Dear Friends of the Corps,

Never has there been a more appropriate time to share a Gratitude Report than now. Since all of our worlds changed in 2020 – somehow expanding and contracting at the same time – everyone at the Corps has been overwhelmed by the outpouring of encouragement for our Corpsmembers and our staff and the support of the essential work we have continued to do.

It took strength and creativity to keep our doors open and continue to offer opportunities to young adults in dire need of paid work experience and a support network. With your help and everyone’s commitment to each other’s success and safety, we have done just that.

We rose to the challenge that Governor Newsom issued to all Corps in April of 2020, and we answered the calls to help wherever we could. Our crews delivered food and supplies, kept testing and vaccination sites clean and safe, distributed vaccine information, and came to the aid of multiple partner organizations.

As leaders, we have been humbled and inspired by the continued work ethic of the Corpsmembers and staff. They are proud to be able to improve the quality of life in their own neighborhoods and inherently know the value of a safe sidewalk, clean streets and alleyways, a shady tree, and safe shelter.

It’s hard work in the midst of so much change and challenge. We have grieved and grown together. We have never understood the word resilience better than we do today.

We are grateful for you and your support, and we ask that you remember the Corps and all of the Corpsmembers in your gratitude lists today.

Sincerely,

Wendy Butts, CEO
Dana Treister, President & Chair of the Board
Teresa Cisneros Burton, Past President
We would like to thank Marisol Rodriguez and Barbara Romero who retired from the LA Conservation Corps Board in the past two years. We are grateful for their years of service to the Corps.
“I used to be kind of shy, so I don’t know where this loud voice came from,” jokes South LA Program Coordinator Juan Alvarez as he is recalling the twists and turns of the last eight years that have taken him from Corpsmember to a management position with a bright future ahead.

Juan makes this joke as he is recalling one of the times he requested a transfer between Corps sites because he was looking to learn more and advance his career.

One of those moves took him in an unexpected direction when the principal of Saito High School, located at our South LA site, asked him to become an office aide and work with her every day. An office job had not been on Juan’s radar, but he embraced the opportunity asking questions and modeling leadership skills. In addition to learning the behind-the-scenes work of a school administrator, he also perfected his public relations skills leading tours of the school and advocating for his fellow Corpsmembers.

It’s that eagerness to learn and openness to taking on new challenges that has driven his success here at the Corps.

“[As a Corpsmember], the Corps gave me a lot to be successful,” he shares. In addition to varied work experience, Juan was able to achieve personal milestones like getting his driver’s license and enjoying new experiences like camping. Hiking is still one of his favorite activities, as is his growing sneaker collection!

Juan’s work ethic and curiosity led him from Corpsmember to being hired as a full-time Crew Supervisor and most recently a promotion to Program Coordinator in 2021. It’s also certainly driving his intention to head back to college and study Business and Administration.

His journey through the Corps illustrates the organization’s double bottom line of advancing youth development and serving the community. Juan places a high value on the difference he has made in all the communities he has worked in but, at the end of the day, he is focused on the next generation of young people looking for a new opportunity just like he was. “A Corpsmember once told me that I give him hope... I’m here to motivate Corpsmembers to keep doing better.”
Another Milestone

In the spring of 2021, the Corps marked its 35th anniversary. While circumstances made it difficult to enjoy an in-person celebration, we did ask staff, alumni, and Friends of the Corps to share some of their thoughts about the last three-and-a-half decades.

“When I was a case manager, I got to see Corpsmembers accomplish their goals, make their mistakes, and overcome any obstacles. I remember one young woman asked me, ‘Why are you a case manager?’ I told her because I like to work with youth. I like helping them figure out what they want to become and how I can help guide them to get there. I told her someone saw the good in me and decided to give me a chance, and I am forever grateful to have great mentors while working at the Corps. Today she is a childcare worker, and she always reminds me how thankful she is for crossing paths with me and working for the LA Corps. It changed her life for the good.”

Denise Haynes
Program Manager, East LA
These last two years have reminded us all of the deep and meaningful partnerships and collaborations that the Corps has built over the last three decades. Chief among those is our partnership with the City of Los Angeles. We have been so proud to work together through multiple administrations and in every council district for all these years to bring our unique program model to every young adult and community in need.

