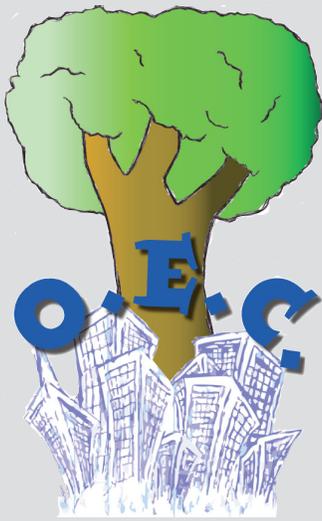




NEWS

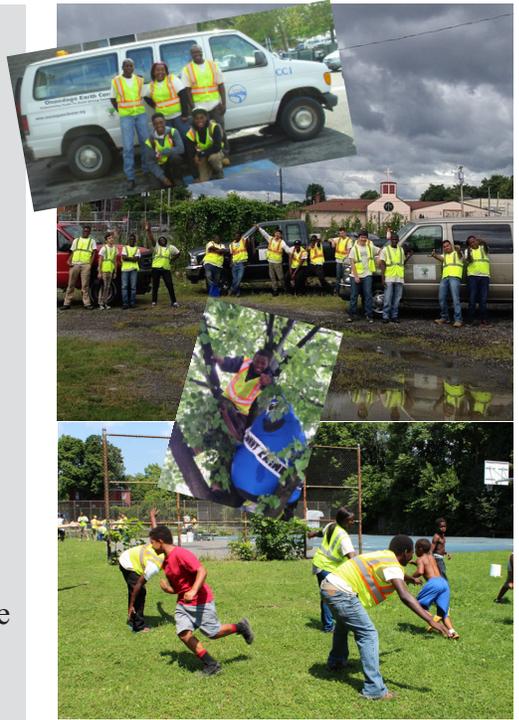
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www.onondagaearthcorps.org

Summer kicked-off with our Orientation held at Orenda Springs Experimental Learning Center. Fifteen youth joined 7 young adults to water trees, maintain green infrastructure sites throughout the city, clean the streets and to educate the community about why these initiatives are important. Youth also engaged community members to work with OEC and our partners to identify tree planting sites, adopt the care of trees, and pledge to keep our city's streets clean.

Stay tuned for updates on fall planting and our 10th year anniversary event.



Top: Summer crew members in their fleets. Bottom: Trees Save the Rain game.

With 470 trees planted in the spring and one of our most programatically robust summers ever, many thanks are due to our supporters! Thank you to our Save the Rain partners -- Onondaga County WEP, City of Syracuse Parks Dept., Cornell Cooperative Extension -- the Community Foundation, the Gifford Foundation, Boxcar Press, Sun Auto, Onondaga Environmental Institute, SUNY Educational Opportunity Center, and Syracuse Housing Authority.

OEC is Turning 10

OEC launched its first summer program as the *Eli MacDonald Green Team* in 2004. The following summer, Eli and other program founders incorporated the youth conservation corps model and changed the name to the Onondaga Earth Corps. Since taking on the conservation corps model, OEC has just completed its 10th year of programming and it is time to celebrate, reflect, and pave the way for another decade of success for youth, the communities we serve and our environment.

Since the inception of the program, OEC has trained and employed 135 youth to plant over 1800 trees, install 10 rain gardens, educate thousands of children and adults about the importance of the urban environment, and log thousands of hours maintaining green infrastructure installations throughout Syracuse.

Join OEC's advisory board, crew



Save the Date!

10 Year Anniversary Celebration

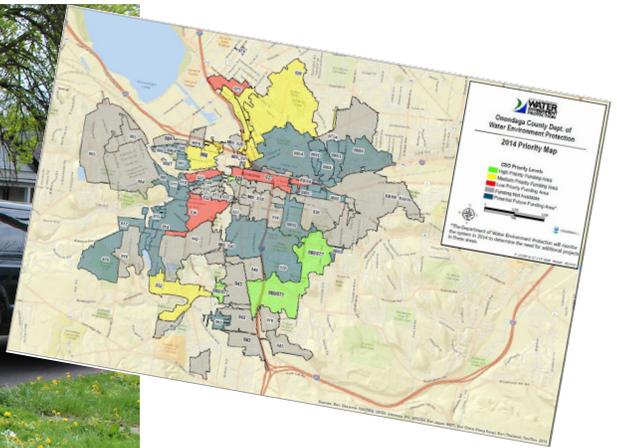
November 14th, 2014
6:00 - 9:00 PM



and family members, staff and community partners that have built this program over the past decade. The

event will highlight the accomplishment of the past 10 years and aspirations for the next 10!

