



IMPACT REPORT 2024

SAN JOSE
CONSERVATION
CORPS+CHARTER
SCHOOL



OUR MISSION

San Jose Conservation Corps and Charter School develops young adults to create transformational change for our community and our planet.

In 2024, San Jose Conservation Corps corpsmembers took on important leadership roles in our community and within our organization. Externally, they took on exciting new projects that advance both our environmental goals and their post-secondary skills. For one of these projects, corpsmembers maintain a recycling database and operate a call center to help the public recycle hard-to-recycle materials. This develops their data management and customer service skills while getting our community closer to zero waste.

Within the organization, we recognized that to truly center our corpsmembers in everything that we do, their voices need to be included in feedback loops and decision-making. Our Corpsmember Council was reinvigorated as a representative body that participates in strategy meetings with our management team, provides feedback on new initiatives, and advises on what needs to change to improve the corpsmember experience. Amplifying corpsmember voices in this way has changed how the Corps operates for the better. We strive to continuously improve in everything we do and look forward to sharing those highlights with you next year.

OUR VISION

A hopeful and sustainable community that nurtures the aspirations of all young people.

SERVICE TO SELF



WELLNESS DRIVES STUDENTS TO SUCCESS

At the Corps' Charter School, wellness and comprehensive student support drive our community school model and student success. Because students have attended, on average, three high schools before enrolling in ours, their path to graduation starts with overcoming personal obstacles. In 2024, we completed our first full year with a dedicated Wellness Center, a welcoming space where students can focus on personal growth while receiving the guidance they need to thrive. Here, students learn to set goals, manage priorities, reduce anxiety, and balance school with the demands of daily life.

Over the year, Wellness Center programs reached more than 200 students through one-on-one meetings, wellness-focused field trips, group activities, and dedicated men's and women's support groups. 2024 graduate Ahmari shared, "The staff provide one-on-one help, not just academic, but outside of school as well. You can talk to any counselor about anything here."

The Wellness Center is part of a broader commitment to meeting all the needs of our students. By removing personal barriers and supporting overall well-being, we create the foundation for lasting academic achievement and lifelong success.



3,581
TRAININGS
COMPLETED

CORPSMEMBERS
SERVED
808

211
HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATES

CINDY'S CALLING CREATING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

Cindy was a corpsmember at the Corps from 2024 to 2025 in the Zero Waste program. She channeled her passion for environmentalism through her work and gained a plethora of skills, training, and certifications, from CPR to operating a forklift. In addition to the opportunities at the Corps, Cindy feels that her role as a corpsmember differed greatly from her previous jobs in that she worked with "many different types of people from different backgrounds," adding that her fellow corpsmembers all supported each other to "have the best outcome."

Cindy continues to live out her passion for zero waste as an Outreach Specialist at Waste Solutions. This allows her to engage the public in environmental stewardship and promote "living a zero waste lifestyle to the best of your ability." Cindy's journey exemplifies our mission of developing young adults like her to create transformational change for our community and our planet.



TRANSITIONING TO PERMANENT HOUSING

San José is ranked the highest in the nation for youth homelessness, making it difficult for many young adults to find an affordable, safe, and stable place to live. At the Corps, 90% of corpsmembers are facing a personal barrier when they join, with 30% of corpsmembers facing homelessness or housing insecurity. For those corpsmembers, our support services team can offer an immediate solution, staying in our on-campus tiny homes that are built by their fellow corpsmembers.

In 2024, corpsmembers spent 2,450 nights in our tiny homes, which gave them the stability to focus on their goals. With time to save money and guidance from staff, all of the tiny home residents who completed the program moved into independent housing, turning a temporary stay into a stepping stone toward long-term success.



FROM CORPSMEMBER TO CASE MANAGER

Arlenni served at the Corps for two years on a variety of projects, from operating emergency shelters to providing zero-waste services to our community. During her time here, she steadily advanced into leadership roles, earning new certifications and gaining skills in team management, customer service, and operations.

