

July 8, 2011

Celebrating 25 Years!



Kenny Mai (with Ray Garcia) at the 25th Anniversary Luncheon

When were you in the Corps and for how long? What Corps Programs did you participate in?

I did two years with the Corps beginning in October of 2007. I participated in several different Corps programs. I was on the Recycling Crew, I was in the YouthBuild Program, I was an Assistant Crew Leader – meaning I helped train new corpsmembers – and I was on the Trail Construction crew. The program that helped me the most was YouthBuild because it allowed me to enhance my leadership and communication skills, and showed me how to work as a member of a team. That program gave me a lot of responsibility and prepared me for my current job as a supervisor.

I was also the President of the Leadership Council. As the President I had to assign people positions, make announcements, plan projects, coordinate water giveaways, give speeches and generally represent the Corps. It really allowed me to work on my communication skills.

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

I'm a supervisor at the Korean Youth and Community Center and am in charge of two of the four community service crews. We remove graffiti by pressure washing and using chemicals to beautify the neighborhood. I'm responsible for getting all of the paperwork done as well.

On weekends, I read a little bit and just try to focus on being a dad. I also play soccer, like the computer and love music.

Please tell us why you joined the Corps.

Before I was with the Corps, I was around gang members, not going to school, partying and not taking life seriously. I was a destructive kid who would damage property and break the law. The Corps made me care for my neighborhood and my surrounding by getting me to plant trees and build parks. They showed me that I can make changes everyday by taking down graffiti.

Before, I was on the street trying to make money but the Corps showed me that working was better than being out there hustling. It made me understand that there were doors and opportunities open to me if I wanted to pursue them. They showed me that people did care about me. Now, I've got a son and a wife, I'm a supervisor and I go to work everyday. The Corps helped me make it this far.

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

I would say the Washington D.C. trip. I got to be around members of Congress, got a free trip and had a really nice room. I never would have gone to Washington D.C. otherwise, and I got to talk to a lot of people that I wouldn't have met if it weren't for the trip.

Alumni Mixer

This Saturday from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm the Corps will be having its *first ever* Alumni Mixer at the Magnolia Family Center (1910 Magnolia Avenue, LA, CA 90007) in South Los Angeles. The Mixer is going to be an excellent opportunity for Corps alumni to meet and reconnect with one another, and should provide younger alumni with an opportunity to network with older, working professionals. Former corpsmember and now senior director at the Corp's East LA site is the keynote speaker. It's going to be a great time for everyone involved and we very much look forward to seeing you there! If you would like to attend, or have any questions, please contact Ian Brown at ibrown@lacorps.org.



CELEBRATING
25
YEARS

LA CONSERVATION CORPS

You are cordially invited to
The L.A. Conservation Corps' Summer Alumni Mixer
Saturday, July 9th, 2011
Beginning at 2:00 pm at
The Magnolia Family Center
(1910 Magnolia Avenue, L.A., CA 90007)

Reconnect with old friends and make some new ones over refreshments. If attending, please RSVP by July 7th.



For questions or RSVPs please contact Ian Brown at (213) 362-9000 x 255 or ibrown@lacorps.org

Young Adult Corps

During the week of June 26- July 2, members of our AmeriCorps Wildlands Recovery Team (WRT) participated in the restoration of a former marijuana grow site. The site contained over 10,000 plants causing significant resource damage to public parkland within the Santa Monica Mountains Recreation Area (SMMNRA). Corpsmembers hiked in extremely difficult terrain to carry out the debris left from the growers. This debris includes the miles of drip line used to produce water into the grow sites from local streams/ creeks where water was dammed up in order to introduce chemicals into the homemade irrigation system. The chemicals used to fertilize the grow sites were poured directly into the waterways causing massive resource damage to the area. The debris and trash left behind by the careless growers, including cooking/ warming fire remains, was disheartening. Supported by law enforcement, the crew was successful in the beginning stages of redeveloping the grow sites, which covered over 4.5 acres. The following was a message from the National Park ranger supervisor who led the operation: "Thank you for sharing your crew with us today. They were a great help and were very professional. It went so well that we actually found a few thousand more plants to haul out next week." - Tom Schaff, San Vicente District Ranger, Santa Monica Mountains NRA



Wildlands Recovery Team clearing debris

Corpsmembers from the WRT were also a big hit this year serving the community at the “Touch-A-Truck” event held in Thousand Oaks. This event brought over 2,500 people from surrounding communities to display their heavy equipment for kids and families. This annual event allows the children to ask questions, get hands-on experience and get introduced into various careers. Private, local, state and federal agencies all supplied equipment including: forklifts, dump trucks, police cars, command centers, US Army vehicles, cement trucks, fire engines and even a helicopter. The crew assisted in answering career questions, promoting and recruiting for the WRT program and demonstrating hands-on operations of fire equipment operation. Corpmembers also assisted Ventura County Fire to provide a landing zone for the helicopter, utilizing their WRT training to properly coordinate the landing and departure of the helicopter to ensure public safety.



Wildlands Recovery Team at the “Touch-A-Truck” event in Thousand Oaks

Support and Transition

Case management had a life skills week and the subject matter was earthquakes. Topics included what to do before an earthquake in order to prepare, how to stay safe during an earthquake, and what to do after the earthquake hits. Corpsmembers created a tour, resembling an attraction at Universal Studios, where they converted LA into a war zone for a day. Each member of the team that won the competition received \$50 cash, delivered by Bruce Saito.



Corpsmembers Jesse Samon (South LA), Trashawn Smith (SLA), and David Cortez (SEA Lab)



Corpsmembers Cristian Gonzalez (East LA), Margarito Miranda (East LA), Davonte Lewis (South LA), and Virginia Sanchez (East LA)

Recycling Across Los Angeles

RACLA recycling numbers for the month of June have reached a record high! Over 77,000 lbs of cans and bottles were collected for June 2011 alone!

If you are out this weekend, come by and say “Hi” to our crews at the following events and thank them for their efforts:

- The RACLA contract employee crew will be recycling at the Dodger Stadium home games throughout the weekend!
- Additionally, a RACLA crew will be recycling at the Christmas in July event taking place at Kenneth Hahn Park on Saturday, July 9th.

Steven Bello

It is with deep regret that we must inform you that one of our corpsmembers passed away on Sunday, July 3rd. Steven Bello was a very successful participant in our California Energy Service Corps program. He provided energy efficiency construction services to low-income residents of East Los Angeles and supportive services to our weatherization team in Santa Fe Springs. Steven demonstrated outstanding commitment and character during his term of service. He will be remembered for his ability to produce a smile during even the most challenging assignments. Steven lost his life during a drowning accident while spending time with family and friends.

Services will be held this Saturday, July 9th from 12-4 pm at Aguape Funeral Home (4250 Central Ave, Los Angeles, CA).



Steven Bello with Hop Hopkins