



March 4, 2011

Celebrating 25 Years!!



Jesus Pineda, L.A.P.D.

1. When were you in the Corps and for how long?

I was in the Corps for five years from '97 to '02. I participated in the Clean & Green program. This program is what made me the man I am today. In being given responsibility for beautifying my own city and earning my own money, I was able to become more responsible and recognize the value of serving my community.

I also participated in a few programs under the Clean & Green umbrella. One of them was called HEART; it was an afterschool arts & cultural program that was held every Tuesday. In the program, we did a number of arts and cultural projects like murals, family histories and we also gave presentations on these activities every 10 weeks.

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

I'm currently a law enforcement officer with L.A.P.D. I took this job because it allows me to continue to serve my community by providing it with safety. I am basically just applying the concept of community service that I first encountered with Clean & Green to a different situation. This same desire to serve my community was also the reason I chose to major in political science in college. With the L.A.P.D. I'm a patrolman. I really enjoy it because it allows me to walk into negative situations and advise youth that are growing up in my old neighborhood and around that same things that I did. I run into a lot of young men and women that are convinced they're going to fail because of their surroundings. Because of my experiences, though, I can tell them that there are programs out there – like the Corps – that help you cope with some of those negative things and make sure that you aren't influenced by gangs. I tell them that when I was thirteen, Clean & Green had me up at 7am on Saturdays working and that I hated it at the time but it built character and kept me away from some of the negativity in my neighborhood. I like letting them know that they can overcome their surroundings if they find something that helps them grow as a young man or young woman.

When I'm not at work I'm busy raising my ten year old daughter. I want to help her grow to be responsible from an early age. Fortunately she has two college graduate parents and doesn't have to grow up in the kind of environment that I did where there wasn't always food in the fridge.

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

The biggest way that the Corps influenced me was getting me to care about my community. This dedication to service and community led me studying politics in college and also was responsible for my becoming an officer with the L.A.P.D. Everything that I've done since Clean & Green has been related to either working with the community or trying to change it for the better.

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

I really remember being one of the featured speakers at the Russell Kantor Scholarship Luncheon. Being able to speak in front of the mayor, the entire board, and Bruce Karatz, the CEO of KB Homes, was an incredible experience. I was also really impressed by how many people the Corps gives scholarships to.

Also, a lot of my family members were in Clean & Green and me, and we all had the same supervisor: Steve Cardoso. He was a great influence on us – we really wouldn't have learned as much if it weren't for him. Working with him was almost like having another dad at work because he was always giving us advice and teaching us lessons. A lot of the advice that he gave me has stuck with me to this day. For instance, he made sure that I knew how important it is to do something right the first time, and that if you do something poorly you'll just be called back and have to do it again. This is one of my values now and it's how I approach everything that I do. My advice to current corpsmembers is to just keep focused. It's not always easy but it's worth it.

Young Adult Corps

The California Association of Local Conservation Corps (CALCC) hosted an Education Day at the State's Capitol on Tuesday, March 1, 2011. Bruce Saito and Karla Ramos along with 5 corpsmembers joined other local Corps to visit legislative offices, inform them of our organization, and seek their support. The Corps met with staff at the offices of Assemblymembers Bob Blumenfield, Betsy Butler, Mike Gatto, State Senator Fran Pavley and Speaker John Perez. Corpsmembers actually had the opportunity to meet with Assemblymember Blumenfield and Assemblymember Gatto.



Bruce Saito, Jeffrey Hernandez, Victor Hernandez, Kimberly Ramirez, Assemblymember Mike Gatto, Imani Middleton, Alicia Johnson, Karla Ramos



Imani Middleton, Kim Ramirez, Assemblymember Bob Blumenfield, Victor Hernandez, Alicia Johnson, Bruce, Jeffrey Hernandez, Karla Ramos

The corpsmember of the year presentation for the LA Corps was made by Assemblymember Gatto to Kimberly Ramirez. During Kimberly's almost two years of service with the Corps, she completed High School, participated in Solar Energy training and installation, Environmental Habitat Restoration and Tree Planting. In her current role as Program Assistant to the Wildlands Recovery Team, she is further developing her professional office and leadership skills. The award being presented by Assemblymember Gatto was especially meaningful because the Corps has worked on many projects in his district including: the Silverlake Trail, Griffith Park, the LA River, community gardens, and tree plantings. Corpsmembers and corps staff also participated in a budget debate and education session.



