



FALL 2018

At OEC this fall, things have been winding down as we prepare for the holiday season. We've been preparing for the winter months by pruning trees throughout the city and making plans for the coming year! Don't miss the chance to catch up with all of the good times OEC has had this season on our [Facebook page!](#)



Follow us on social media to find out about all of our cool volunteer events this winter!



OEC representatives at Partners in Community Forestry Conference in Orange County, California

PCF Conference a Great Opportunity

BY TAY STENSON

My experience at the Partners in Community Forestry Conference was quite a game changer for myself. I was very excited and appreciative of the opportunity to speak on behalf of our team/program. I've had many opportunities since working for OEC but this one has been the best one yet. I networked with great individuals whom I hope that I left a great impression on. I always enjoy hearing about other programs and what they're doing. I think it is great for all of us to get together and share our experiences to get ideas on how to execute on things that we may have in common but just don't know how to go about.

After my presentation, we had a few people come up to us and inquire on how to start a program very similar to ours. It felt good to know that we inspire others and are also a little ahead of the game. I think its very important for young people like myself to experience things like this, as it broadens your horizon and puts a different prospective on things. I hope to inspire the youth and other young adults of not only our program but community to pursue opportunities like these.

Winter Season Begins!

BY NICK GARTY

The end of 2018 brings an exciting future for OEC: regularly scheduled winter work! This year the advanced young adult (AYA) crew will continue their structural pruning efforts into the cold months. Work is part time, but almost all of the crew have second jobs to sustain them through the winter. This program allows the team to stay together and keep gaining work experience while meeting to explore more permanent job opportunities for the spring when many environmental employers begin hiring.

In the past OEC has had avenues for winter employment through the Snow Corps program, clearing sidewalks and shoveling steps. This work, however, was dependent on weather and could often inconsistent. Now, OEC can provide its crewmembers with a stable option to remain in the program through the season that is traditionally the hardest time to find work.

Another Successful Season for Tree-Planting

BY KELLY McDERMITT-WISE

Fall was a very busy time for the tree program. We planted 569 trees in every city neighborhood and 192 of them were planted in city parks. The tree planting crew has become expert tree planters since the first trees of spring.

Some of the highlights of the fall season were planting at the Home Headquarters Block Blitz on September 14th in the Elmwood Neighborhood. The tree and GI crews joined hundreds of volunteers to plant trees and clean up brush growth from Elmwood Park. It was fulfilling for all of us to be part of an event that gives back to the neighborhood in such a huge way.

Arbor Day planting was held at the LeMoyne Elementary School. For this event we partnered with Cornell Cooperative Extension, The Syracuse Parks Department and National Grid. We planted 13 Quercus Bicolor trees with the first grade class. These little children had so much fun in the rain that day. They were eager to get dirty, dig with shovels and save the worms. Our crew did an excellent job relating to them and teaching them the benefits of these new trees at their school. We plan to do education at the LeMoyne School as these little ones will grow up with these trees.

The tree crew worked with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition and Tioga County Soil and Water in October to clear sod from three homes along Tully Lake to plant over 300 native plants and trees. These plantings will help with shore line erosion and increase water quality. Shore line restoration work is highly rewarding and the homeowners were pleased with our work.

It is satisfying to drive through Syracuse and see the many young trees planted this year. Each one represents the efforts of Onondaga Earth Corps and is a memory that the crew takes pride in.



LeMoyne Elementary School students help plant trees for Arbor Day

G.I. Crew Keeping the City Clean

BY MEQDAD ABDUL ALI

Onondaga Earth Corps Green Infrastructure program consisted of site maintenance for 21 Onondaga County green infrastructure sites associated with the implementation of the County's Save the Rain initiative. The program allowed both youth and young adults to develop professional skills while fulfilling contractual site maintenance requirements for the County. Generally, the schedule allowed for field work Monday through Thursday, and Friday's were reserved for crews personal development to work on their skills sets, short, and long term goals.

