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# OEC NEWSLETTER

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Official publication of the Onondaga Earth Corps

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## Be well. Be resilient. Be creative.

The team here at OEC is taking the COVID19 pandemic seriously and in stride as we are sure all of our partners and community friends are too. In this unprecedented time, OEC is following the guidance of local, state and federal experts as to how we can protect our staff, our youth corps members and the community at large.

OEC staff have moved to working remotely from home and our offices are closed to the public until further notice. Our telephone calls are being forwarded to staff at home and we are able to access our emails.

We had an amazing spring training in the works prior to the outbreak of COVID19. We are not going to let this get in the way of serving youth. After a slight delay, our team has retooled to host our spring pre-hire training for young adult applicants remotely. We are embracing the opportunity to introduce a new level of digital literacy for staff and young applicants. We are also inviting guest professionals from across the country to get youth excited about career opportunities in urban forestry, landscaping, environmental engineering and stormwater management. Young adults will be ready and willing to go to work when the community risk has passed.

These times present many daunting challenges but we believe in the collective resilience and creativity of our community. Please read on to hear about other organizations and resources in these times of need and feel free to reach out to OEC if there are ways we can assist as an organization. We encourage you all to be well, be resilient and be creative.



Greg Michel  
Executive Director (on behalf of the Board of Directors)

### *Past Events:*

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#### **International Society of Arboriculture, NYS Chapter Annual Conference:**

January 26 & 27,  
Suffern, NY



#### **The Corps Network 2020 National Conference**

February 9-12,  
Washington, DC



#### **Syracuse Urban Forest Master Plan Presentation**

March 5,  
OneGroup Center, Syracuse, NY



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# OEC Welcomes New Staff!

**BY YVONNE CHU**

OEC welcomes two new staff members, Jessica (Jess) Alighieri and Katherine (Kat) Korba, to our team. We are excited to welcome them and are already impressed by their creativity, enthusiasm, and ability to adapt to changes. The addition of Jess and Kat as Personal Development Crew Leader and Natural Areas and Forestry Program Specialist, respectively, are much needed additions to the development of our growing organization.

## Get to know our new staff!



**Jess Alighieri** graduated with a degree in Natural Resource Management from SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry and has worked with such agencies as The Student Conservation Association, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County in various capacities. She now works with the Onondaga Earth Corps as a Personal Development Crew Leader, bringing job readiness programming and goal curating skills to the youth of Onondaga County.



**Kat Korba**, joined the Onondaga Earth Corps team in March 2020 as a Natural Areas and Forestry Program Specialist. She looks forward to working with the youth of Syracuse through environmental stewardship projects such as tree planting and natural area restoration efforts to both empower youth while simultaneously improving ecological conditions and increasing tree canopy in the City of Syracuse. Prior to Korba's start at OEC she was an Urban and Community Forestry Educator with CCE Onondaga from 2014-2020. Katherine has led urban forestry programs for CCE Onondaga's Save the Rain tree planting program, Community Development and the CommuniTree Stewards program. Katherine received her Master's in Landscape Architecture in 2013 from SUNY ESF, where she focused on community based design, stormwater management practices, green infrastructure and natural resource planning.

Welcome to the team!



OEC Staff and former staff, l-r: Ioane Etuale, Yvonne Chu, Kat Korba, Shad McKinney, Jess Alighieri, Meqdad Ali

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# Knowing Syracuse, Through the Lense of OEC

During a tour of Syracuse, focused on OEC's history in the city, staff members made stops throughout the city to learn about the mission and role of the organization. Crew leaders Taveon Stenson and Tajuddin Martin guided the tour and stopped at former and current worksites, spoke with community members, and reminded the staff about the legacy of the crew members and OEC staff that came before. Get to know Syracuse through the lens of OEC through the images below!