As City services have been overburdened with requests and working with less, we've been here to help fill those gaps in community beautification work, sidewalk and alley clean-ups, and the battle against illegal dumping. We are always ready and very proud to be of service to our community and our government partners. We are grateful to have been awarded additional municipal funding to address quality of life issues like these because it means we can offer more young adults the chance to become Corpsmembers and take advantage of all of the services we provide. At the same time, it’s tough and sometimes heartbreaking work for our Corpsmembers and the crew supervisors that lead them into the field every day. When they plant a tree or build a walking path, they can see it grow and be enjoyed by the community over time. When they clean an alley or a sidewalk, often in their own neighborhoods, too often they are back the next week because the public space has been dumped on again.

“It’s become a personal challenge to finish what I started,” Corpsmember Alberto recently shared with us about the work he has been doing and the experience he has gained at the Corps. Alberto has been working on a crew that has been dedicated to community beautification, cleaning up illegal dumping, and trying to improve the health and safety conditions of the streets and sidewalks and alleyways in Los Angeles. We admire his spirit, and want to tap into that determination and spread it all around the Corps.

Alberto and his fellow Corpsmembers want safe and clean sidewalks for their younger siblings to walk to school. They want healthy green spaces in their neighborhoods that will benefit public health and happiness. And they are willing to pick up the shovels and do the work.

In 2020 & 2021...

- 300,094 illegally dumped items collected
- 5,397 alleys cleared of litter and debris
- 18,394 storm drains cleared
- 19,653 tons of litter cleared off streets & public spaces
“Recently one of my Corpsmembers was selected to go to the CCC Backcountry Trails program. Honestly, she had been a handful since she joined. I pulled her aside one day and told her, ‘You need to get it together and stop assuming everyone is out to get you. We’re here to help you, not hurt you.’ She worked hard, passed all her classes, and the day she left for Backcountry she sent me a text: ‘Thanks for everything. I wouldn’t have gotten this far if you didn’t believe in and push me to do better. You have my highest appreciation. I hope to make you proud.’ Lord, I want to cry. That just blessed me. To see the lightbulb go off and see a transformation, you can’t duplicate that.”

Carlos Campero
Director of Conservation Programs, Compton

“...I was struck by the quality of the people working with LACC. The crew members were totally dedicated; they displayed hardiness and flexibility under challenging conditions and got along very well among themselves and with Conservancy staff. All in all, the experience couldn’t have been any easier from our standpoint. We look forward to working with the Corps on future projects!”

SethKauppinen
Native Plant Manager
Catalina Island Conservancy
On Saturday March 13, 2021, Corps staff, Corpsmembers, and members of their families participated in a memorial tree planting at the Compton Creek Natural Park in honor of loved ones lost to the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff and Corpsmembers were not immune to the devastating impact of this public health crisis, so as a nonprofit community-based organization and a family, we needed to do something to support each other in our grief.

What a better way than to memorialize them than with the planting of a tree in a park where others can enjoy their beauty and they can benefit the local environment. These trees will offer a place of rest and represent the beauty, stability, strength and peace everyone has lost.

Folks had the opportunity to say a few words about the family member for whom they were planting their tree. There were tears flowing and many pauses to gather themselves. It was an opportunity to say goodbye, as many of those lost were not able to be honored with a funeral. Once the work began, some plantings were a celebration of a life with laughter and excitement to honor their loved one, while others were somber and deliberate. We spoke their names, shared their stories and gave their memories to the trees who will protect them for generations.
“During the summer of 2020, I sat down with about six Corpsmembers and we discussed the effects of the pandemic on their mental health as young adults during this time. One thing that touched me during these conversations was the Corpsmembers’ responsibility and self-identification as pillars of their families. They had a great sense of responsibility to be still working as many young adults lost their jobs. I learned so much about their experience, and how our young people are affected by decisions made at the city, state, and national levels. The day-to-day changes and challenges wore heavy on Corpsmembers’ minds and bodies, but they also found confidence in themselves, stepped up as leaders in their families, and showed resilience in challenging times. I really enjoyed hearing their perspective on mental health and how much they look out for each other.”

Jeremy Minter
Development Manager
No Place Like Home

At the beginning of 2021, the Corps announced a unique partnership with local government agencies, collaborating social service agencies, and the for-profit company Pallet out of Seattle to build hundreds of tiny home-style shelters at multiple sites around Los Angeles for people experiencing homelessness.

Each shelter can be assembled in less than 30 minutes and is outfitted with beds, shelving, climate control, electricity, and safety features. The design of the shelter structures also makes them easy to clean when transitioning between occupants, an important consideration during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pallet employees at the company’s Seattle-based factory headquarters — the majority of whom have lived experience in homelessness, addiction, or the criminal justice system themselves — manufacture and ship shelter panels to assembly sites, where Corpsmembers work in teams to complete final assembly.