When Arleni first joined, she was "without a place to call home." Through our housing program, she was able to move into safe housing, which gave her the stability to focus on her goals. She balanced working at the Corps and a second job, working overnight shifts to save money and move forward in her life journey. "Living in the tiny home allowed me to save money, purchase a car, and regain my sense of direction," she recalls.

Today, Arleni is a Case Manager at LifeMoves, supporting others facing challenges similar to her own. "The Corps made a real difference in my life, and I will always be grateful."





ANSWERING THE CALL OF SERVICE

When disaster strikes, our mission is clear: to stand with communities and offer support when it's needed most. In 2024, corpsmembers demonstrated their commitment to serve by providing critical relief and recovery services following natural disasters. From the wildfires in Los Angeles to Hurricane Helene in North Carolina, crews mobilized quickly to support communities in crisis.

In Los Angeles, corpsmembers worked on stormwater management, installing protective barriers to keep toxic runoff out of the streams and ocean. In North Carolina, they supported hurricane survivors by clearing debris, using chainsaws to cut down fallen trees, and distributing essential supplies to the survivors.

Natural disasters, such as hurricanes, floods, wildfires, and earthquakes, can devastate both the environment and people's lives. Recovery is long and difficult, but it also brings moments of resilience and rebuilding. "I'm driven by the connection I feel to the environment," corpsmember José shares. "Every task makes a difference."



JOSÉ'S PATH TO PURPOSEFUL WORK

After Typhoon Mawar devastated Guam and Hurricane Helene brought flooding to North Carolina, José deployed for four months to support the survivors in both regions. "It opened my eyes to how different communities experience hardship, and it reminds me that no matter where you go, people need help, and they remember kindness."

Guam was his first deployment, where he learned critical skills like navigating disaster zones, using chainsaws to clear fallen trees, and mucking and gutting damaged homes. When he arrived in North Carolina, he felt ready. "I was able to use what I learned in Guam to step up."

Each deployment strengthened José's commitment to service. "I want to be the person I wish I had growing up. If I can make someone's life easier, even for a moment, then I'm doing what I'm meant to do."



RESTORING CALIFORNIA'S FIRST STATE PARK

In 2020, the CZU Lightning Complex Fire burned over 97% of Big Basin State Park, damaging trails, infrastructure, and historic old-growth redwood trees. Since then, State Parks staff and other partners have led ongoing restoration efforts.

In the summer of 2024, our corpsmembers joined the State Parks trail staff for 10 eight-day trips, camping in the park and working on trail recovery. Working on more than 19,000 feet of trail, they cleared 123 hazardous trees, and seven acres of brush and overgrown vegetation, as well as helping to construct new bridges, steps, and retaining walls made from repurposed materials, wood, and logs.

This work not only restored safety and accessibility for future visitors but also gave corpsmembers hands-on experience in environmental restoration and trail maintenance. Their efforts contributed to preserving the legacy of Big Basin and ensuring that guests can enjoy the park for generations to come.



HOURS IN
SERVICE TO THE
COMMUNITY

20,063

57.5
ACRES
CLEARED OF
FIRE FUEL

PARKS AND
GREEN SPACES
MAINTAINED

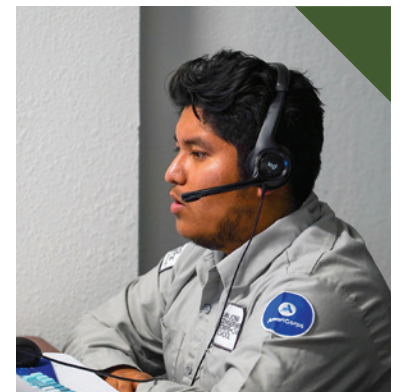
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LOCAL RECYCLING EXPERTS RECYCLESTUFF.ORG

In 2024, the Corps expanded its services by taking on the management of RecycleStuff.org, a recycling database operated in partnership with the Counties of Santa Clara and San Mateo. This resource helps residents find safe, convenient ways to repair, rehome, recycle, or dispose of nearly 300 different hard-to-recycle items or materials.

