

# The Faces of Urban Forestry



**Sara Ohly & Alex Bragg**  
Retired, local volunteers

New Haven,  
Connecticut



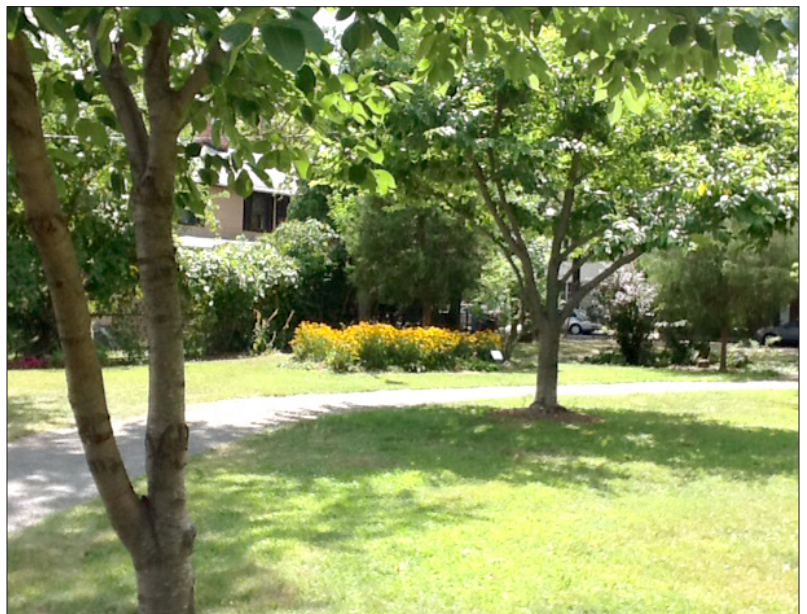
## Restoration Project Renewed Park and Community Engagement

Over the years, once vibrant Lenzi Park declined into a grim, crime-ridden eyesore that was avoided by residents who feared for their safety. That was before retirees and long-time residents Sara Ohly and Alex Bragg decided they wanted to make a difference in their community. Sara got involved as a volunteer with the Urban Resources Initiative and was delighted when a grant was received from the U.S. Forest Service to renovate Lenzi Park.

Sara recruited Alex and together they watched their beloved park transformed. Old concrete and asphalt was torn out and pathways with vegetation were restored. Local folks joined the effort and helped plant trees. “We planted cherry trees, clumps of evergreens, and made a meditation garden,” says Sara. “The last tree planted was a large red oak in honor of the hardware store that donated paint to the park.”

Sara and Alex noticed that residents began using the park again. “This is very gratifying for us because we will have left this legacy behind us,” reflects Alex. He says, “Without this project, we would not have been able to reach people in our community.” Sara adds that the park renewal is resulting in increased involvement and engagement of residents. “It makes for a very different relationship to the park.”

“You have to find something in common with people, like planting trees.”  
– Sara Ohly & Alex Bragg



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A joint project of U.S. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry, the National Association of State Foresters, and the Arbor Day Foundation. For more information visit [arborday.org/faces](http://arborday.org/faces)