If you Have a Spot for a Tree OEC will Plant for FREE!



OEC needs community support to identify and receive approval for 100s of tree planting sites.

OEC staff and crew members pose with volunteers from the Gifford Foundation after planting one of 470 new street trees planted in the spring of 2014. You could be the next lucky property to have a free tree! Contact OEC at 315-565-3797 to see if your property is eligible.

Since 2013 OEC has teamed up with Onondaga County's Save the Rain (StR) Urban Forestry Program to plant trees towards the county's goal of 8500 to help keep storm water out of the storm drains and protect Onondaga Lake. Since 2013, OEC has planted 1170 trees as a part of this program and planning is in the works to plant another 450 trees this fall.

For each tree that is planted, OEC and Cornell Cooperative Extension go through a lengthy community engagement process to receive home owner or landlord/renter approval in priority areas targeted by Save the Rain.

First, CCE and OEC staff conduct outreach with neighborhood and community groups to inform them about the opportunity for free trees in priority areas as part of the StR program. These priority areas are determined by stormwater models that show what combined sewer overflows are occurring. Based on these target areas, OEC and CCE staff reach out to community businesses, not-for-profits, and rental property owners to identify interested parties.

Next, we survey StR priority areas for blocks that have ideal plant-

ing conditions, such as wide spaces between the sidewalk and the curb, low probability of utility conflicts, and high numbers of available planting sites. Based on preliminary surveys, teams of OEC crew members and OEC and CCE staff contact people over the phone or go door-to-door to talk with home owners about planting trees in available site. Crews site trees for available planting sites while they onsite talking to home owners. Siting requires that each tree be minimum distances away from sidewalks, driveways, utilities, and other trees. Each tree is approved before getting logged by CCE into a planting plan.

One Northside resident recruited 22 of his neighbors to become proud recipients of new StR trees this summer!

The work does not end with owner approval for each site. Once sites are approved and the best tree for that particular location is chosen, OEC marks the sites with white flags and

calls Dig Safely NY (811). Dig Safely NY then notifies utilities responsible for electric, water, sewer, gas and telecommunication infrastructure. The appropriate companies notify OEC if there are any conflicts with planting the tree in our marked locations. Once all the utilities have confirmed that there are no conflicts, we are finally ready to plant your tree!

This fall and next spring, OEC and StR partners will be planting trees and will go through this process for all approvals. OEC and CCE knocked on almost 900 doors this summer but we still need help to spread the word.

There are many ways that you can help! First, contact CCE at 315-424-9485 x or email yz748@cornell.edu to find out if you are located in a StR target area. Next:

- 1) Host a neighborhood gathering with us to tell your neighbors about the opportunity.
- 2) Contact your neighbors and see if they are interested in a free tree.
- 3) If you are eligible for a tree, consider adopting your tree(s). (see article on page 3)

Youth Recruit Tree Adopters and Support for Save the Rain



Crew members and staff from Cornell Cooperative Extension pose with homeowner who has just approved a planting site and volunteered to adopt her new tree. Call OEC today to find out if you have a site for a tree or if there are trees in need of care.

Youth and young adults from OEC were out this summer caring for trees as well as recruiting community members to join us as stewards of the urban forest. To date 112 of the 1170 trees planted by OEC have been “adopted”. Newly planted urban trees face many challenges to survival including weed whacker and lawn mower damage, narrow tree lawns, poor soil conditions, road salt, snow accumulation from plowing, and vandalism. To overcome these challenges, trees need help!

