


# A Family Tree: Nykia & Carlos Perez

By Jane Carroll



Nykia Perez and her father Carlos love trees. So much so, in fact, that they devote a sizeable chunk of their free time not only to planting trees, but also to motivating others to volunteer and join them. Both graduates of PHS's Tree Tenders training, the two are now using their knowledge to empower and inspire others in their section of Philadelphia.

Nykia helps run a small nonprofit organization called Philly Tree People, along with friends Dina Richman and Jacelyn Blank. "We give people a say in what goes on in the neighborhood. Through us, they can request a tree and help plant it," says Nykia, who is also a member of PHS Young Friends.

Her dad Carlos, meanwhile, has his own group of volunteers who plant trees within the city's 19133 Zip code. "I try to change the neighborhood by helping people and teaching them about trees," Carlos notes. "Why keep your knowledge inside?"

Ultimately, Nykia and Carlos, along with Philly Tree People and their army of volunteers, are proving that everyone can be a part of positive change in their communities. Says Nykia, "Once the tree is in the ground, residents can see the improvement immediately. More importantly, it shows that somebody cares."

For more on Philly Tree People, visit [phillytreepeople.org](http://phillytreepeople.org).

Photo by Margaret Funderburg