



Follow us on social media to find out about cool volunteer events next year!
www.onondagaearthcorps.org/events

Fall 2017 Testimonials

Our fall season has been full of community events as well as events celebrating the youth of OEC; a couple of standout events come to mind— the fall crew graduation and our fall retreat with staff and crew. As a wonderful and fruitful season comes to an end, we at OEC are reminded of our mission to support CNY's local youth and how grateful and proud we are to carry out this mission. Below, we have shared some of their experiences in their own words and pictures.



"I think [OEC] has changed the look of the urban community"

"Just having the trees in neighborhoods that don't have as many trees has given them such a better look"

"I would like to do more social projects where we speak to the community. More projects with the kids."

"[OEC] made me care more about my community being clean and more united."

"[OEC has changed my attitude so much] I probably would

never get a job indoors again."

"It changed my attitude by making me take my work seriously."

"[OEC makes a difference because] the more trees we put in the ground the better Onondaga Lake is getting."

"I learned teamwork really does make the dream work, also I learned to step outside my comfort zone and speak to people more. You never know who you are talking to."

- Fall 2017 Crew Members

NEWS

Fall 2017

OEC had another stellar season this Fall! Our crews and staff were hard at work taking advantage of some beautiful fall weather— planting trees, maintaining green infrastructure sites and attending our annual ENCORE fundraiser!

Don't miss the chance to catch up with all of the good times OEC has had this season on our [blog](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) [page!](#)

www.onondagaearthcorps.org





OEC young adult crew members, former staff and CCE staff having a gala time at ENCORE 2017

ENCORE 2017

For OEC, celebrating the Day of Giving came early, on November 4th at our annual fundraising dinner at May Memorial Unitarian Universal Society, "Earth Corps Encore 2017: Celebrating Youth, Building Community."

A delicious meal was catered by Bull & Bear Grill, and Dick Ford provided us with enjoyable tunes on the piano. The minister and staff at May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society helped create the perfect venue for us to dine and talk and delight in entertainment from the OEC crew members and staff, past and present, and from the outstanding performances from the Dance Theater of Syracuse.

Each of the directors from the OEC board and family members found ways to support our mission with their time, energy and resources to make the 4-hour event fun and smooth, even when the unanticipated arose. Delivering camaraderie with generosity, our OEC crew members gathered the courage to tell their stories about the ways the OEC has changed their lives, particularly as they fielded questions from the guests.

We honored fellow staff member, Adrienne Canino, with a unique, well-deserved tribute. Master of Ceremonies and Executive Director Greg Michel's sense of humor, leadership and profound passion to serve the OEC communities of young people, not only on Nov. 4th, but throughout the days, weeks and months, year after year, provide the inspiration to all of us.

—Ann Kornbluth
Board Member

Fund Development Committee Chairperson

Emerald Ash Replacement Project

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) continues to pose a threat to the forests of the northeast, and has created new challenges, but also new opportunities for Onondaga Earth Corps.

Being an invasive insect, EAB is out of place in the ecosystems of upstate New York. While it has found an abundant food supply in the live tissue of ash trees, it lacks natural predators to keep its population growth under control.

As a result, the ash borer population has exploded, expanding to new areas at a dizzying rate, and leaving no surviving ash trees behind. Because ash are popular street and park trees, it is often necessary to remove the dead to reduce the risk of property damage and human injury as the trees begin to decay and fall apart.

Working with the Town of Dewitt at Ryder Park and with Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District (OCSWCD) at Oneida Shores Park, the OEC crew (temporarily) left the urban parks and tree lawns of Syracuse City to restore forested areas which had been damaged by the ash borer by replanting with new trees that will not be as susceptible to pest damage.

Hopefully, with ongoing care and attention, the tree canopy of these parks and forests will return to their former glory.

—Nick Garty



Oneida Shores crew ecstatic after successfully planting 269 Trees!

Community Stream Restoration Project in the Tully Valley

This fall, OEC and partners at the Onondaga Environmental Institute continued to work on restoration of brook trout habitat along Onondaga Creek and one of its tributaries in the Tully Valley.

Trees were planted along the creek to shade water, lower water temperatures increasing dissolved oxygen levels, create a more conducive environment for trout as well as other species of fish, and to improve the overall health of the waterway.

To this end, the majority of planting this year focused on the creek banks on Tully Farms Road where fast-growing, shade providing, water loving tree species (e.g. willow, cottonwood) were planted close to the water, and slower growing tree species like sycamore and oak further back from the banks for more long-term future shade provision.

OEC also installed sturdy fencing around all of the trees we planted to protect them from deer, beavers, and rodents. A community planting event was held in September, where volunteers, including some Onondaga Nation participants, planted trees with us. Over 50, 8th graders from Lafayette High School were also brought out for a science class field trip to learn about the creek, our planting project, and to get their hands dirty.

This project has been a fun opportunity to work in a beautiful location by the refreshing creek, while learning about and improving our waterways and wildlife habitat as well as an important educational piece in considering the diversity of factors that contribute to the health of our lake.

- Safia Gravel



(L to R) Volunteers and OEC Crew Maurice, Kani taking a break while planting in Tully Valley



(L to R) Clare Carney, Miranda and Tim removing sod at the STR Brighton Tree Planting event

Fall 2017 Save the Rain Tree Planting

This fall, OEC planted a total of 566 street trees for our county's Save the Rain (STR) program.

Most trees went into the Brighton neighborhood, with significant additions to the Southside, Southwest, Near Westside, and Strathmore neighborhoods. These trees will capture tens of thousands of gallons of storm water in their first year and will continue to do so as they grow.