Through the Save the Rain Adopt-A-Tree program, OEC youth recruit homeowners to participate in caring for newly planted trees. These Adopters then become valuable members of our OEC tree team: they are important ambassadors to their communities about the benefits of trees, and have demonstrated their support for urban forestry by taking care of the tree OEC planted at their property. The young trees OEC plants benefit greatly from this extra care, and go on to survive and thrive in the urban environment.

OEC crews conduct outreach for Adopters as they survey for planting

sites, when they plant trees and while they make visits to care for trees. You may also see us at other events such as the Clean Water Fair and Westcott Street Cultural Fair.

Adopters of newly planted trees commit to watering, weeding, and protecting their trees from trunk damage and vandalism. With an adopter, a tree is more likely to survive because of ongoing care and neighborhood appreciation and knowledge of the work that goes into growing a healthy tree and the benefits those street trees provide to our air, our community, and our lake!

Adopters are invited to workshops to learn more about this and urban forestry in general. They are also invited to other OEC hosted events, like community tree planting events.

Interested in joining the Adopt a Tree Program? You may even be eligible for a free tree at your home! Please contact our tree program directly. Even if there is not an opportunity to plant at your property, you can get involved with the trees we plant in parks and other green spaces, and join us in the many other opportunities this program

Save the Date!

*Adopt-A-Tree Workshop
October XX
Location TBD*

*Community Tree Planting
November 8th
Rose Hill Cemetery*

presents!

Learn more about our Adopt a Tree program with the video series OEC will release this fall. Get the news as soon as its released: like us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/theonondagaeearthcorps) and follow us on Twitter (@OnonEarthCorps) for tree news and crew updates. Or visit our website, where we have weekly tree care advisories to Adopters, www.onondagaeearthcorps.org. You can also reach us via e-mail us at onondagaeearthcorps@gmail.com, or phone (315) 565-3797.

OEC Clean Street Crew works with City of Syracuse



Summer 2014 was an exciting time for the newly created OEC-City of Syracuse Clean Streets Crew. The collaboration between the City of Syracuse and OEC tasked OEC crew members with making a visual impact along two highly visual commercial corridors outside of the downtown area. Crew members picked up litter and weeded four days a week in the corridors just outside the downtown business district.

The Clean Streets Crew received training prior to beginning work, in order to make the best impact over the course of the summer. Just before the crew went out into the streets they took a crash course on safety from the Syracuse Department of Public Works (DPW) John Hudson and Chris Divito. They learned the importance of always wearing safety vests, avoiding potentially harmful litter, staying alert of their surroundings at all times, and of course staying away from traffic.

OEC crew members also attended a brain storming session with Save the Rain champions, Tom Rhoads and Madison Quinn, at the Wastewater Treatment Plant to discuss different ways of curbing litter through different policy, infrastructure and communication strategies. We all left that session knowing that if we all as citizens of Syracuse continue to litter, the litter would undoubtedly find itself in Onondaga Lake.

City of Syracuse Deputy Commissioner of the Division of Business Development Ben Walsh also came to discuss with OEC his vision on the development of the Clean Streets program. He discussed avenues of effective and efficient means of making a visual impact in the city of Syracuse with the Clean Street Crew to pump us up before heading out to the streets.

The crew worked through a hot and steamy summer, persevering through rain and traffic, never giving in to the endless amount of trash that collects on the streets from day to day.

To get to the bottom of the reasons why people litter, the Clean Streets Crew designed a litter survey based on their training and experiences talking with project partners. Over the course of the summer, the crew conducted surveys with local businesses and homeowners, asking them questions about their thoughts on litter. The community was very receptive to crew members. The crew also designed a "Clean Streets Pledge" to enroll community members in taking ownership of their streets and making a commitment to keep the streets clean.

Over the entirety of the summer, the Clean Streets Crew surveyed 38 individuals, collected 25 pledges, and picked up 28 extra large bags of litter along the Geddes and Butternut

St. corridors. They also pulled over 40 bags of weeds from green infrastructure along Butternut.

The Clean Streets Crew not only made a great visual impact along Butternut and Geddes, but also engaged community members to make Syracuse a cleaner place. Community members from both the Butternut and Geddes corridors who witnessed OEC picking litter from the streets began to pick up litter from their front yards and sweep up litter from in front of their convenience stores.

