



The OEC Crew and youth from Schiller Park participate in a demonstration of pollution in a watershed.

Connect the Drops: City youth campaign for a litter free community and lake

Did you see *Trashy the talking Trashcan* around town this summer? Don't worry if you haven't, you'll get your chance to see this new member of OEC's summer program, Clean Streets. The crew gained momentum this year with support from the Central New York Community Foundation and Save the Rain's Connect the Drops program. With the additional support, OEC was able to expand our employment opportunities, and lead new efforts to educate the public in as many high-need neighborhoods as possible.

While youth did pickup over 100 gallons of litter across the city during the summer, they also focused on creating ways to engage residents in cleaning their

streets. With methods like *Trashketball*, and *Trashy the Talking Trashcan*, the youth learned valuable collaboration, outreach and public presentation skills. Thanks to SALT Makerspace's Director, Mike Giannattasio, the youth's vision for a trashcan that interacts with its community came to life and has been seen about town encouraging people to 'feed' the trash into the proper place.

Tree Maintenance and Rapping

You may have heard or observed that the dry, hot summer was harsh on Syracuse's young street trees. Those familiar with OEC's work may remember that for several seasons, the crew has been pushing the limit and breaking personal records to plant more and more trees in a single season. They have been successful, and the result has been many, many young street trees you likely see regularly. Summer's record heat presented a real threat to all of that hard work.

As in so many cases before, OEC's crew rose to the challenge and went above and beyond. Not only did the OEC crew water their newest planted trees, but the crew also watered previous generations of OEC trees whenever possible. Tree crew supervisor Ioane Etuale says, "I didn't say anything to them, I just went to check on them one day and they were like, 'Yup, we started watering all of these trees, not just the ones on the list.'" Their willingness to work hard has helped keep many more young trees alive



The OEC crews visit the Metro Wastewater Treatment Plant to learn about their urban water cycle.

this summer.

This tree crew--Shad, Marquise, Tommie and Tationa--have proven themselves in other ways as well. Their outreach efforts have regularly resulted in successful tree sites, and the OEC annual banquet was enlivened by their musical and comedic performances.

"It's great to see youth blossom in their time with us, and I know we will all remember that rap for a long time" Adrienne, tree program assistant, says. Check out the performance she is talking about later this fall on OEC's social media.

Syracuse's green spaces get some TLC: GI crew, Parks crew love a summer job outside

OEC's summer program is the richest part of the year. We often hear from youth that the appeal of OEC's job opportunities is the chance to work outside, 'doing something.' We find that the

hands on work, dynamic pace, and opportunities for leadership are the lasting memories crewmembers take with them after exiting the program.

This summer, the worksites spanned the city, from a native plants garden at Kirk Park, to rain gardens at James Pass Arboretum in Tipp Hill. The youth learned hands on skills in landscaping, green infrastructure, tool and road safety, and a wealth of ecological knowledge. "This is the kind of work I love," Ryan Gilmore, Parks crew member, says happily at the end of the program. Check out more details from the crew on our social media pages and the video on "OEC Impact."

Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! OEC and partners promote smart harbor practices

Did you know that boat steward programs are highly popular elsewhere in the state for protecting against aquatic invasive



species? Did you know Oneida Lake hosts thousands of out of state professional fishermen every summer? And did you also know that aquatic invasive plants stand to significantly reduce the local recreation economy if left unchecked? It's all true!

That's why OEC is excited to be a part of a new partnership with The Finger Lakes Institute, Onondaga Environmental Institute, New York Department of Environmental Conservation, and Onondaga County Parks this summer. With this team, OEC has trained and supervised Ameri*Corps interns to conduct outreach and boat checks at Onondaga Lake and Oneida Lake in hopes of improving and protecting water quality in Onondaga and Oneida Lake.

By interacting with boaters at the boat launch and recording types of plants found on boats and boat trailers, the boat stewards contribute directly to aquatic invasive species awareness and efforts to track their spread. Over the course of the summer, the team inspected hundreds of boats and boat trailers, speaking to their owners and other recreators about the impact the species could have and the simple steps we can all take to prevent their spread and



Top: Devontae, from the Young Adult Crew, explores the watershed divide with a friend!

Above: Tom, Wil and Quan of the Green Infrastructure Crew bonding during problem solving challenges at Summer Orientation at Alverna Heights



preserve our lakes' water quality. Find out more at www.oei2.org or www.fingerlakesinvasives.org.

OEC and HOPE partner again for Hyde Park

Hands On Preservation

Experience came to Hyde Park this year to restore building and lands that once belongs to Eleanor Roosevelt. OEC recruited and trained five young adults for the project. With guidance and expertise from the National Parks Service, the OEC crew packed up for a three month stay at Val-Kil, NY to learn important window and building restoration techniques and valuable professional skills. The crew has successfully restored the playhouse windows and will be moving on to reframing and painting work that will provide years more use for visitors to this national history site.

Unlike other OEC program, the HOPE crew will continue through the end of September, so please keep watch for our success stories in our Fall newsletter and social media pages!

From Top to Bottom, Left to Right: Devontae and Eli work side by side to restore the playhouse at Hyde Historic National Park.

Youth volunteers help the crew during a community event at Dr. Weeks Elementary School.

Connect the Drops Crew show off their arsenal of games and engagement tools while conducting outreach to stop litter in Syracuse.

The Aquatic Invasive Species Boat Stewards got to visit with ESF researcher Luke Kirby, who brought the team for a tour of Onondaga Lake and demonstrated aquatic invasive species harvest and identification.



Save the Date!

October 22, 2016

OEC's Annual Tastes of the World Dinner
6pm at Grace Episcopal Church, Syracuse, NY
For more details ticket, please visit
www.onondagaearthcorps.org

Save the Date!

November 5th, 2016

Join OEC and Cornell Cooperative Extension
to plant trees in Syracuse!
More details available at:
www.cceonondaga.org

ABOUT THE ONONDAGA EARTH CORPS

The Onondaga Earth Corps (OEC) is a youth development and employment program for youth ages 15 to 25 living in the City of Syracuse. As youth work on community and environmental service projects, they learn valuable job and life skills, community based problem solving skills, civic engagement, and environmental stewardship and technical skills.

OEC began in 2004 as the Eli MacDonald Green Team, a neighborhood initiative to beautify the community and employ youth. In 2005, the program changed its name to the Onondaga Earth Corps and incorporated the youth conservation corps model. Since then, under the leadership of many community collaborators, the OEC has become a leading force in revitalizing our urban environment through urban forestry, green infrastructure and outreach efforts throughout the City of Syracuse.

OEC activities are made possible in part by funding from Onondaga County's Save the Rain campaign, as well as our ongoing support from Onondaga Environmental Institute and SUNY Educational Opportunity Center.

THE VISION

- Help youth understand the relationship between people and the urban ecosystem
- Engage youth in hands-on community and environment 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.

DONATE YOUR TIME, TALENT, CAPITAL

Support the work of the Onondaga Earth Corps however suits you best! We are always looking for creative ways to grow our program. YOU CAN HELP! Visit www.onondagaearthcorps.org for more details.

CONTACT

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