



November 18, 2011

Celebrating 25 Years!



Stefanie Miller

When were you in the Corps and for how long?

I was a corpsmember about from 1999 – 2000, but I stayed on as a staff member at SEA Lab for 7 years. So I actually left the Corps in 2007. One of the best parts of being a corpsmember was that it gave me the opportunity to start my career. The AmeriCorps program itself was fantastic. I used the money for my schooling and actually got to go to Australia with my scholarship. I went from being a corpsmember to a staff member and continued down the path of environmental education because of that experience. That opportunity really shaped where I was going.

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

I live in Ogden, Utah. When I left the Corps in 2007 it was to move to Wisconsin and go back to school to get a Masters in Natural Resources and Environmental Education. I now work fulltime for a non-profit in Ogden, Utah called the Ogden Education Center and run their Education program. So I run my own program and have my dream job! The Corps led to that because they gave me the opportunity to advance my career and that's what led me down that path. I live in a nice area about 4-blocks from a trail system that I take my dog on everyday.

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

I'm pretty sure that if I hadn't started working at the SEA Lab I wouldn't have gone back to get my Masters degree and wouldn't have any interest in the Environmental Field. And I'd probably be teaching in the classroom, rather than at an Education Center. It really gave me a love for what I do! And the work at the Corps – both as a corpsmember and after they hired me on – gave me actual work experience. Because of that I was able to get into graduate school – it's why I was able to get where I am now. Wherever I interview people seem to be impressed that I worked for the L.A. Corps. And what I did then was a building block for what I do now – it just gave me a lot of experience.

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

I miss it! I miss the people! I had a fantastic boss and fantastic coworkers. And to this day I still talk to my old boss and some of my coworkers. I think the people really made it special. I even keep in touch with the interns that worked for me – they still let me know how their schooling is going.

2012 Russell Kantor Scholarship Announcement

The Russell Kantor Scholarship Fund was created in 1988 to honor the memory of Russell Kantor, the son of Los Angeles Conservation Corps' Founder, Mickey Kantor. The Kantor family wants to encourage and support the Corps' young people in their post-high school education and training so that they might find greater opportunities and realize the goals they developed in the Corps. The scholarship is open to participants who have been enrolled in Clean & Green,

Young Adult Corps, and Los Angeles Educations Corps for a minimum of two months within the past eight years. The deadline for this year's application is **Friday, December 16, 2011**. For more information regarding eligibility or to request an application, please contact Esteffi Marquez, Scholarship Supervisor via email at emarquez@lacorps.org.

Young Adult Corps

On Tuesday, November 15th, the LA Corps participated in NBCUniversal's Green Week activities for a 4th consecutive year. YAC from East LA, under the supervision of Jeff Davis, helped employees make seed blocks, which will go to the school gardens the LA Corps is building at Cochran Middle School and Helen Bernstein High School. One brave volunteer helped make the soil blocks and the others planted pea, cucumber, radish and carrot seeds on over 500 blocks! Even Beetlejuice stopped by to help green our schools! For more photos of the project, click [here](#).



Corpsmembers Jeffrey Scott, Ibrahim Francis, Johnny Mendez, Joseph Herrera, and Cristal Gonzales at NBCU



For the past two weeks, the YAC Community Enhancement Team has been busy working at Tejon Ranch located in the in Lebec, California. The mission was to remove an invasive plant called Salt Cedar which is known for taking up a lot of water and releasing salt into the soil, making it difficult for native plants to grow. Corpsmembers Xzavier Foster, Eddie Aragon, Traveon Jackson, Geraldine Renteria, Tyray Bryant, Rene Ochoa, Maurice Thomas, and supervisor Ignacio Garcia covered approximately 8-10 miles.



Corpsmembers work at Tejon Ranch

On Tuesday, November 15th, Crew 3 was tasked with rehabilitating a burn area at Mandeville Canyon where there had been a small fire back in September. While responding to this incident, several Los Angeles City Fire Department

vehicles were damaged because the road had not been maintained since the last fire blew through. As a joint effort with Los Angeles City Fire Department, the Lost Hills Fire Crew rehabilitated the Mandeville Canyon Fire Road, in order to prevent damage to vehicles in the event of another fire or other emergency. The Crew cleared brush from a 12ft wide, 3,000ft long fire road in just one day. Los Angeles City Fire Department was very pleased with their work. Great job Crew!



Lost Hills Fire Crew at Mandeville Canyon

PSI College Cohort

From November 1st to November 6th the PSI College Cohort participated in a Convening and Learning Exchange sponsored by the National Youth Employment Coalition and Jobs ForThe Future in Washington D.C. The Convening brought together organizations from across the country that are developing Post-Secondary Education models at various Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Institutions. Staff attended multiple workshops where they were able to share best-practices on mentoring programs, academic preparedness, and high school-to-college bridge programs. Two PSI students, Byron Villagran and Rosa Menodza, both of LA Trade Tech College, were able to join staff and sit on various discussion panels. The students spoke to large groups of industry professionals about the challenges of pursuing a post-secondary education, their own goals and aspirations, and the work they have been able to do with the LA Conservation Corps' PSI program to help them matriculate through college.



Byron Villagran and Rosa Menodza

On Wednesday, Byron was selected to participate in a separate panel on Capitol Hill titled "Dropout Recovery is National Recovery," hosted by Jobs ForThe Future. The focus of the panel was highlighting partnerships between community based organizations with local community colleges. In attendance was the Honorable Kay Hagan, U.S. Senator for North Carolina, YouthBuild USA President and Founder Dorthy Stoneman, and National Youth Employment Coalition Executive Director Mala Thakur. The event also attracted key national figures such as Roberto Rodriguez, the Special Assistant to the President on Education for the White House Domestic Policy Council, and Gerri Fiala, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Employment and Training Administration for the U.S. Department of Labor.



Byron and Rosa also had the opportunity to sit down with a staff member for Senator Barbara Boxer, as well as Congressional Representative Xavier Becerra of California's 24th district. The two students had a conversation about their experiences in college, and the importance of maintaining federal and state support for students across the state and country who rely on financial aid to help them reach their academic goals.

While in the nation's capitol, students and staff were able to take in the sights, visiting the White House, taking a tour of the Capitol building, and seeing the Library of Congress. The group visited exhibits at the National Archives, the Natural History Museum, and the Holocaust Memorial Museum. The group also viewed a number of monuments, including the Lincoln Monument, the World War II and Korean War monuments, and the new Martin Luther King, Jr. monument. Most importantly, students and staff had an opportunity to get an intimate campus tour of Georgetown University.



The opportunity to travel outside of Los Angeles and interact with peers in a professional setting was one that the students truly seemed to cherish. Everyone involved was able to make beneficial contacts and refocus their efforts toward improving access to and persistence in post-secondary education by at-risk and low income young adults.

Recycling Across Los Angeles

This weekend RACLA crews will be busy recycling at UCLA v. Colorado football game on Saturday the 19th at the Rose Bowl. This will be the last UCLA football game this season so come on down and cheer on our corpsmembers and UCLA! Also, on Saturday one crew will be recycling at STAPLES Center after the LA Kings v. Detroit Red Wings event.

Congratulations Wing!



Our payroll accountant, Wing Ho, is getting married in Hawaii this week! Best wishes from your LA Corps family!

The Friday Night Update will be on hiatus next week for the holiday weekend.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving!