



April 8, 2011

*Celebrating 25 Years!!*



*Johnny Barbosa, Project Manager, Krieger Specialty Products*

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

I was with the corps for about 18 months in 1995 and 1996. I was involved in a variety of programs during my employment with the Corps. I was given the privilege to be on a Tree Crew, Trail Crew, Fire Crew and received my diploma through the Young Adult Corps program. They helped me to recognize the value of being on time and having a strong work ethic. They were *very* strict on tardiness and absenteeism, which I had an issue with at the time. Being on different crews and having the opportunity to learn to use all of the different tools was also very beneficial to me. I was given the opportunity to use my talents and ability to succeed. The staff – the teachers especially – believed in giving us opportunities to grow and take on responsibility. For instance, they allowed me to work as a tutor in the program with other corpsmembers. They worked hard to open doors for us and present us with opportunities to improve ourselves.

I owe thanks to the Corps for giving me a number of other opportunities. I was given a scholarship to go to the National Outdoor Leadership School to go backpacking in New Mexico for a month (we were actually the first group of corpsmembers to ever receive that scholarship). That was the experience of a lifetime and I talk about it to this day. And because I'm a Scoutmaster for my sons Boy Scout Troop, I pass on the outdoor skills that I gained to teach my boys how to camp.

I applied and received an internship with Veterans in Community Service through the Corps as an installer. I was eventually promoted to Project Manager, Purchasing Manager and finally Warehouse Manager and learned to use computers efficiently, write proficiently and communicate effectively. I worked for VICS for 8 years and left as the youngest Senior Staff Member that they had ever had.

I am proud to say that I gained the skills, which attributed to my success, during my employment with the Corps: to be punctual, work hard, apply myself, to be efficient, effective, taking the initiative/lead, learning to be responsible and being an example to those around me.

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

After my time with the Corps, I got a scholarship to go to school and went to community college for a few years to become a draftsman. Now I'm a Draftsman/Project Manager at a company that designs and fabricates special order doors for sound-studios, hospitals, the Pentagon, the Department of Defense, FBI offices, US Embassy's all over the world and a number of other institutions. I was actually one of the first employees hired for the position without a college degree. Considering my early troubles in life, where I came from and where I was headed, it's been quiet a ride!

In my personal life, I've been married for twelve years and have four children. I'm just a family man now. I enjoy spending time with my wife and children. We are also involved in a variety of church ministries. My hobbies are spear fishing, camping and going to the beach. I'm a scoutmaster and really enjoy getting to expose some of the children from less fortunate backgrounds to the outdoors. I really enjoy taking the boys camping and doing for them what so many people did for me. They sacrificed much. It's my time to give back now.

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

When I was a teenager, I was selling and doing drugs, went to jail a number of times and wasn't doing anything productive with my life. It was difficult to get a job because of my criminal record and my background. Around that time, my childhood friend joined the Corps and had a lot of success turning things around for himself, so I decided to interview. They hired me on the spot. That day really changed my idea of who I was as a person. I mean, someone was actually going to give me a chance, when everyone else had given up on me. The Director, Art, did not turn his back on me. He embraced me and believed in me, when so many turned me down. That was a big step toward my success and a new beginning in my life.

The Corps has had a tremendous impact and influence on me. The Corps and its staff played a crucial role in changing my mindset. It's definitely one of those experiences I'll never forget! It was a huge part of my change from being a troubled young person to becoming the man that I am now – a family man who goes to church and works hard.

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

The National Outdoor Leadership School was an amazing experience! They basically taught us how to survive in the wilderness. It was one of the highlights of my life that I probably will not experience again.

Having the opportunity to come back to the Corps to speak and encourage the youth is a gratifying experience. I enjoy speaking to the next group of corpsmembers and encouraging them that there is more to life than what they see around them.

## **Young Adult Corps**

On Saturday April 2, 2011 the following corpsmembers attended the Environmental Youth Leadership Training: Steve Bernal, Raquel Brown, Adham Green, Marcus Haynes, Peter Lopez, Ismael Orozco, Guadalupe Rosales, Christian Gonzalez, Margarito Miranda, and Ricardo Medina. The Environmental Youth Leadership Training was held at City Hall and covered topics including how to start a tree planting or environmental project, conduct community outreach, put together a work plan for a green project, marketing/event planning, and leveraging resources to implement the program. This training was offered by our partner, Million Trees LA.



*Corpsmembers at the Environmental Youth Leadership Training at City Hall*

This past month, our Wildlands Recovery Team members went on a working trip to Morro Bay. They participated in live fire drills to mitigate piles and non-native plant species, and they put their chainsaw

training to work. They also spiked out on the fire line while pulling night shifts, training ROP Cadets and volunteers, cleaned all tools and equipment daily, and prepped piles for the next trip. All of these tasks and duties are the same as those performed on all live fire incidents.



*Wildlands Recovery Team during live fire drills at Morro Bay*

On Tuesday, corpsmembers from our East LA site traveled to Porter Ranches' Promenade Housing Development where they began planting over 100 trees that had been blown over by high winds and needed to be replaced. Mrs. Ruth Rhodes, president of the Promenade HOA contacted Million Trees LA and Meghan Shearer, Urban Trees Manager, to ask if we could help replace the trees. Together with the help of MTLA, corpsmembers started the process of planting 107 new trees this week. The HOA and all of its residents were excited to see the new trees being planted in their neighborhood. In addition to replacing trees, corpsmembers also planted new trees in previous "hot spots" throughout the development. It was great to see our corpsmembers work with elderly residents who shared life stories and personal experiences.



*Program Coordinator, Carlos Campero and Mrs. Ruth Rhodes*

### **Clean & Green**

- This past week, Clean & Green assisted with the Milagro Charter School "Cesar Chavez Day" Day of Service project. The school also had a very special event called Locks of Love which donates hair for wigs for children in need who suffered from cancer or alopecia areata.
- Clean & Green crews and the new NELA corpsmember session worked tirelessly at the Old Palm Fire Station in Council District 5. Crews removed weeds, trash, bulky items, and graffiti. See the shout out the Palms Neighborhood Council gave to Clean & Green in their [newsletter](#).
- FOX Studios and Fulcrum Adventures staff invited four Clean & Green students to the Culver City Park to receive backpacks that included school supplies, first-aid supplies, among other great goodies. Clean & Green members, Isabel Bernardino, Jailene Cobarrubias, Arnoldo Martinez, and Kevin Diaz, also had the opportunity to talk to the FOX staff about what they do in Clean & Green.



*Clean & Green with Fox Studios and Fulcrum Adventures staff*

- This week Clean & Green kicked off the Recyclebank Canvassing. Two Clean & Green crews will be going out, door to door, in designated areas of Los Angeles to encourage residents to recycle, and get them to sign up for recycling reward points. The reward points can be used at various partner stores, such as Vons, Pavillions and many more.

On Saturday, April 9th, Clean & Green crews will be at the following events:

- Colorado Blvd “Community Clean Up” at 2035 Colorado Blvd
- Virgil Middle School Community Fair at 152 N. Virgil
- Councilmember Greig Smith’s “Spring Clean Up” at 19514 Rinaldi Street
- Valley View Elementary School “Clean Up” at 6921 Woodrow Wilson Dr.
- Lincoln Park “Fundraiser” at Mission Rd and Valley Blvd
- Solano Canyon Community Organization and Councilmember Ed Reyes’ “Clean Up Day” at Solano Community Garden
- Congresswoman Maxine Water’s, Community Meeting on impact of Federal Budget Cuts at Jesse Owens Park
- 20 Clean & Green members will be going to Death Valley National Park starting Sunday, April 10<sup>th</sup> thru Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup>. Clean & Green members will be learning how non-profit organizations help support National Parks through retail operations. The C&G members will job shadow many of the parks employees including including Budget and Administration, Housing Maintenance, Water Treatment/Utility Systems Operator, Archaeologist, Botanist, U.S. Park Ranger/Law Enforcement. They will visit the Death Valley Virtual Museum and explore mining sites, among other exciting activities.

### **Support and Transition**

The Corps will soon say goodbye to 10 of its MSW graduate interns. The interns have provided intense case management services, counseling, crisis intervention, and community linkages. They have also reached corpsmembers at more intense levels than staff alone. The visibility of the interns drew

corpsmembers into the department and allowed the corpsmembers to grow towards their goals. They increased our retention rate by meeting with corpsmembers regularly on an individual, intimate basis. The interns were not afraid to get their hands dirty from the beginning and immediately established relationships with corpsmembers and staff. Thank you to Erica Lopez, Ada Valladares, Kendall Depew, Shauna Letvin, Stephanie Grijalva, Elizabeth Burklo, Leslie Porter, Veronica Vargas, Linda Quilizapa, and Jasson Walker! You will all be greatly missed!



*Intern, Stephanie Grijalva, working with LaSaun Gardner*

### **Pictures of the Week**



*Students at HQ High School work on painting mural panels*



*Clean & Green student Juan Velasquez at the Kings vs. Phoenix Coyotes hockey game*