



PowerCorps PHL Cleans Up Vernon Park

By David Bower, Volunteer Coordinator

The PowerCorps team did a really good job at Vernon Park on December 21. Our team of 9 young men and women, 2 of whom live quite near the park, worked from 8am until 4:30pm. We started by raking leaves... and stinky Ginkgo fruits!... at the toolshed. We then raked at Center-in-the-Park, at the Pastorius/Abolition monument, and on the large lawn in front of Vernon House. We also cleared leaves from most of the storm water inlets throughout the park. All leaves were taken to the site near the fence on the south edge of the park between the deli and the church. We once again have a large compost pile that we hope will yield compost for our gardens in future years.

The team also picked up litter throughout the park. While we were working, we saw the Ready, Willing, and Able team doing the same along Germantown Avenue.

Center-in-the-Park staff assisted with restroom access throughout the day for our team. At around 3pm, Supreme Dow graciously hosted a tour and a very inspirational talk for the team inside the Black Writers Museum. We also heard a brief talk from the Fairmount Park Conservancy staff who were working on the monuments. I spoke to the team throughout the day about all of the good work being done by the Friends of Vernon Park and our partners. As the quotes below from PowerCorps PHL members reflect, the team felt really good about its work and how it connects to the community:

What do you remember from the project at Vernon Park?

- **Fiyana:** Raking leaves, the Black Writers museum, Mr. Supreme talking to us. It was my favorite project because I felt like I was helping clean up my own community.
- **Pedro:** Mr. Supreme was dropping knowledge at the Black Writers Museum; people were thanking us and some even helped us clean the park; and also the monument lifted depicting a slave way before the Emancipation Proclamation. It was set by the Germans from the neighborhood, which is why it's called Germantown.
- **Bern:** It looked pretty complicated when we approached the job, but we didn't think about that. We teamed up and strategically got it done. It was on average about 125 bags of compost we picked up. We were helping the community, and people were thanking us that finally someone was cleaning up. It felt good.

I encourage folks to check out the PowerCorps website at www.powercorpsphl.org. It's a great program that is lifting up communities and PowerCorps team members all over the city.

[Editor's note: [Check out this blog post](#) for more information about the program's achievements in 2015.]