# Finding Community in the Shadow of CoVid-19

**BY JESS ALIGHIERI**

What is it that our favorite neighbor, Mr. Rogers used to say about being scared? Ah yes, "Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping." Uncertain times can feel overwhelming as the unknown is so obviously in the foreground of all that we do now. Onondaga Earth Corps is looking to help our community and has compiled a list of organizations in Onondaga County and the greater Central New York region who are working tirelessly to help alleviate our concerns and provide support for families and individuals who are in the most need. If you are someone who is in need, or if you are someone who would like to help by providing service or supplies, please take a look at some of these organizations and contact them. They are here for all us, and they can use our help too. This is a time for us as a community to find new ways to support each other. We can do this!

Stay Home, Stay Safe, Save Lives.



The mission of the OEC is to empower youth to be active participants in creating positive change for their communities and the environment. We are committed to supporting our community through CoVid-19.

Please visit our website at: [www.onondagearthcorps.org](http://www.onondagearthcorps.org) for more information and for links to the resources listed and more.

## ONONDAGA EARTH CORPS: COVID-19 RESOURCE LIST

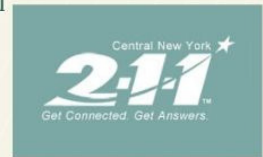
Need help finding support through the CoVid-19 pandemic? See below for a list local organizations who can provide access to items you need.

THIS IS NOT AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGES IN SUPPLIES

**LOOK TO THE LIST BELOW OF LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS AVAILABLE TO HELP**

### 211 CNY

Looking for community, social, or governmental services? Dial 211 or 1-844-245-1922 or check [211cny.com](http://211cny.com) for up-to-date information regarding CoVid-19



Information is changing rapidly. Please check 211 for all up-to-date information

### CAFE SANKOFA CO-OPERATIVE



Working to keep the community on the South Side connected & supported. See the link below to find more information on resources & support offered.

<https://www.cafesankofacoop.com/>

### WE RISE ABOVE THE STREETS

Started by Ali-amin Muhammed Day as a way to connect low income families & individuals with food, hygiene products, & clothes. We rise above the streets provides weekly access to these resources via Sandwich Saturdays. See the link below for details.

[We Rise Above the Streets - Sandwich Saturday](#)



### THE COVID-19 COMMUNITY SUPPORT FUND



While we are all dealing with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, some of our neighbors face disproportionate challenges due to unexpected time off from work, unplanned child or health care expenses and lack of access to adequate food and shelter. A coalition of community partners is banding together to give support to those who need it most.

[COVID - 19 COMMUNITY SUPPORT FUND](#)

### VERA HOUSE

Vera House, Inc. prevents, responds to and partners to end domestic and sexual violence and other forms of abuse Vera House maintains a 24 hour hotline to provide immediate assistance to families in need.

<https://www.verahouse.org/>



# Words from Crew Members

## VICTOR REEDER



"OEC helped me make it through their program to a certain extent, but I helped myself to finish it. What I have learned throughout this journey, is that it seems as if I am always putting myself through difficulties that I have to learn from in order to strive to embrace a higher extent of wisdom.

The word "focus" goes hand and hand when it comes to the word "work". Sometimes you have to work alone in order to focus. As long as you do not quit, love never fails. Also, remembering that you are tired of failing helps you care. By finally standing strong no matter what, if love never fails, you will end up knowing the answer to your relationship on how to love unconditionally. Once you keep up with that, they will see how much you really care. They will see your intent, value and care."

+ For Victor's full statement, please visit our website at <http://www.onondagaeearthcorps.org/winter-2020-newsletter>

## JAKELLA HOLMES-PORCH



"Hi my name is Jakhella. My experience over the winter was different. I say different because I never saw myself working outside in the cold. We worked on a lot of outreach, which I like because it gave me a chance to engage with our

community and also helped me work on my communication skills. When I first started OEC I couldn't have a regular conversation with just anyone that I didn't know. Now I'm getting a little better with my communication. This season we worked more on measuring the distance between utilities, which I have gotten way better at. It's great to know the distances from utilities because I can use this skill in the future. This season I am looking forward to putting more trees in the ground and engaging with my community."

### Contact Us



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### 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