Corpsmembers now support the public by providing up-to-date information on recycling sites, services, and events such as hazardous waste drop-off. Residents can call the center for personalized help or chat directly with sustainability specialists through the website.

RecycleStuff.org gives the public direct access to tools that support greener choices and promote a shift toward a zero-waste lifestyle. Corpsmembers find purpose in their work by connecting with community members and passing on their knowledge to create a more resilient community.



SERVICE TO COMMUNITY

SERVICE TO ENVIRONMENT



THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDS

The University of California Naturalist program gives corpsmembers the chance to explore local ecosystems, from the redwoods of Santa Cruz to the rolling mountains of the Diablo Range, while learning about geology, plants, water, and what it means to be a steward of the land.

The program deepens their connection to the parks and open spaces they help maintain and encourages both personal and professional growth. "I feel like I am now able to educate people about woodlands, geology, and the environment. It feels good to be able to bring awareness to those who don't know," says corpsmember Andrew. By seeing the bigger picture of conservation, corpsmembers leave with a greater sense of purpose, pride in their impact, and a valuable college credential.

2,019
TONS OF
WASTE DIVERTED

POUNDS OF FOOD RESCUED
AND DISTRIBUTED
157,832

2,074
TONS OF
CO₂ ELIMINATED



THE LIFE OF E-WASTE

Corpsmembers collect over 30,000 pounds of electronic waste per month from residents and local businesses through daily drop-offs, events, and local pickups. Once collected, items are sorted, weighed, and stored on pallets in categories such as monitors, printers, TVs, flat screens, cellphones, laptops, or wires.

Next, a Responsible Recycling-certified recycler transports the E-waste to a recycling center. There, materials that would otherwise end up in landfills are salvaged and repurposed to create new devices. This helps conserve resources and prevent toxic chemicals from polluting the environment. Corpsmember efforts help ensure that these materials continue their life after disposal and don't end in the landfill.



PROTECTING LOCAL AGRICULTURE FROM INVASIVE SPECIES

From backyard to backyard in Alameda County, corpsmembers spent six weeks plucking fruit from neighborhood trees. Not for harvest, but to protect California's crops from one of the world's most destructive pests, the Mediterranean fruit fly.

As part of the state's Medfly quarantine project, crews partnered with the California Conservation Corps and the California Department of Food and Agriculture to collect and safely remove infested fruit from homes in the affected area.

This urgent effort helped prevent the pest from spreading and damaging our local agricultural production. Along the way, corpsmembers gained firsthand experience in protecting food systems and preserving the health of California's farms and gardens by doing the work that keeps our communities and the environment thriving.



FIGHTING FOOD INSECURITY AND DIVERTING WASTE

Food recovery at the Corps is about more than reducing waste, it's about supporting the community. In 2024, nine California Climate Action Fellows led food recovery projects with the Corps, helping businesses meet State Bill 1383 requirements to donate edible food and compost the rest. Together, they recovered 157,832 pounds of food through 617 local pickups.

The recovered food was distributed to corpsmembers, staff, students, and families at the Corps' community markets. Any remaining food went to local partners or into our compost system. That compost is then shared with community members at our Zero Waste Saturday events. For the Corps, food recovery means less waste in the landfill, lower grocery bills, and a healthier community.

CENTERING CORPSMEMBER VOICES



“The Corpsmember Council help me become the leader I am today I’ve gained experience in leading initiatives, shaping policy, and bridging gaps for underserved children. I’ve developed the voice, skills, and connections to drive change while advocating for those who need it most.

BELEN REYES
Council Leader

“The Corpsmember Council helped me develop my professional voice and hone my abilities while working in a team.

