



PHS Healthy Neighborhoods Giving Circle

IMPACT REPORT: Summer 2024 - Spring 2025

PHS Healthy Neighborhoods is a dynamic set of programs using horticulture to uplift neighborhoods, foster healthier living spaces, open doors to economic growth, and bring fresh food within reach for many people. Multi-year support from the PHS Healthy Neighborhoods Giving Circle provides a critical base of support for this work.

Community Gardens

PHS now supports over 190 community gardens with organic growing supplies, tools, education, and other resources. Our work with gardens took a big step forward in 2024 with the creation of the PHS Stewardship Institute. This series of organizational development workshops and one-on-one consulting will address the complex challenges faced by many garden groups such as succession planning, power dynamics, diversity/equity/inclusion, conflict resolution, and more. Piloted in the summer of 2024 to positive response, PHS is now finalizing the curriculum and teaching format in time to fully launch the Institute in summer 2025.



Tending seedlings at PHS's Strawberry Mansion Green Resource Center

PHS support also includes growing and distributing 270,000 organic seedlings annually to gardens through Green Resource Centers operated by PHS in partnership with community-based groups. PHS seedlings include many culturally appropriate, hard to find varieties for immigrant gardeners who are an increasingly important part of Philadelphia's network of community gardens. Through the McLean Tool Library, PHS also lends a wide variety of tools and equipment. In 2024, over 1,500 items were loaned to gardens so they could host volunteer work days or access specialized equipment.

Tree Programs

PHS tree programs protect and restore the region's tree canopy, particularly in under-resourced areas with few trees and high average temperatures. Since September 2024, PHS worked with over 100 Tree Tenders groups who enlisted the help of thousands of volunteers to plant 2,125 trees in Philadelphia and surrounding counties. Through online and in person training classes, PHS trained over 200 new Tree Tenders who will go on to rally and lead others in group planting and tree care efforts.

Through volunteer and paid stewardship efforts, PHS works to ensure that newly planted trees are monitored and well maintained. PHS has a 90% one year survival rate and 80% five year survival rate, above average for volunteer urban forestry programs nationally.

PHS continued to focus tree efforts in priority neighborhoods with especially low canopy and high need such as Southwest Philadelphia. Last November, the recently formed Southwest Tree Tenders group helped Moms Bonded By Grief (a community support group for mothers who have lost children to gun violence) to create a healing garden with a memorial tree grove at a long neglected vacant lot. Together, volunteers planted nearly a dozen trees at the new memorial site, and another 25 trees at other locations in Southwest Philadelphia. Other PHS work in Southwest Philadelphia included a partnership that is teaching local teens environmental, community engagement, and design-related skills, and has them distribute and plant trees throughout the neighborhood.



The \$12M USDA grant awarded for the Philly Tree Plan was recently unfrozen, and work is now moving forward again. PHS continues to play a leading role in the Philly Tree Coalition and is leveraging the Tree Tenders program to advance key aspects of the Philly Tree Plan.

Volunteers planting in North Philadelphia with Heritage Tree Tenders

PHS Philadelphia LandCare

With nearly 13,000 vacant lots currently under management representing nearly one third of Philadelphia's total vacant land, PHS continued to expand the LandCare program in partnership with the City of Philadelphia. As a major testament to the importance of the program and its community support, the City recently increased funding to make Philadelphia LandCare a year-round initiative. This will provide crucial maintenance services during winter months in many neighborhoods and provide year-round employment for many workers. PHS LandCare provides approximately 300 family sustaining jobs for people across Philadelphia, many of whom have overcome barriers to employment and received training through PHS Workforce Development. While the PHS LandCare program is largely funded by the City of Philadelphia, Giving Circle donors and other supporters play a critical role in PHS's ability to leverage its impact and connect it with other PHS Healthy Neighborhoods programs.

Workforce Development

The PHS Green Jobs training program provides training and employment in horticulture and landscaping, particularly for underemployed individuals and those facing structural barriers to employment, such as returning from prison. Job placement is facilitated through a network of employers, many of them contractors with the Philadelphia LandCare program. PHS has dramatically increased the number of people trained and placed each year since 2022 and has added tree care and planting to the training curriculum.

In 2024, 38 employers hired over 90 Workforce Development graduates, more than double the number two years ago. In PHS's first 2025 training class, 38 people graduated on March 29th at a ceremony in Hunting Park attended by family members, city representatives, and community-based hiring partners.



PHS also runs the Same Day Work & Pay program with the City of Philadelphia and community organizations to pay participants \$100 per day plus social service support for cleaning vacant lots and streets. Over 5,000 daily jobs are created annually that provide short term economic relief and often pathways to more permanent employment.

Workforce graduates celebrate at the ceremony in March

Nicetown and Tioga "Love Where You Live" Greening Plan

The place-based, community informed greening project began in September 2022 is still going strong. PHS partnered with the Food Trust to supply two new corner stores with healthy fresh food and healthy eating workshops and started a monthly free farmers market on the third Saturday of each month that will continue in 2025. To support food gardening, PHS developed a beginner gardening education series for residents that included gardening supplies and soil. PHS also trained 54 teachers and youth educators about how to build and maintain teaching gardens at Nicetown's Furtick Farms. Four community gardens were renovated or upgraded by PHS.

A newly formed Nicetown Tree Tenders group planted over 50 trees during fall and spring seasons. PHS planted an additional 100 trees at churches, community groups, and in greened vacant land. Through a special Nicetown-Tioga Green Jobs Program, 14 neighborhood residents were trained and placed in full time jobs with employer partners.



A Front Porch contestant shows off her work

The Love Where You Live Front Porch Challenge returned last summer with over 60 families (twice as many as last year) using PHS gardening kits to transform and beautify their blocks, build friendships, and showcase their gardening skills and creations continue to build health, well-being, and community in 2025 and beyond.

Your ongoing support of the Healthy Neighborhoods Giving Circle and other programs helps make all of this possible. We believe that gardening for the greater good is a collective effort, and the strength of our incredible network of supporters is key to making it happen. We thank you on behalf of the communities we serve and the many others who care about the welfare of the city and its residents.