



February 25, 2011



Bruce Saito met President Obama at the “America’s Great Outdoors” Press Conference at the White House on Wednesday, February 16, 2011. To learn more about the America’s Great Outdoors initiative view the [website](#). Also, read about it [here](#) or view the [White House press conference video](#).

Celebrating 25 Years!!



Aileen Adams, Deputy Mayor, Office of Strategic Partnerships

1. Please tell us a little bit about your work and partnerships with the L.A. Conservation Corps. When did they begin and what were they like?

I have had the pleasure of knowing and working with Bruce for over 20 years in many different capacities -- now as a Deputy Mayor and formerly as a State Cabinet Secretary and L.A. Conservation Corps board member. As a Cabinet Secretary during the energy crisis, I was asked by Governor Davis to lead the State’s energy conservation efforts. Working with the Legislature, we called upon the Corps to play a crucial role in addressing that crisis. LA Corps members went door-to-door in low-income neighborhoods and assisted residents in implementing significant energy saving techniques. Their effective work was instrumental in helping our State reduce energy consumption by 14% during peak hours.

Bruce and the Corps are helping to make Los Angeles a model for a green economy by training hundreds of young adults to meet new labor demands in this arena. Today, Los Angeles is one of the “greenest cities in the country”, with its 20% reduction in carbon emissions below 1990 levels, the strongest energy efficient building ordinance of any major City, and its 20% renewable portfolio. Corps programs are at

the forefront of “greening” our city, for example, by adding to trails in some of the 35 new parks that have been created.

Years ago, as a board member, I had many opportunities to observe Bruce’s extraordinary leadership up close as he managed a complicated organization and developed effective new programs and fundraising strategies. I watched the organization partner with an outstanding, accredited charter school that has helped countless Corps youth attain their high school diplomas. I even taught a couple of classes there.

Every year I’ve attended the annual graduation ceremonies where over 700 Corps members have received financial assistance to go to college because of Bruce’s commitment to them and the Russell Kantor Scholarship Fund. When you look at the range of the Corps’ accomplishments – planting over 100,000 trees, removing 13 million square feet of graffiti, building 25 playgrounds for children, teaching 20,000 school children about recycling, and recycling more than 10,000 tons of bottles and cans – it’s hard to think of a leader and an organization that has been more effective than Bruce and the Corps. To me and many others, Bruce is a city treasure and a personal hero because of his unending commitment to providing so many thousands of disadvantaged youth with the opportunity to be the best that they can be.

2. What was the Corps like when you first became its partner?

The Corps has always been a very high-quality organization, but twenty years ago it didn’t have the visibility in our community or the broad range of programs it has today. For example, it didn’t have the capacity to help participants graduate from high school and attend college. It has been remarkable to witness its growth and see the thousands of youth whose lives it touches, and the many services they in turn are able to provide throughout our great City.

3. Why did you decide to become a member of the L.A. Corps’ board?

Because I really care about providing opportunities – a broad range of educational and job opportunities – to youth that would not have access to them otherwise. That is the very least obligation of a society with as many resources as ours. It is our fundamental responsibility. The Corps provides those opportunities better than any organization I know. It helps participants turn their lives around and move forward in a very positive way. It’s extremely rewarding to see how many Corps members meet the challenge and overcome unimaginable obstacles. They are a true inspiration.

4. Are there any memories of Bruce or the Corps that you would like to share?

All that I can say is every time I see Bruce he brings *such* a smile to my face and a tear to my eye! I’m so proud of him and all of the work of the Corps. Bruce has persevered as a leader and persevered in his commitment to disadvantaged youth in a way that sets a high standard for all of us. My heroes in life are people like Bruce who give their all – everything they have – to a great cause and people like so many Corps members who overcome the impossible and contribute so much back. Their strength and courage, their dedication and perseverance, humble and teach us all.

Young Adult Corps

On Monday February 14, 2011 the River Keepers, River Ambassadors, seven Clean & Green supervisors and a Clean & Green crew worked with several Dodger players and council district staff who organized and participated in the *Dodgers Appreciation Day LA River Clean Up*. The crews and fans had the opportunity to work along side both current and former Dodger players including: Tommy Davis, Bobby Castillo, James Loney, Kenny Landreaux, Andre Eithier, Don Mattingly, and the great Tommy Lasorda. Crews and volunteers removed trash from the LA River bed along Taylor Yard. Items removed including bulky items such as tires, shopping carts; metals, car part etc. Nearly 150 volunteers removed approximately 3,500 lbs of trash!



Dodgers Appreciation Day LA River Clean Up

Crews were able to begin work at the El Cariso smart garden after a month long hiatus. We are currently installing a “Smart” irrigation system complete with solar controller, rain sensor, low flow broadcast and drip irrigation. Corpsmembers are doing a really great job handling this very technical project. From one water source, the crews are connecting 6 different irrigation valves that will disperse the water from large trees all the way down to a drip irrigation blanket for a garden planter.



Corpsmembers installing the irrigation system at the El Cariso smart garden

As many of us are all too familiar with, LA has way too much asphalt! The students of Wisdom Elementary school needed a playground so under the direction of Steve Cancion; the Corps removed 70 yards of asphalt from an unused street median next to the elementary school. Crews then installed a DG walking path and 2 sitting areas.



Corpsmembers cleared asphalt to make way for a walking path

Clean & Green

Six Clean & Green crews worked on an urgent request that came from councilmember Dennis P. Zine’s office. The crews worked at Mulholland Drive between Flamingo and Valmar Street to clear a half mile long corridor that was filled with tall weeds. The kids did an outstanding job!



Before



After

Highlights:

- This past week, Clean & Green crews were called to assist with maintenance and preparation at the Los Angeles Fire Department for a reception honoring a fallen fire fighter who lost his life while fighting a fire.
- On Thursday, Clean & Green members took part in the Mock Interviews. This is always an exciting time for the students. They have the opportunity to show off their interviewing skills and prepare for real life interviews.
- On Friday, Clean & Green assisted with the set up and preparation for Saturday's "16th Annual LA Dodger Job Fair". Clean & Green also provided assistance during the Job Fair.