

## Royal Garden's Nicole Chandler Receives Top Honors at the Keep America Beautiful National Convention in Charlotte, NC

Nicole Chandler founded [Royal Gardens Association](#) in October 2005. Living across the street from the open lands area of Morris Park, where there was an overgrowth of invasive planting materials, she was motivated to improve the landscape that provided her constant view from home.

It was Nicole's commitment and dedication to the neighboring parkland that started her toward receiving the [Keep America Beautiful Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson Award](#). The award, presented earlier this month, recognized Chandler's work leading thousands of volunteers in litter prevention, waste reduction, recycling, and beautification and greening activities.

According to the Keep America Beautiful Awards Committee, "Nicole has empowered citizens of Philadelphia to take pride in their community and clean and beautify Morris Park, part of the Fairmount Park System in Philadelphia. Nicole continues to secure significant in-kind donations and forge partnerships with local businesses and global corporations to ensure the work continues."

"We are grateful to Keep America Beautiful for the opportunity and congratulate Nicole for receiving this national recognition," stated Shannon Reiter, president of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. "I commend Nicole for her local efforts, many achievements and countless contributions to clean and beautiful communities."

Nicole had many supporters to thank upon receipt of the award. "I would first like to thank my Project Managers of KRGB, Daniel Ritz, George Chandler, Zamir Chandler and John Brown for their continued support and dedication to this vital organization. Without them, I am meaningless. Two hands could not sustain all this green space alone," Chandler said. "I would also like to thank PPR, Philadelphia Water Department, Keep Philadelphia Beautiful, PennDOT and United Way for our sustaining partnerships, and the host of volunteer groups and individuals who has chosen KRGB as the site to exercise and perform their environmental protection rights and duties."

Early in her work with Morris Park, Nicole mapped out what she wanted for the open space by creating a Master Planting Plan and becoming a park adopter through the Fairmount Park Commission. She then began the process of transforming her neighborhood park into a serenity garden and outdoor educational environmental center for the seventeen schools within a one-mile radius of the park.

After clearing over 110 tons of debris, Chandler created several perennial garden beds, a gateway entrance using a row of flowering cherry trees, a vegetable garden and a riparian area. Once she had beautified this area, Nicole's vision became vivid to all those who walked or drove by. Since then, her vision has helped recruit over 3,000 volunteers who have committed to volunteering at the minimum of twice a year.



Royal Gardens Association also adopted the perimeter of the Cobb's Creek Golf Course and the Rose Recreation Center, where the sight of these attractive landmarks in the Overbrook section of Philadelphia was once blighted by an overgrowth of invasive planting materials and tons of illegal dumping. After clearing all debris and creating a native planting plan for these areas, both sites have become more visible to the public, and the Rose Recreation Center has reopened to community members.

The Royal Gardens Association remains committed to its mission of restoring the green space in the Overbrook section of Philadelphia. In 2007, the organization became the Philadelphia Chapter of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and is referred to as "Keep Royal Gardens Beautiful" under this affiliation.

"Being a homeowner in this Overbrook Hills community, gives me the responsibility to care about its condition and well being," said Chandler. "Understanding the aesthetics of one's neighborhood not only defines the value of one's property but the description of your self worth. The question one must ask of oneself: 'Are you worthy? Then live Clean and Beautiful. Or, are you unworthy? Then live filthy and trifling.' I chose to be worthy of living Clean and Beautiful, and my actions speak for themselves inwardly and outwardly, inside my home and outside in my entire community."

Philadelphia Parks & Recreation sends a big shout out to Nicole Chandler and congratulates her on a well deserved honor!