

Cut costs, save environment: PhillyCarShare

Company gains popularity with eco-friendly students, profs.

By: Kendra Howard

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The green men were spotted again. The matching pair, sporting green spandex bodysuits complete with green face paint and reflector shades, slivered through an afternoon crowd near the Bell Tower last Tuesday during Fall Fest. Toting green Mini Cooper-length cardboard keys, their mission, other than to catch the attention of passing students and professors, was to promote Philly Car Share.

Mission accomplished. The Philly Car Share men have invaded Philadelphia, scouring the city in an effort to spread the word about the company and its services. Philly Car Share is a car rental company that offers swanky, yet earth-friendly cars such as Audis, BMWs and Mini Coopers at low rates, starting at \$2.90 per hour or \$29 per day. Membership is free and the minimum age to join is 18. Cars are conveniently parked all around the city at "pods" and can be accessed using a universal key, known as a key fob, issued to members upon joining.

"Convenience and cost are what people love about Philly Car Share," said Clayton Lane, deputy executive director. And many people agree- 3,800 new memberships poured in during September alone.

"We have a very diverse group of members whose ages range from 21 to 45 and are located all around the city," Lane said. "People appreciate us because we are so accessible and anyone can join. We don't discriminate against the young people without insurance."

Pre-med freshman Miranda Pellitier said she lives by Philly Car Share. She has been a member for only three weeks and has used the service at least 15 times already.

"I usually take the cheaper [Toyota] Prius model to go grocery shopping or out to eat, but once, I rented the Mazda Miata convertible for a day just to go shopping with my friends," she said.

Philly Car Share has been a hit with college students who appreciate all things cheap and easy. Temple has increasingly become involved with the Philly Car Share movement this year as compared to last. Lane said just 30 Temple students and faculty were members

last year around this time, but now that number has increased significantly - approximately 400 students and 200 faculty members have joined.

Lane said Philly Car Share is hoping that creating a new pod on Broad Street and Cecil B. Moore Avenue will help membership continue to grow.

Janet Carruth, the assistant secretary of Temple's Board of Trustees, has been a member of Philly Car Share for about four months and has been blown away by the outstanding customer service, cost and convenience, preferring the company to any other car rental place.

"It's the bomb," Carruth said. "Philly Car Share has given me the freedom I didn't have before because I don't drive all the time but can if I want to for as long as I need," she added.

Carruth has been with Temple for 27 years, and after getting rid of her car upon moving from Center City to East Falls five years ago, has relied on public transportation to get around. She still enjoys hopping on the train that's just two blocks away, but likes having the option of driving when more extensive errands need to be done.

"They just opened a pod at East Falls and I love it," she said. "I will rent for a couple hours to tailgate at Temple's football games or go grocery shopping and then return it when I'm done close to home."

Philly Car Share is not only beneficial for its customers, but also has an agenda to help the environment. They are hoping that people will rent only when they need to drive and not all the time, ultimately reducing the amount of cars on the roads. Philly Car Share will even reimburse those who take public transportation to any of the pod locations, further helping the environment.

"I like to think I'm doing my part in helping the environment," Carruth said. "I had been thinking about getting another car, but not anymore. I can just get it when I really need it."

Lane said he hopes that Carruth's philosophy becomes contagious.

"We are hoping this attitude transfers throughout the city," he said, "because why own a car that's just sitting around?"

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