
OEC NEWSLETTER

Official publication of the Onondaga Earth Corps

A Successful Year for OEC!

BY ALEX COLEMAN-GRIDLEY

The Onondaga Earth Corps has concluded another year of service to the community, and as we reflect on the past several seasons, we can see that 2019 has proven to be a year of great successes and advancements for our organization.

Over the past year, OEC has employed over 40 youth and young adults and connected with countless more through our outreach and volunteer efforts. We have brought approximately 600 volunteers to our community events, which included street clean-up efforts and tree-planting events held throughout Onondaga County.

We have planted over 615 trees throughout the city and county, thanks to the efforts of our tree-planting crews as well as that of volunteers at our community events at Onondaga Park and Pratts Falls. Our Green Infrastructure crew has maintained over 20 green spaces in Syracuse, and we have educated over 450 community members.

One of our biggest accomplishments has been increasing our media footprint. We have expanded our efforts to receive more media coverage for the work we do, and to ultimately allow OEC to become a more well-known entity in the community. These efforts have proven greatly successful, with many events receiving coverage from local news sources.

In this edition of OEC's newsletter, you will be able to read about the work we've accomplished over the Fall season, news from our annual Encore fundraiser, and testimonials from young adults who have recently graduated from our program.

Past Events:

Encore:

November 9th, St. Lucy's Auditorium, Syracuse, NY



Jamesville Beach Planting:

September 30th,
Jamesville, NY



Pratts Falls Planting:

November 2nd, Pratts Falls Park
Manlius, NY



Earth Corps Recognized in Local News

BY YVONNE CHU

In 2019 Onondaga Earth Corps was recognized in local newspapers, television stations, and radio stations a total of 9 times throughout the year. The media covered topics like the Schiller Park Project, work with the iApologize efforts, Tree City and Arbor Day Planting celebration, and fundraisers like the Earth Corps Brunch and the annual Earth Corps Encore event.

Printed in Syracuse.com's Opinion section on Sept 4, 2019 and written by OEC Supporters Karen Schroeder and Jim Williams were touching and heartfelt words stating: "The job, a position with Onondaga Earth Corps, found him [their son and OEC Crewmember] engaged in hands-on community and environmental projects, including the care of our city's gardens and parks, trees and stormwater management. (con't)

While we're impressed with our son's new-found knowledge of invasive plants, it's the awareness he attained this summer that make us the most gratified."

On Oct. 6, 2019 Spectrum News journalist Jessica Houghtaling wrote, "Onondaga Earth Corps is helping Syracuse go green by planting trees across the city... Their mission is to empower the youth through improving the environment... It helps get young people involved in the environment, especially at a time when climate change is an issue many are fighting for... Most importantly, it sets them up for a stronger future. Teens get training to have careers in related fields."

OEC had several great accomplishments this year reflected through the coverage of the local media. The recognition through the articles, video, and audio records help us share our efforts with the community we work hard to serve. To read, watch, and hear about our appearances in the press please visit:

<http://www.onondagaeearthcorps.org/category/blog/press/>



Youth and Young Adult Crews at the Earth Corps Staging site. l-r Sarah Anderson of American Forests, Syracuse City Arborist Steve Harris, Youth and YA Crews

Encore Fundraiser Draws a Lively Crowd

BY ALEX COLEMAN-GRIDLEY

This year's annual Encore fundraiser was a great success. The year-end celebration of OEC's service to the community was held at the Auditorium of St. Lucy's Church on Syracuse's West Side. The event drew a crowd of over 150 people, including crew members, family, partners, and sponsors.

Attendees enjoyed live music performed by the Brownskin Band with Joe Driscoll, as well as food catered by Pastabilities, Mr. Bigg's, Yard Greens Catering, and Biscotti's. The crowd also took part in an environmental-themed trivia game hosted by Brian Cocca of the Syracuse Trivia Company.

Youth and young adult crew members spoke about their experiences with the Earth Corps over the past year. Each crew shared pictures and memories of the hours spent in the field, and told the audience of the knowledge and skills they have gained from their service to the community.

The event was also attended by State Senator Rachel May, who spoke on stage of the important role that organizations like the Earth Corps serve to young people, and shared her own past experience volunteering with the organization.