Each village of shelters that has been constructed by Corpsmembers is being managed by a partner nonprofit that specializes in working with people experiencing homelessness. They provide a variety of case management and barrier removal services to occupants.

While the Corps is used to working with government partners and quite often other nonprofits, this project has included working with a private sector partner and provided a model for how future partnerships could flourish to help meet the needs of Corpsmembers.

Assembly of the shelters allows Corpsmembers to build skills in construction, critical thinking, time management, and teamwork. In addition, the project has had a personal impact on many Corpsmembers. “Working with Pallet and building these shelters for individuals experiencing homelessness strikes a chord with many of our Corpsmembers. Some of our Corpsmembers have experienced homelessness themselves so they understand how meaningful a safe space can be for someone. Also, this is fast-paced, team-based work that lets them harness their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and at the end of even one day on the job site, they see the difference they are making,” states Alex Lopez, Sr. Program Director at the LA Conservation Corps.
Since the early days of the Corps, we have always been able to provide rapid response and ongoing recovery support in times of crisis like earthquakes or civil unrest. And while a pandemic was never something we had considered, we were ready to take on new projects to support our families, friends, and neighbors.

Initially, that included partnering with Los Angeles City Council offices to deliver food to seniors and other homebound vulnerable populations. In the summer of 2021, we began work on the LA County CARES Food Distribution project. Our Corpsmembers together with others from San Gabriel Valley Conservation Corps and the Conservation Corps of Long Beach worked with staff from the LA Regional Food Bank to set up distribution events and hand out food items to residents who were in need of some help. Corpsmembers traveled to events all over the County to meet the moment.

In the fall of 2021, we began working with the LA County Community Health Worker Program. Staff and Corpsmembers were trained to canvas neighborhoods and engage with the public providing information regarding COVID-19 education and vaccination information while distributing supplies like hand sanitizer, disposable wipes, and masks.

While these unique opportunities offered Corpsmembers a chance to receive unexpected training in new skills sets, they did continue to remind us of the complex and interdependent times we are living in.
A Celebration
Like No Other

The last two years brought a lot of changes and firsts to the Corps, including our first Virtual Luncheon. After the disappointment at having to cancel our 2020 event, the Corps family roared back to life with enthusiasm and positivity for this unique and special day.

Hosted by Teresa and Sean Burton live from our beautiful Compton Creek Natural Park, the 2021 Virtual Spring Luncheon was a testament to our #LACorpsPower and the strength of our connections to the community and our friends.

Honoree Gerard Orozco, Vice President and Executive Client Manager at Jacobs, showed just how much he deserved the title of 2020-2021 Corps Champion. Despite a delay of over a year and a change in format, he brought all his energy and passion to helping us celebrate. We were thrilled to share messages of congratulations from U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris, U.S. Senator Alex Padilla, LA Mayor Eric Garcetti, and Jacobs Chair and CEO Steve Demetriou.

Not surprisingly, it was our Corpsmembers who stole the show. In particular, Corpsmember Dayy Thomas shared their story in a unique behind-the-scenes video of the life of a Corpsmember. Not wanting to stop there, Dayy kept everyone cheering with their enthusiastic comments in our chat.

We rounded out the show with the story of Simboa Wright, former Corpsmember and current Vice President of SEIU 721 and Board Member of the LA Conservation Corps, who shared words of wisdom with all of today’s Corpsmembers.

We are so grateful to the Board Members and community supporters who made this a special day and helped us raise vital funds to continue to provide unique and life-changing services to LA’s young adults. Thank you!
“For many years, it wasn’t until a Corpsmember left the program that they would then express their appreciation for their experience or the relationship we established. So, it was a momentous day when a Corpsmember while still in the program actually named me as her mentor during one of our conversations. It is a role that I do not take for granted. Recently, I was extremely proud to see her receive her bachelor’s degree in Environmental Science & Resource Management from CSU Channel Islands.”

Maria Madrigal
Former Director of the LACC SEA Lab

“I think some of the most rewarding moments have got to be those unexpected ‘thank you’ text messages and calls that I receive from Corpsmembers. On days where I am swamped at work, those messages really make my day and remind me of why I do the work that I do. It makes me both happy and proud to know that I am positively impacting some of the Corpsmembers and helping them with their next steps.”