Kimberly Ramirez recognized and awarded Corpsmember of the Year for LA Corps by Assemblymember Mike Gatto.

Thanks to the help of Linda Chilton, and the people at the USC Wrigley Institute in Catalina, 11 Corpsmembers and Program Manager, Nick Riehl, were able to go to Catalina Island to receive on the job training. The day started at 6:30 am at the East LA site, followed by a 27 mile journey from San Pedro to Two Harbors. Upon arrival, the corpsmembers promptly began setting up 100 feet of deer fence which was necessary because the deer on the island tend to destroy the natural plants and vegetation. After restoring the fence and completing some other planting projects; the corpsmembers had some time to hike around the island and go for a quick, chilly swim! Overall it was an awesome day and the corpsmembers had a great time!



Corpsmembers on Catalina Island

Under the direction of resident entomologist, Lila Higgins, the Corps was asked to install a 60' long interpretive decomposed granite nature walk through the butterfly and hummingbird garden at the Natural History Museum on Exposition. This was an excellent opportunity to develop a relationship with the museum while giving corpsmembers a meaningful project. Though it is a short path, it meanders between a community garden and native plants giving the feeling of nature in an urban environment. According to the corpsmembers involved with this project, it was nothing like what they imagined when they started. The corpsmembers created something beyond their original expectations!



Corpsmembers installing a nature walk at the Natural History Museum

Corpsmember Development

The most recent Transition Program concluded on February 17th with a recognition breakfast honoring the service the corpsmembers have given to the City of Los Angeles and the Corps. All four members of the program have been successfully placed into either post secondary education or employment.

Andrea Franklin, former SEA Lab corpsmember, is now working as an Education Presenter at the Aquarium of the Pacific. Medran Robinson and Jasan Givens, both South LA Corpsmembers, enrolled at LA Trade Tech College and are taking classes this spring semester. Phillip Wade, also a former South LA corpsmember, was recently offered a contract staff position with the Corps to work on the LA Dodger Recycling Crew for the baseball season. He is also looking forward to being a student at LA Trade Tech in the fall of 2011.



Left to Right: Jasan Givens, Phillip Wade, Medran Robinson, and Andrea Franklin

On Friday, February 25th, 36 Corpsmembers participated in the 2nd annual Cash 4 College workshop. Corpsmembers were able to get assistance completing their 2011/2012 online FAFSA forms. All participants were also eligible to enter into a raffle for \$1000 in financial aid by completing an online survey. Students who completed their FAFSA will be able to access any financial aid awarded through the summer 2012 college semester.

Twenty students participated in work readiness training the week of February 21st. Corpsmembers learned about good customer service skills, how to create resumes, and practiced their interview skills. At the end of the week corpsmembers participated in a mock interview where they dressed up in business professional clothing, presented resumes and applications, and walked through the typical steps of an interview process. Many corpsmembers were able to make vast improvements in their public speaking abilities during the week, and were able to talk confidently about themselves and their experiences inside and outside of the Corps.

Clean & Green

Clean & Green alum and Russell Kantor applicant Vong Khanha received her letter of acceptance to Mount St. Mary's College. She will be graduating from Marshall High School in June 2011. Vong worked for Clean & Green in October 2010. She plans to pursue a career in Business.



Vong Khanha, former Clean & Green member

This week the Clean & Green crews were busy attending to various council district requests throughout the city of Los Angeles. Some of the worksites included, Valley Circle from the 101 freeway to Victory Blvd in Council District 3, Alley south of Victory Blvd and Ben Ave in Council District 2, on Saticoy Street between Lankershim Blvd and Tujunga Ave in Council District 6, on La Tijera Blvd from Airline Ave ending at 74th street. We also received a special request from Councilmember Tom LaBonge to assist with a clean up of a senior home.