OEC was able to meet our fundraising goals through Encore attendees and sponsors, and we are thankful for the dozens of volunteers who helped us ensure that the event ran smoothly. We hope to see you next year!

Pratts Falls Planting a Success

On November 2nd, OEC planted over 70 trees in Pratts Falls Park in Manlius with the help of many volunteers! The event's success is largely thanks to the hard work of the Advanced Young Adult Crew. Here's what they have to say:

TAVEON STENSON - CREW LEADER

"The outcome of the Pratts Falls planting was very gratifying for me. While it wasn't my first time helping to plan an event here at OEC. It was the first event where I was in charge of preparing my crew for a bigger leadership role. Which means a lot to me as a leader/supervisor myself. To see my crew members show up & show out in their positions for the event was beyond amazing! Observing the growth & tremendous effort that they put into it was awesome. They truly made me proud, it was hard work but everyone, including the volunteers made it a day to remember."

SHANE FULLER - CREW MEMBER

"I had the pleasure of being apart of the planning process for our last community tree planting out at Pratt's Falls. I took on the job of writing the day's agenda & assigning people to their groups. I learned all that it really takes to make an event like that happen. The day of the event I helped unload the tree delivery and helped with registering people. The turn out for the planting was good, even though we had a set back we got all of the trees in the ground."

VICTOR REEDER - CREW MEMBER

"Honestly, this season was very appealing. It made me more aware of the progress that I have made this fall, and the growth ahead of me. I've received heavy equipment training using a backhoe and a dingo. I have a satisfying remembrance of taking before and after pictures when we plant or prune trees in the community. It's quite gratifying to see my efforts & hard work are paying off. I've recently received an achievement award (presented by New York State Senator Rachel May) at our Earth Corps Encore Fundraising Event. This fall was my first time transplanting on a G.I crew. By transplanting plants, we are spreading life in areas that need help prospering, due to distinct underlying environmental problems."



The Youth Crew at Encore. top row, l-r: Tigist Getahun, Said Mohamat, Malik Jennings, Matthew Limpert, Terrance Valdes, bottom row, l-r: Greg Michel, Quan Petteway (photo by JoAnn Cucci)

G.I. Team Helps Clean up City Parks

BY MEQDAD ALI

Most of our green infrastructure crew's work consists of weeding, edging, trash removal, and general maintenance at our G.I. sites throughout the year. In 2019 we had a dynamic crew structure which allowed every crew member to learn about and participate in maintaining over 20 rain gardens, bioswales, and vacant lots around the City of Syracuse. We also had the opportunity to educate over 100 kids/adults from schools, and communities about the green infrastructure practices, and how it helps reducing water/air pollution, and environmental issues.

The beginning of this G.I. season consisted of environmental education by Amy Samuels from the Onondaga Environmental Institute on how rain gardens are constructed, about water/sewer sheds, water cycles, combined sewer systems, and water treatment. Crew members learned about native plants and what traits each plant in a particular garden and how those characteristics work to maintain the functionality of the rain gardens, as well as invasive plant species (weeds) and how they hinder the desirable condition of any given site and why they need to be removed.

As we moved along in the season crews learned how to test soil conditions at a site to determine the composition, quality, and drainage properties. Crews also learned how to logistically plan where plants should be placed in a garden to promote beauty, color (something blooming throughout every season), and healthy growth while preventing erosion and bare spots.



OEC cleans up brush at Burnet Park, l-r: crew leader Haley O'Brien, AYAs Victor Reeder & Shane Fuller

Contact Us



/theonondagaeearthcorps

@onondagaeearthcorps

@ononearthcorps

www.onondagaeearthcorps.org

(315) 565- 3797

onondagaeearthcorps@gmail.com

SUNY EOC Building
100 New St. Room 239
Syracuse, NY 13202



ABOUT THE ONONDAGA EARTH CORPS

When the Eli MacDonald Green Team was restructured in 2005 as the Onondaga Earth Corps (OEC) for local communities, OEC was formed to:

- Help youth understand the relationship between people and the urban ecosystem
- Engage youth in hands-on community and environmental service learning projects
- Train youth for future jobs and careers in environmental fields
- Empower youth by developing their leadership abilities that help them analyze situations, solve problems and implement strategies to improve their communities