The Clean Streets Crew wanted to make sure they could spread their message to the younger generation as well, so they decided to host Onondaga Earth Corps' first ever "Clean-A-Palooza" at Schiller Park on August 6. All of the Onondaga Earth Corps crews helped put together educational activities for youth by setting of tables hosting hand painting, fun games, surveys, and prizes. The visiting youth all split up into various groups and picked up litter inside and around the perimeter of Schiller Park as a competition to see which group could retrieve the most trash and the group with the most trash won prizes.

Clean Streets Crew taught the youth how to pick up litter safely and even got them to pledge to keep their community clean. The event was a great success and every one had an awesome time that day.



I pledge to keep Syracuse beautiful by:

1. Regularly cleaning up litter and caring for green spaces in front of my home or store.
2. Never littering.
3. Encouraging others to always use a trash can and do their best to keep Syracuse clean too!



Crew members and staff gather round trash collected during Clean-A-Palooza event held at Schiller Park on August 6th. OEC Clean Streets Crew organized the event for community center youth. OEC crews also hosted educational games to inform Northsiders about benefits of trees and the opportunity for free trees.

The Clean Streets Crew had a fun time this summer weeding and mulching tree pits, picking up litter, and surveying storeowners and homeowners. Crew members learned a lot about the profound effects that litter has on the surrounding community, and the variety of ways of curtailing litter. The Clean Streets Crew has confidence that the community members who signed onto the pledge will continue to not litter themselves, encourage others in their community to not litter and instead use a trash can, and on a regular basis clean up litter in the green spaces in front of their home or store. Our green infrastructure in Syracuse, NY depends on them to do just that!



OEC crews hosted educational games to inform Northsiders about benefits of trees and the opportunity for free trees at Clean-A-Palooza

Caring for Trees & Rain Gardens - Crafting Social Media Messages



Top left: Beatrice demonstrates how to water a newly planted tree using buckets during the filming of a “how to” video. Top Right: Children from the Bishop Foery Center Cyrell poses with Ronnie Raindrop during filming of video about how trees capture rain water.

Onondaga Earth Corps employed 8 youth through our partnership with CNYWorks Youth Program this summer. After our orientation trip at Orenda Springs, the youth began a summer of work in tree maintenance, green infrastructure maintenance, community outreach and their youth-led project: a social media campaign featuring a new series of videos and new social media channels for OEC.

Once again, OEC partnered with Onondaga Environmental Institute and the Environmental Finance Center, to create the social media campaign and supporting videos. The Youth crew then created 3 tree care videos and 2 story-telling videos to express the importance of urban forestry and environmental stewardship in Syracuse. The youth also decided to start an Instagram social media channel, based on OEC resources, with support for a Twitter account in the future. The crew designed the new OEC Social Media Policy and Methods manual with input from Environmental Finance Center, Onondaga Environmental Institute, and OEC Executive Director. This

document now guides the program’s continued use of these methods.

All of these developments are new and exciting for OEC, and having youth input and energy created a meaningful project for spreading the word about OEC and its programs. “One of the top requests we get from youth when we ask about creating more impact is to expand our social media presences,” says Adrienne, OEC program assistant. “It was really important to have their buy-in through the start-up process.”

In addition to these projects, the youth teamed up with OEC young adult crew members to water, prune and weed 110 of the 958 trees the program is responsible for caring for. Youth crews also taught Bishop Foery’s youth how to care for trees in nearby McKinley Park. OEC crew members mentored and worked alongside the younger youth of the summer program to learn about the benefits of trees and how to help them survive. Additionally, the youth integrated with the Green Infrastructure maintenance program to service 7 sites this summer.

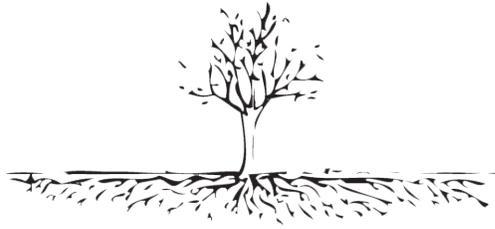


Top: Crew members film using green screen technology. Bottom: Crew members weed at Pass Arboretum.

