of becoming like a gentrification tool." But if the BeltLine development maintains its goal to connect communities, she hopes "...that same level of commitment and that same level of creativity and the same level of investment also happens for Southside communities."