



Celebrating Small Biz: PhillyCarShare

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*Today's featured winner of the [25th Annual Excellence Awards: Honoring the Region's Small Businesses](#) is **PhillyCarShare** for 2008 Non-Profit Organization of the Year.*

PhillyCarShare's premise is simple: automobiles, while necessary, are abundantly overused. A vision emerged to reduce automobile dependence citywide by creating a community-based car-sharing experience that would exceed the convenience, flexibility and affordability of car ownership. As a non-profit, PhillyCarShare viewed decreasing auto use as a social benefit rather than a bottom-line endeavor.

Five local Philadelphians, all volunteers, set out to prove this concept in 2002, with nine members, two cars, and a modest \$25,000 investment. A year later, 535 members had given up 270 personal vehicles to share 13 environmentally friendly cars. The organization's goal was to offer low-emission vehicles throughout the city, available by the hour, to members with personal electronic keys and 24-hour access.

By 2004, the City of Philadelphia joined, becoming the first government worldwide to share cars with local residents to reduce its large fleet. It relinquished 330 municipal vehicles, saving taxpayers \$7 million to date. Additionally, over 500 member companies now offer their employees the benefit of driving for work without driving to work, while avoiding the \$11,000 annual cost of owning and operating a company car.

In 2006, Philadelphia became the fastest-growing car-sharing city on the planet and PhillyCarShare focused on becoming more innovative to reach more people and places. The organization became free to join. It also became the first and only service in the nation to offer membership to drivers aged 18-20. It placed shared vehicles on virtually every block of Central Philadelphia and deployed the lowest-emission fleet of any large car-sharing system in North America.

Five years later, PhillyCarShare has signed up an astounding 25,000 Philadelphians; decreased the number of vehicles on the streets by 10,000; reduced members' auto emissions by 90%; created employment for 41 people; and saved Philadelphians \$40 million annually on car ownership – money that can be spent instead in our local economy.

Most recently, PhillyCarShare was among 10 winners of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council's first-ever Philadelphia Sustainability Award, and received additional accolades by 30% of the online voters who selected it for the People's Choice Award. Today, PhillyCarShare continues its mission to make Philadelphia less about cars and more about people.