



November 4, 2011

Celebrating 25 Years!



Stacey Lomax

When were you in the Corps and for how long?

A long time ago! 1994 or 1995. I signed up for the Corps after being released from Youth Authority and was a corpsmember in the Young Adult Corps. As a corpsmember I was doing environmental work, recycling, painting over graffiti, and going to the colleges and picking up bottles and cans. After awhile they started some programs where they wanted corpsmembers to work with and mentor younger kids and asked me to become a youth counselor in one of these programs, Clean & Green. Each of the youth counselors was assigned a group of kids and the program was designed to take them out to nature and get them to see something other than their neighborhoods. We went out on retreats up to Big Bear, did reservoir clean up after the Northridge earthquake caused the Laguna reservoir to flood, painted out graffiti in the community, and did art projects.

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

I work for a *great* company, H&R Block, and manage one of their offices. I've been working for them for over 2 years and before that I was in college. I'm one of the top office managers in my region and win a lot of awards. I manage an "A" office which means we do over 1,000 returns – it's one of the top offices in our district and one of the largest too. I'm still learning. Everyday I'm learning – it's one thing I learned from the Corps: life isn't planned for you. I'm actually still going to school for legal studies because I want to go into law. I've taken all that I've learned and utilized it in every job that I've had.

I have three kids and try to give them the values that I got from the Conservation Corps. When I was in the Corps I was a teenage mother. Now my daughter's grown up and has her own kid. My younger daughter's an honor roll kid and my son's just full of life.

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

When I joined the Corps I was fresh out of Youth Authority. I did 5 years in Youth Authority and when I got out a parole officer I admired knew someone that had gone to the Corps and said it was a great program and suggested I try it. He took me down there and I started it and liked it. To be honest it helped me a lot. When I got out of Youth Authority I didn't have much discipline but every morning we had to run all these miles, be there on time and be dedicated. If I hadn't got into the Corps and hadn't met all these great role models and mentors, I probably would have ended up in prison or dead. At the time I needed a strong minority role model and was able to use the mentoring and teachings that Bruce gave me to put myself through college. The Corps just showed me something different and something better. For me it made a major change in my life – things just got better. I just kept trying new things and doing new things. It was an experience that opened my mind and showed me to move forward.

It was just a life changing experience for me and has helped me accomplish a lot of my goals – I have beautiful kids that are good students, have stayed out of trouble, have a good job and have learned so much. I'm just happy with who I am and where I'm at.

I also took a love of service from the Corps. In our off-season I get to do a lot of recruiting and work with the community – we recruit single-mothers, neighborhood youth, members of the Native American tribes to lower unemployment in really affected populations – and I get to talk to them about what they've been through and how they can change their lives if they want. The Corps helped me learn to value helping people and taught me to make it a part of everything I do.

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

Clean & Green does so much for the kids! Its emphasis is training youth and conserving the environment but it's really more like therapy. It teaches you about conservation but it also teaches you that you need to take care of yourself just like you need to take care of your surroundings.

I liked the Corps because I grew up around gangs and drugs and it was a way of getting away from that and seeing a better environment. It inspired me and gave me direction – something that was really important for young people growing up in South L.A. at that time. It got me to go back to school and made me aware of the environment and how important it is to take care of it. I also got to meet some people that have been great mentors, so I think it was a great program.

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 hopes 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.

Scaling-Up Service Corps

On October 27th and 28th, the LA Conservation Corps hosted the Corps Network and the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) for a Service Corps Site Visit. The visit focused on how to strengthen and expand service corps through directly connecting corpsmembers to the corporate community and creating an effective employment pipeline. Panel discussions included members from the LA Corps, Corps Network, CGI, Community Action Partnership, LLC, National Association of Workforce Boards, and Monster.com. The panels discussed how to develop a new service-to-work program involving a model where corpsmembers have direct access to higher education and employment after completing their time with a service corps. Afterwards, the group toured LA Conservation Corps sites to see our different programs and how we engage our corpsmembers.



Bruce Saito introducing the LA Conservation Corps



Panel speakers included Board Chair Jack Sahl, College Readiness coordinator Brian Kellarway & former corpsmember Andrew Campero

Community Gardens

On Saturday, October 29th, Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and the LA Community Garden Council hosted the opening ceremony at the Florence-Firestone Community Garden, located at 98th Street and Pace Avenue. Activities included composting lessons and pumpkin carving activities. If you are interested in having a 10 x 10 plot at the Florence-Firestone Community Garden, the next meeting will be held on November 30th at the Florence-Firestone Community Service Center (located at 7807 S. Compton Ave, Los Angeles 90001) from 6 – 8 pm.



Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas with community partners and corpsmembers at the Florence-Firestone opening ceremony

In honor of WB IMPACT Day, on Saturday, October 29th, 50 volunteers from Warner Bros., UCLA and the Art Colony in Burbank joined students from the Burbank Community Day School and our YAC crew to install irrigation, prepare garden beds, plant 15 trees and design an outdoor classroom space at the school's community garden. The event kicked off with breakfast and opening remarks from Katie Weiss of Warner Bros., Bruce Saito from the LA Corps and Principal Chris Krohn. Jim Smith from LA County Parks & Rec was involved in the original design of the garden and came out to lend his support to the project. For more photos of the project, click [here](#) for a slideshow.



WB IMPACT Day at Burbank Community Day School

After School Program

On October 26th, 2011, the LA Conservation Corps After School Program celebrated its annual *Lights On Event*, a nationwide event to call attention to the importance of afterschool programs for children, at Hollenbeck Middle School. There were a variety of activities offered such as computers, robotics, piñata-making, and some exciting entertainment. Each activity offered is an example of what takes place during the After School Program. The event was a great success and a fun time was had by all. The LA Corps would like to thank its partners and school administration for helping make this a great event: Ms. Rico, City Year, Youth Services Plus, teachers, and all After School staff



After School Program at Hollenbeck Middle School

Clean & Green

Clean & Green officially ended its summer program and this week began training the new fall session of Clean & Green members.



Irene Lopez addressing new Clean & Green members

Clean & Green crews have been hard at work lately responding to projects from various Council District offices!



Before and After

Recycling Across Los Angeles

This weekend RACLA with 30 corpsmembers will be recycling at Pasadena's Rose Bowl during the UCLA v. Arizona football game. Also one crew will be collecting recyclables from STAPLES Center after the LA Kings vs Pittsburgh Penguins hockey game on Saturday.