Home Headquarters' Block Blitz on the Southside of Syracuse was a major fall highlight. 15 new street trees were planted by OEC along with a huge group of volunteers who came together to improve and beautify the neighborhood. It was exciting to see what a positive impact many hands made on a neighborhood!

OEC's community planting event was held in the Brighton neighborhood at McKinley-Brighton Elementary School, and 79 trees were planted all over the neighborhood on a Saturday morning. About 135 volunteers turned out to help! OEC began the day with communal breakfast, some stretching and then taught everyone how to plant trees. The event was a great success, it brought diverse groups of people together, even many residents and homeowners came out to help. We look forward to planting more trees for Save the Rain in Spring 2018!

- Safia Gravel

Christian Brothers Academy Greenhouse Visit

Greg Michel, So'Unique Harrison, and Jeanne Mastrandrea visited and met with the CBA (Christian Brothers Academy) greenhouse club twice this fall season.

The first visit OEC got to meet the students and work with club members to clean out the greenhouse and help devise a plan regarding composting, water collection, and heating.

The second visit OEC was able to begin planting seeds in small pots with club members. We had some mystery seeds as well as asters, blue lobelia and milkweed to keep it fun for the high school students. The plants that were sown in small pots were left inside to germinate and will be given a cold period. Some have successfully germinated already!

Working with these students has taught the club about the importance of cold stratification. OEC has given them echinacea and milkweed seeds to hold on to for the winter months. We look forward to meeting up with this club again in spring to see how the plants and students have progressed from this project.

- Jeanne Mastrandrea

Onondaga Lake Shoreline

This fall, the young adult crew came out to help restore the shoreline at Onondaga Lake. The crew on this day consisted of Miranda Werntz, Thomas Pileski, Kai Stenson, and So'Unique Harrison. This was an optional project for our crew. It was commendable of them to join us on this brisk fall day. Our crew and staff came together to plant 880 dogwood trees on November 21st. Tree team staff Safia Gravel, Nick Garty, and Jeanne Mastrandrea devised a planting plan with Eva Sztchmiller's (Soil and Water) help.

The dogwoods were spaced evenly in the designated planting areas which were pre-marked by Eva. The efforts of Soil and Water staff and OEC staff and crew Greg Michel, Meqdad Salehi, Eli MacDonald, and Alexander



Onondaga Lake Shoreline crew poses after planting



Green Infrastructure crew working on transplants on the Townsend Median

Agosto made the day very enjoyable for all and allowed us to get the trees in the ground quickly.

Working with Soil and Water was a breeze and the people in the park really seemed to appreciate OEC's work. It was a great last planting project for our team as a whole and OEC is honored to help out on the Onondaga Lake Shoreline which is a special and remarkable place in our region.

- Jeanne Mastrandrea

Green Infrastructure (GI) Fall Projects

GI's biggest event in the fall was three days of transplanting with our subcontractors Ms. Green Jeans, and Project Joseph. A total of 520 plants were transplanted from various sites and relocated to the S Townsend St. median, the OnCenter surface lot, Skiddy Park, Comfort Tyler Park, and the W. Onondaga St Green Corridor. A total of fifteen people participated. Hong Bin, from Atlantic States Legal Foundation & Project Joseph and Julie from Ms. Green Jeans were on hand to collaborate on this project. Alex and Stephan OEC's Green Infrastructure assistant crew leaders and OEC crew members Tim and Miranda were all present to lend a hand.

The 520 transplants included species like iris, coneflower, black eyed Susan, day lily, aster, sedum, phlox, catmint, and different types of grasses to bring more color to our targeted area and beautify it. Seeds were collected from the Townsend St. Median, James Pass Arboretum and the Zoo entrance at Wilbur Ave. They were then planted at the other locations, as well as conserved for future use elsewhere.

The three days of planting were hard work but were also fun and afforded lots of opportunities for training. The crew learned how to divide and transplant the saplings or

seeds. They also learned what the right season and time are to ideally carry out transplants. Crew members also learned a great deal about best practices related to post-transplant care. A great time was had by all, and everyone had a great learning experience as well.

- Meqdad Salehi

Ryder Park Planting with Town of Dewitt

On Saturday, October 14th, Onondaga Earth Corps came together with the Town of DeWitt to hold a community tree planting at Ryder Park.

Volunteers came from the surrounding neighborhoods in Dewitt and Fayetteville, from the local schools, and from the Dewitt Tree Committee. After an introduction from Town of Dewitt's naturalist Christine Manchester, OEC's executive director Greg Michel, and arborist Jim Maloney, volunteers and OEC crew members set out to plant 53 small hardwood trees to replace ash trees which had been or will be removed after damage from the emerald ash borer.

During the planting, Ryder Park's butterfly garden became

the site of a new and exciting invasive species research project. 100 Hemlock shrubs were planted to support a population of hemlock wooly adelgid, a pest which has been damaging hemlock forests. By housing this pest, scientists from Cornell University can study the best methods for controlling the pest's spread and eliminating it.

- Nick Garty



Volunteers helping to plant Hemlock trees around the butterfly garden at Ryder Park.

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.

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.onondagaeearthcorps.org for more details.

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.

CONTACT

Contact Onondaga Earth Corps Staff at
315-565-3797 or email via
onondagaeearthcorps@gmail.com
or visit us on the web:

www.onondagaeearthcorps.org
www.facebook.com/theonondagaeearthcorps



The Power of
Opportunity



Save the Rain

SUNY EOC
Syracuse Educational Opportunity Center