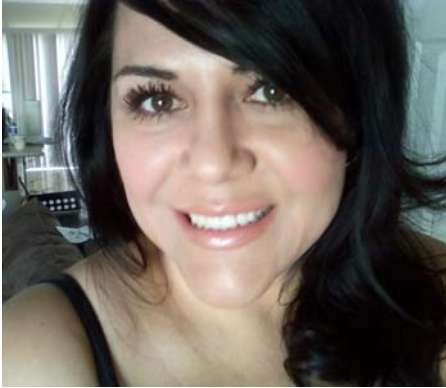




October 28, 2011

*Celebrating 25 Years!*



*Melissa Hurtado*

**When were you in the Corps and for how long?**

I was in the programs between 1993 and 1995 and I was a crew leader from 1995 to 2000. As a corpsmember I was in Project Conserve, the program where you work and go to school on alternating weeks. I mainly worked on trail maintenance, construction and recycling but also had the opportunity to work on a number of really different projects in the community.

**Please tell us about your life now, both professionally and personally.**

Right now I'm an auditor in the juveniles division of the LA County's Probation Department. I don't work with the youth directly; my job is to review reports, compile statistics on the youth and discuss discrepancies or problems with other staff members. I have to know *everything* that's going on with them. I'm still a probation officer but it's different than my last position in the department. I used to work with high-risk offenders when I was working with juvenile hall. I was a detention officer so my job was to maintain order and control. I actually really liked that job because – like Clean & Green – we got to develop a program and use it to teach them. Sometimes we would teach them through movies and sometimes we would use incentives – like if they didn't participate or cooperate then we would take their phone calls away or keep them away from the rest of the population. Back then I was aiming to be the chief probation officer. Now, I want to be in a manager's position with a public department of the County of L.A. or San Bernardino. I want to go back to school but I'm debating what I want to study, I'm considering law school.

**How did the Corps influence who you are and what you are doing currently?**

The Corps is what gave me a passion for working with youth. I actually became a probation officer because I thought that it would allow me to impact young people like I was able to with the Corps. It turns out that it has a very different – but still incredibly important – impact: Clean & Green focuses on prevention and intervention, and probation's focus is rehabilitation. When I first began working with the residential treatment services bureau I saw that my time with Clean & Green made this work *so* easy for me. It's not an easy job – a lot of my coworkers actually struggled. You really have to multitask and getting them to do activities isn't always easy – but because of my experience it was like second nature to me. Later, I found out why: our residential treatment services were actually *modeled after the L.A. Conservation Corps!* That's why when I would go out into the woods and visit fire camps to audit them I would recognize all their activities – trail restoration, etc.

**Is there anything particularly memorable about the Corps that you would like to share?**

During my last few years with Clean & Green I began working as an assistant team leader and was promoted to crew leader. I loved leading my own team! I can't help but feel that I made an even bigger impact in the community as a team leader with Clean & Green. I was able to teach them so many things in the course of my duty – the kinds of things that they don't learn at home. As a team-leader I was able to take on my own projects and decide what things I really wanted them to learn for 6 weeks at a time. For instance, if your field study is about "tolerance" you can take them to the museum of tolerance and have them learn about other cultures. These field studies were great because they allowed me to introduce the kids to a lot of different situations and kinds of work – one time we did murals, for example. I liked taking the kids out of their neighborhoods. Once I took them to Brentwood when they were having a pet parade. They

had never been exposed to anything like that before! The kids saw how much pride those people took in their community. I also got to take them to a ropes course – which was another great experience for them. You really get to use your creativity in coming up with stuff to show them. I think it was just the best job ever!

### Nonprofit Day LA

On Tuesday, October 25th, the LA Conservation Corps joined dozens of nonprofit organizations for a breakfast reception at City Hall. Six organizations that were invited to speak during the City Council Session in honor of the first Nonprofit Day in LA and the LA Corps was represented by corpsmember Elizabeth Valerio, who attends East LA College and works in the administrative offices at NELA. She told the Councilmembers that she graduated from the Corps with her high school diploma after dropping out of Roosevelt HS (which got the Mayor's attention) and described some of her favorite projects while working on a crew. She did an outstanding job – thanks, Elizabeth!



*Corpsmember Elizabeth Valerio with Deputy Mayor Aileen Adams; Elizabeth preparing to speak during Council session*

### Gardens

On Saturday, October 22nd, Young Adult Corpsmembers from East LA supported the LA Community Garden Council's Fifth Annual Gathering at Loma Alta Park in Altadena. The event included workshops, speakers, demonstrations and fundraising activities. Corpsmembers Eduardo Hernandez, Roberto Velasco, Isidro Ortiz and Thomas Walker (pictured with Bruce Saito), helped run the logistics including set-up and break-down, collecting recyclables and directing people to workshop locations. Great work, guys!