We removed approximately 804 gallons of trash, and 243 cubic yards of debris over the course of the project. As part of this project, we had 20 dedicated training sessions that included project/program orientation, natural water cycles and combined sewer/stormwater systems, pruning, weed identification, conventional wastewater treatment, wetlands' green and gray infrastructure training sessions.

We also had environmental educational trainings with Percy Hughes Elementary school 5th graders, and Fowler High School students on raingarden functions, plant Identifications, watershed model, and waste water management.



Quan and the Youth Crew at Encore 2018

Highlights of the 2018 Youth Corps

BY QUAN PETTEWAY

This season at Onondaga Earth Corps the youth crew has been great. We spent the season monitoring air quality and planting trees. We hosted community plantings at Oneida Shores and Union park. We also participated in a community planting at Kirk Park. The youth had an amazing experience learning about the environment and gaining new skills that can be useful in the future.

We monitored air on each side of Syracuse. Each crew member had a specific job in this activity. One crew member measured the feet in-between sites, one crew member measured temperature and wind speed while the others counted cars, tracked time and monitored the pollutants in the air. In the areas where there is high air pollution the youth plan to plant evergreen trees.

Throughout our season we were shadowed by a Syracuse University Student, Stormy Mendez. Stormy attends the New House school and featured the youth crew in a magazine that she was working on for her class. The crew was excited find out that they would be in a magazine and enjoyed being interviewed. The youth were able to talk about the areas of the programs which they loved and were they felt we need to make improvements.

Overall members of the crew had a very successful year they were able to socialize and obtained friendships with different peers that would have never interacted with if not for Earth Corps. One crew member was able to visit the college that he has been anticipated on attending and stated that Earth Corps aided in his decision of the career path that he wants to pursue and they each were able to become social.

Caring For Your Trees in the Winter

BY NICK GARTY

Winter is here, that doesn't mean you need to stop caring for your trees! If you maintain your trees, winter is an excellent time to prune both for the tree and for you. Below is helpful information about why winter is a fantastic time to maintain your trees. If you are unfamiliar with tree pruning, please consult an arborist or reach out to OEC for tree maintenance advice.

- Pruning after a tree has dropped its leaves makes it easier to see the branch structure so you can prune where the tree needs it most.
- When the tree breaks dormancy, the new shoots will reach for the sun evenly, filling in areas where you removed branches.
- Pruning while your tree is dormant reduces the effects of stress, and the wounds made by pruning will begin to heal in the spring, when the tree is growing most vigorously.
- Winter is the time of year when airborne diseases and spores are least active, meaning your tree is less likely to get an infection as a result of pruning.
- You may notice sap "bleeding" from cuts you have made. This is normal, especially with maples, and does not harm the tree.



Encore 2018 Celebrates a Year of Service BY ALEX COLEMAN-GRIDLEY

The Onondaga Earth Corps marked the end of the 2018 season with Encore, its annual fundraiser and celebration of service. The event was held on November 3rd at the May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society and featured food catered by Pastabilities and live music from Colleen Kattau and Kaelem Michel. Graduates of OEC's Youth and Young Adult programs were given a chance to speak on stage to share their memories of the program, and a Q&A session was held between Earth Corps employees and the audience.

The fundraiser was well-attended, with vendors, partners, and family members of employees coming to show their support for the work OEC has done for both the community and the youth it employs. Attendees gave a \$20 donation at the door and could make a further donation if they wished. Several more guests were unable to attend, but gave donations through the OEC website.

Overall, Encore 2018 was a great success. It offered a chance for OEC and all its supporters to reflect on the work done over the course of the year and truly appreciate the experiences its many programs have provided for youth.



OEC Staff & Youth on Stage at May Memorial, Encore 2018

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 in 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.onondagearthcorps.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 project
- Train youth for future jobs and careers in environmental fields