RAYMOND RUBIO
Council Leader



“I am glad I was able to help increase the feedback between corpsmembers and supervisors, giving more of a voice to corpsmembers at the Corps.

JULIAN MUÑOZ
Council Leader

“I was able to enhance my communication skills and further develop my professional expertise. I learned that even the quietest person can make the voices of others heard if given the opportunity.

LUZ VALENZUELA
Council Leader



“The Council was an amazing experience, allowing me to grow as a leader and a person.

AMY HUA
Council Leader



DRIVING CHANGE

The Corpsmember Council has become a driving force for change within our organization. In 2024, council leaders presented to elected officials at the statewide Corps Conference in Sacramento, delivered corpsmember feedback to the organization’s management team, and helped launch our alumni network. They also influenced technology updates, guided new supervisor evaluation processes, and organized community events. These accomplishments highlight how corpsmember perspectives shape our work in ways that are both practical and innovative.

Looking to 2025, the Council will help lead the development of our new three-year strategic plan, ensuring corpsmember voices are central to our goals. They will also launch a diversity, equity, and inclusion campaign, help expand career pathways, and strengthen alumni engagement. By incorporating corpsmember insight into our strategic plan, we are building an organization that reflects the people it serves and prepares them to make lasting change in their communities.

OUR CORPSMEMBER COUNCIL

We believe the best ideas for the future of our organization come from the people who are experiencing the program every day. That’s why we created the Corpsmember Council, a youth advisory board that enables corpsmembers to shape programs, share feedback, and represent their peers. Council leaders step into leadership roles, receive advanced training, and work directly with staff to ensure corpsmember perspectives are centered in decision making. By turning insight into action, the Corpsmember Council helps create a more responsive, inclusive, and impactful organization. This is more than leadership development, it’s a platform for corpsmembers to create change from within and ensure their voices guide the future of our work.



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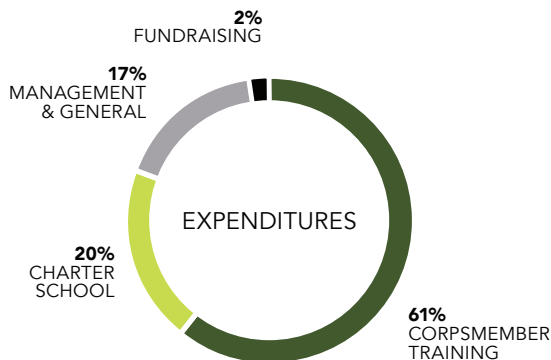
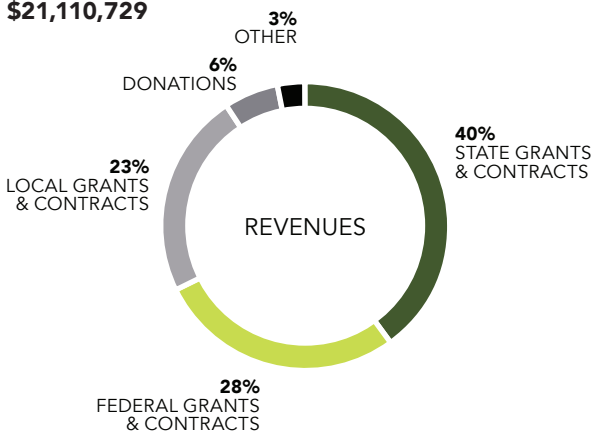
BEDRIYE USTA

ALEX WEBB

RAMÓN ZARAGOZA

FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2023/24

TOTAL BUDGET
\$21,110,729



CONTACT

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SJCCCS.ORG

The work accomplished by SJCC+CS is made possible by the generous support and collaboration from our community partners and donors. We are thankful for your commitment to improving the lives of San Jose's opportunity youth. Together, we can create a community where all young people's talents are realized.

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