*Fifth Annual Gathering of the LA Community Garden Council; Farmsworks LA Workshop on Urban Farming*

On Saturday, October 29th, Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and the LA Community Garden Council will host an opening ceremony at the Florence-Firestone Community Garden, located at 98th Street and Pace Avenue. Activities will include composting lessons, pumpkin carving and sharing light refreshments with neighbors. The ceremony will take place from 12 – 2pm with Bruce Saito speaking on behalf of the LA Corps. Everyone is welcome!

### Young Adult Corps

This past week 22 corpsmembers from Headquarters High School had the exciting opportunity to travel to New York City. While in New York corpsmembers examined how New Yorkers were managing climate change and decreasing their carbon footprint in urban areas through greener commuting choices such as, using the subways, bike paths and walkways. Corpsmembers met with the Green City Force, an organization that prepares young people from low income

backgrounds for sustainable careers. Both groups deliberated over the importance of acquiring practical skills in the emerging green marketplace and discussed their experiences while working in their organization.



*Corpsmembers at Green City Force Urban Farm*

Also, while in New York, students visited popular tourists attractions such as Times Square, the Brooklyn Bridge, Wall Street, the 9/11 Memorial, the Apollo Theater, the Museum of Modern Art and Central Park. Corpsmembers also toured the United Nations and learned how the UN is actively engaged in global issues, such as human rights, peace and security, environmental concerns and social development. Additionally, corpsmembers had the opportunity to visit to the Institute for Juvenile Justice Reform (IJJRA) in Brooklyn.

For many students, this was the first time they got a chance to leave the State of California and actively explore the east coast. Overall, the trip was an unforgettable experience and all the students rose to the occasion maturely and working together. Thanks again to everyone who made this trip possible!



*Corpsmembers touring New York City*

During the past few weeks, the Wildland Recovery Team (WRT) has been working on a brand new trail in Bundy Canyon located in the eastern Santa Monica Mountains. The trail is approximately 5 miles long starting from the top of the Kenter Ridge winding down into the creek over a 1000ft below. The crew will be learning how to construct a 60ft bridge to cross over the creek and gain access to the adjacent Bundy Ridge. WRT along with MRCA staff are working with chainsaws and hand tools to create a base line for the trail. After completing phase one, they will be detailing out the rough cut of the trail designing the slope and contour to prepare the trail for proper drainage and safety so the community will be able to use the trail to hike. Currently the Wildland Recovery Team is only 200ft from completing the preliminary trail and will soon return to make it completely ready for community use.



*Wildland Recovery Team working on a new trail in Bundy Canyon*

This week the PECI Crew found out that they were the top performers for this month out of all the PECI EnergySmart Jobs Programs across the state. The crew performed 52 direct installs and completed 77 surveys out of the 274 stores that they visited this month. The crew was excited to see their hard work pay off!



*Surveyor Ashton Castillo measuring a reach-in refrigeration unit at a local store*

### **Clean & Green**

Councilman Tom LaBonge and Council President Eric Garcetti are co-hosting an LA RiverDay and Cleanup on Oct. 29th from 8 a.m. to noon. Clean & Green along with PAVA, a Korean American organization and 600 young adult volunteers will be cleaning the river from the Hyperion Bridge to Los Feliz Boulevard and everyone is welcome to join! Both Council President Garcetti and Councilman LaBonge will be speaking at 9 a.m. in the grassy area next to the river. Everyone is asked to park in Griffith Park's Friendship Auditorium parking lot, 3201 Riverside Drive and walk along the river to Los Feliz Boulevard to the resource fair.

On Monday, October 24th we presented a report on Paddle the LA River to the Ad Hoc River Committee at City Hall. Councilman Ed P. Reyes presented all partners and LA Corps staff with a Certificate of Recognition.



Clean & Green will be at the following events on Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup> through Monday, October 31<sup>st</sup>:

- Councilmember Herb Wesson's Community Clean Up located at Hauser and Adams Blvd.
- Green Festival Los Angeles at the LA Convention Center (10/29 and 30)
- Councilman Tony Cardenas' "Community Health & Safety Fair"
- Councilmember Tom LaBonge Community Clean up located at Vineland Ave.
- Council District 15 Harbor Gateway Clean Up located at 208th Street and Denker Ave.
- Clifford Elementary School Beautification Project
- Halloween Carnival at Milagro Elementary School (10/31)
- Halloween Festival at Ramona Hall in Highland Park (10/31)
- Halloween Festival at Van Ness Recreation Center (10/31)

### Recycling Across Los Angeles

RACLA will be busy this weekend recycling away at various locations:

- On Friday the 28th one crew will be collecting cans and bottles from STAPLES Center event How Sweet the Sound Finals.
- On Saturday the 29th, East LA staff will be assisting in recycling at the UCLA v. California game at Pasadena's Rose Bowl.
- Also on Saturday, RACLA staff will be collecting recyclables at LA Memorial Coliseum for USC v. Stanford game.
- On Sunday the 30th, a crew will be collecting all CRV material from inside Rose Bowl.

Happy Halloween, Everyone!