Maria Cortez
Case & Transition Coordinator
Donors & Partners

Thank you to all of the individuals, corporations, foundations, and community and government partners who supported Corpsmembers and our mission between July 1, 2019, and June 30, 2021. This list includes donations, gifts, grants, in-kind support, and contracts to our programs, special events, and general operations. Your generosity helps make our work possible. We do our best to compile a complete list. We apologize if your name was omitted unintentionally.

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Western National Parks Association
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**Financials**  
*Statement of Activities*

### July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

**Revenue and Support**
- General Agencies & Contracts: $19,533,759
- Contributions - Private & Corporations: $983,505
- Program Fees: $51,152
- In-Kind Revenue: $686,870
- Contributions - Individuals: $92,646
- Special Events: $92,327
- Other Income: $45,793

**Total Revenue & Support**: $21,286,052

**Expenses**
- Program Services: $17,886,517
- General and Administrative: $3,380,882
- Fundraising: $113,535

**Total Expenses**: $21,380,934

**Net Assets**
- Net Assets - Beginning of Fiscal Year: $8,142,560
- Change in Net Assets: $105,118
- Net Assets - End of Fiscal Year: $8,247,678

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### July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

**Revenue and Support**
- General Agencies & Contracts: $19,329,663
- Contributions - Private & Corporations: $934,169
- Program Fees: $45,315
- In-Kind Revenue: $841,762
- Contributions - Individuals: $152,558
- Special Events: $235,260
- Other Income (loss): $125,129

**Total Revenue & Support**: $20,562,577

**Expenses**
- Program Services: $17,572,189
- General and Administrative: $3,766,429
- Fundraising: $95,473

**Total Expenses**: $21,434,091

**Net Assets**
- Net Assets - Beginning of Fiscal Year: $8,247,678
- Change in Net Assets: $229,765
- Net Assets - End of Fiscal Year: $8,477,443
“I strived to get to know each Corpsmember personally. It’s been over 20 years, but the names of my Corpsmember students remain in my memory: Noel Zuniga, Edgar & Jorge Jauregui, Erick Alvarado, Chaneka Parker, Melinda Folk, Findley Johnson, Walter Alonso, Theresa Luna…

I felt so much like they did as I learned how to teach effectively and discover what I liked to do; I’m so grateful that the Corps offered me the experience to grow and develop as I sought to do the same with my students. I remember the kindness of so many Corpsmembers and the adventures we shared as we explored Southern California on field trips and I wonder what paths they’ve taken on their journeys through life so far.”

Wendy Butts
CEO

“When I first started at the Corps, I was a tutor. I remember one Corpsmember who had had a child when she was in high school and dropped out. She had been at the Corps for about a year and earned her high school diploma the same year that the Corps decided to have a prom. Most were excited, but she expressed she would not go to prom because she didn’t have a dress or transportation. One day after work, we took her to the mall and helped her pick out a dress she felt comfortable in. The day of prom, we picked her up at another Corpsmembers’ house, and they had a great time. She later confided that no one had ever done something like that for her. It made me happy I was able to do something nice for her, but it also had an impact on me. I felt both happy and sad at the same time, and it made me realize that ‘little’ things can make a difference.”

Ingrid Marroquin
Human Resources Manager
A Very Special
Thank You

It is impossible to look back on these two years and not pause to honor and celebrate the hard work and passion of the Corps staff. Let’s applaud our front line Crew Supervisors who stood by the Corpsmembers who were relying on the steady work to stay afloat and were beacons of hope to the community. Let’s marvel at the Directors and Managers and Coordinators who were asked to perform magnificent feats of logistical and programmatic adaptation to respond to community needs and make amazing strides for the environment while still keeping their Corpsmembers and colleagues safe. Let’s send some love to the Corpsmember Development team who met the moment with compassion and care for all. Let’s stand in awe of the educators in the After School Program who refused to give up. Let’s shout out to the administrative teams who often worked alone but always stayed focused on making sure the programs had everything they needed to succeed. Let’s count the times we heard one colleague say to another who was struggling, “I got you,” or offer to help with something outside of their comfort zone. This team rose to the challenge and reminded everyone what it means to be a Corps.
Thank you for your support over these eye-opening few years. We are growing stronger and more resilient together. We hope you will continue to cultivate this growth by spreading the word about the Corps and our amazing Corpsmembers. Your commitment and generosity keep us all moving forward.

Thank you!
LA CONSERVATION CORPS

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