Nurturing Roots 2014 Fundraising Campaign

In 2014 OEC is embarking on its first major fund development campaign to raise \$40,000 towards building the infra-structural and administrative backbone necessary to grow the program and make a stable leap in to becoming a 501 (c) (3).

With great fortune OEC is off to a good start. One of our favorite local companies -- Boxcar Press/Smock/Bella Figura -- hosted a sidewalk sale in August, some proceeds of which will benefit OEC. Passionate supporter of OEC, Patty Weisse, worked with the OEC board to host a fundraiser event at the Spa500 on September 10th. Thank you Patty and thanks to all at Boxcar Press!



OEC crew members hold up their letterpress printed airplanes at the August 14th Smock Sidewalk Sale. A contribution was made to OEC for each airplane that completed a "paper airplane golf course" that went through Smock's facility.



Community Need

Youth in the City of Syracuse face tremendous challenges including, high rates of unemployment, poverty and crime; increasingly limited funding for not-for-profit educational and social services; historic disinvestment in many of the City's neighborhoods; and disproportionate environmental risks and hazards. Youth are also often perceived as a problem for communities to solve rather than an asset and opportunity for revitalization. OEC provides a unique opportunity that addresses these challenges from numerous angles.

The Response - OEC

OEC uses the same conservation corps model that has been used successfully and effectively throughout the United States since the 1930's to address critical environmental and human service needs. Onondaga Earth Corps provides youth with:

- a positive work environment that promotes success for all youth no matter what their challenges
- job readiness and professionalism training
- workers safety and logistics training
- technical training in urban forestry, landscaping and green infrastructure
- leadership and life skills training and in-the-field practice

- meaningful community based youth-led service projects, such as tree planting, street clean up, and videos that improve conditions in the communities we serve
- tools and knowledge to educate the community about important environmental issues and civic engagement

OEC Needs your Support!

While OEC has been successful in growing capacity through partnerships, grants and fee based work, much of the infrastructure and staff time necessary to provide youth with the support they need to successfully complete our programs as well as to prepare them for future jobs or schooling is not covered by grant or fee-based deliverables. OEC is rallying our support base to build our capacity.

Organizational Capacity Building

In 2004 OEC launched as an 8 week summer program with no dedicated staff and one crew of 14-18 year olds. In 2014 OEC has five staff (1 FT, 4 PT), three crews and is operating close to year round. In 2014, the OEC Advisory Board has been developing policies and procedures to make the transition from program to organization. Steps the Board is taking to bring policies, systems and infrastructure in line with the growth of OEC include:

- hiring Executive Director
- development of employee handbook
- filing as a 501 (c) (3)
- developing staff training
- purchase truck, crew van, trailers
- establish quality & safety control procedures

Nurturing Roots Campaign -

A tree grows and thrives above ground when the environment at its feet is just right. Preparing a healthy environment for roots to spread underground and to absorb nutrients is equally important to the sunlight, water and protection trees receive above ground. So too is the case with the youth in Onondaga Earth Corps. While growth with our crew members is evident through their attitude, work and pride, there is much work "below the ground" that fosters their growth. Our *Nurturing Roots Campaign* focuses on generating support to fund the "roots" of Onondaga Earth Corps as an organization that enable us to provide the youth development, career support, life coaching and empowerment that is essential for the continuation and success of Onondaga Earth Corps. If OEC raises just \$20 for each of the trees youth will plant in 2014, to support these costs, we will reach our goal of \$20,000.

Visit www.onondagaeearthcorps.org and click on "invest in OEC" to learn more about how you can contribute.



ABOUT THE ONONDAGA EARTH CORPS

The Onondaga Earth Corps (OEC) is a youth development and employment program for youth ages 15-25 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, environmental stewardship and technical skills in urban forestry and other urban green infrastructure.

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 Syracuse.

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
onondagaeearthcorps@gmail.com
 or visit us on our website at
www.onondagaeearthcorps.org
 315-565-3797

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.



Onondaga Environmental Institute is the fiscal sponsor of the Onondaga Earth Corps.



OEC activities are made possible in part through collaboration with Syracuse Educational Opportunity Center.

ONONDAGA EARTH CORPS
 wants you to

