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## Thomas tapped to lead Buckhead Business Association

**By Everett Catts**
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Jennifer Thomas

The Buckhead Business Association tapped Jennifer Thomas as its new director, a familiar face when seeking a director.

Jennifer Thomas, who worked for the organization as a volunteer as of last week after a 45-day search process, replaces Sharon Silva, who a May resigned after five years of focus on personal and family matters. Thomas will start her new job on July 31 before turning 31.

"I'm really excited about it," Thomas said. "I think there's a lot of potential for growth. There's potential members and new sponsors. There are many ways for members to get even more involved in the community. I want to be a part of that."

Ms. Thomas, who was one of the finalists for the job, had worked as a community representative at La Raine's in Virginia-Highland from July 2004 to 2008. The search committee liked the fact that she had corporate experience, having worked in public affairs and government as a specialist for Coca-Cola Enterprises from 2004 to 2008.

Elizabeth Gill, the association president and the owner of Oklahoma City, Okla.-based Employment Professionals' Business Solutions, led the search's first phase. 100 people applied for the position.

Neighbor Newspapers and Express conducted interviews, background checks, drug testing, credit checks and reference checks. The list was then whittled down to 10 semifinalists, who went before the association's board of directors.


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committee, a panel of six people comprised of board members and officers, for the second round of interviews. Then, on June 21, the two finalists gave a presentation to the organization's board and the choice was made.

"Honestly, we thought she was the most qualified candidate of those interviewed who went through the process. She had both the marketing experience as well as administrative experience that will take the BBA to the next level with the goals we've set for corporate sponsorship and community involvement," said association president Heather Wright. She added the fact that Ms. Thomas is a Buckhead resident and familiar with both the community and the organization which helps her stand out as a candidate.

Founded in 1951, the association has more than 400 members. In addition to growing the organization, Ms. Thomas said she plans to inject some new ideas into it.

"I want to expand where they started with the Education Alliance and move that past just what they've done," she said. "It's wonderful what they're doing at Garden Hills Elementary and North Atlanta. I think there are ways members can get even more involved in the community, and BBA can spearhead some of that."

Ms. Thomas earned a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Georgia and her husband Jared live in Buckhead's Castlewood neighborhood. Ms. Thomas enjoys reading and watching Georgia football games in her spare time.



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