



Urban Tree Connection named Champion in Action in Philadelphia

Community revitalization youth organization receives \$25,000 grant and other benefits

PHILADELPHIA (April 6, 2006) - Three of the region's foremost corporate leaders announced today that Urban Tree Connection has been named greater Philadelphia's latest *Champion in Action*SM for the second quarter of 2006 in recognition of its programs to assist low-income communities in transforming vacant lots into green spaces and safe areas. The organization provides programs such as after-school garden clubs, vacant lot rehabilitation, block captain assistance and landscape apprenticeships for neighborhood youth. Over the next three months, Urban Tree Connection will receive a \$25,000 grant, media coverage, and extensive promotional and volunteer support.

Champions in Action is an innovative program that provides various forms of support for small non-profit organizations in recognition of their contributions to communities throughout the five county Philadelphia area. Since its inception in 2003, eight Champions have been selected.

"Citizens Bank is pleased to join NBC 10 and The Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News in naming Urban Tree Connection our latest Champion in Action," said Stephen D. Steinour, Chairman and CEO of Citizens Bank. "Urban Tree Connection is a highly regarded organization that has developed strong relationships in the community with children, parents, and local businesses. It has played a significant role and planted the seeds of revitalization in its West Philadelphia communities."

"NBC 10 is proud to be a partner with the Champions in Action program," said Dennis Bianchi, President and General Manager of NBC 10. "Strong partnerships and programs such as this allow us to demonstrate our community commitment, and give us the chance to thank those local nonprofits, like Urban Tree Connection, that do so much good work in communities across our region. This organization ensures that community residents of all ages come together to bring about a positive change in their neighborhoods."

"Urban Tree Connection continues to raise the bar for all neighborhood programs by strengthening relationships between youth and adults," said Joe Natoli, Chairman and Publisher of *The Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News*. "It has empowered neighbors to successfully stand up against drug activity and violence on reclaimed lots."

Bianchi and Peg Marty, Executive Vice President of Citizens Bank, surprised Urban Tree Connection and its staff members by delivering the news in-person along with balloons and an oversized check for an unrestricted \$25,000 grant. NBC 10's cameras were on hand to capture the moment. It was broadcast live on the morning show "10!" today.

Some of the statistics that demonstrate the successes of Urban Tree Connection:

- Since being founded in 1997, Urban Tree Connection has already reached out to over 500 youth in Philadelphia. In 2005, the organization engaged 220 youth in 15 after-school garden clubs throughout Philadelphia. Development of an urban farm in the Haddington section of Philadelphia will teach healthy eating habits, entrepreneurial skills and provide low-cost produce to community residents.
- Neighborhood teens and adults joined together to create a memorial garden at 54th Street between Wyalusing and Westminster Avenues, in honor of the children lost to street violence.

"We are honored to be recognized by Citizens Bank, NBC 10 and *The Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News* as a Champion in Action," said Skip Wiener, Executive Director of Urban Tree Connection. "Urban Tree Connection will use the resources that this award brings to grow and promote its activities in various neighborhoods. We thank everyone at Citizens Bank, NBC 10 and *The Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News* for their support of non-profit organizations through the *Champions in Action* program."

As the most recent *Champion in Action* award winner, Urban Tree Connection will receive:

- A \$25,000 contribution in unrestricted funds from Citizens Bank;
- Media coverage from NBC 10, including public service announcements and profiles;
- Advertising space in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Philadelphia Daily News* and on Philly.com to promote both the program and the organization;
- Volunteer support from Citizens Bank, NBC 10 and Philadelphia Newspapers employees;
- Extensive public relations support;

- Promotional support, highlighting the *Champion in Action* in all Citizens Bank branches;
- Exposure on the Web sites of Citizens Bank, NBC 10 and Philly.com.

To learn more about Urban Tree Connection, visit www.urbantreeconnection.org or call 215-877-7203. Urban Tree Connection's offices are located at 5125 Woodbine Avenue in West Philadelphia.

About Urban Tree Connection

Founded in 1997, the mission of the Urban Tree Connection is to assist urban, low-income communities to revitalize their neighborhoods by transforming abandoned open spaces into safe and functional places that inspire and promote positive human interaction. Youth participation is at the core of Urban Tree Connection's programs because the organization believes it is crucial to educate future generations of Philadelphia about the value of urban green space.

About Citizens Bank of Pennsylvania

Citizens Bank of Pennsylvania is a \$35 billion state-chartered bank with dual headquarters in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. It has 402 branches, more than 670 ATMs throughout Pennsylvania. It also operates 13 retail branches and 25 ATMs in southern New Jersey and a commercial loan office in Virginia. It is a subsidiary of Citizens Financial Group, Inc., a \$155 billion commercial bank holding company headquartered in Providence, R.I. Citizens has more than 1,600 branches, approximately 3,800 ATMs and more than 26,000 employees in a 13-state retail branch network and has non-branch retail and commercial offices in about 40 states. Citizens is the eighth-largest commercial banking company in the United States ranked by deposits. Citizens is owned by RBS (The Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc).

About NBC 10

NBC 10, one of 14 Owned & Operated NBC television stations, is located in Bala Cynwyd, Pa., a suburb of Philadelphia. Millions of viewers throughout Greater Philadelphia, Lehigh Valley, South Jersey and Delaware tune into NBC 10 everyday for the most up-to-date news, weather, sports, consumer, health and traffic reports. Viewers also tune in daily to watch the 10! Show, an upbeat, one-hour lifestyle and entertainment show featuring local, national and internationally-known celebrities. The program airs 'live' Monday through Friday at 10 a.m. Recognized as the #1 web site (www.nbc10.com) in the top 50 markets, NBC10.com was recently awarded with the prestigious National Edward R. Murrow Award.

About the Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News

The Philadelphia Inquirer, the Philadelphia Daily News and philly.com together form the regions' premier newsgathering and advertising entity. Communicating in print, online and through an array of subsidiary publications, The Inquirer the Daily News and philly.com combine world-class journalism with unmatched marketing power to provide millions of readers investigative news, lifestyle information and shopping opportunities found nowhere else.