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THE COURIER

FOREST SERVICE JOB CORPS CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CENTERS
Creating the Next Generation of Conservation Stewards



Although quarantined with COVID-19, Great Onyx Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center Office Administration student Simon Kilpatrick was ecstatic when it was announced he was the Philadelphia Region's 60th Anniversary Student Essay Contest winner. USDA Forest Service photo by Beverly Tobin.

"SIXTY YEARS OF HELPING HANDS"

By Simon Kilpatrick, Office Administration, Great Onyx Job Corps CCC, 60th Anniversary Student Essay Contest winner, Philadelphia Region.



Since 1964, Job Corps has provided young people the chance to break

generational poverty by helping them to obtain an education, while also teaching them the skills needed to start their career. For me, Great Onyx Job Corps Civilian Conservation

Center has revealed a path towards independence that I did not think existed.

Being physically disabled with a possible learning disability, working on my feet everyday just was not in the cards for me--nor was attending a college or university (both of which I have already tried). Discovering Job Corps has given me a new outlook on life by showing me that I can be successful and that I can be a productive member of society. These epiphanies came to me through my trade, mentoring others, living in the dorms, and just generally helping others in whatever ways I can.

During my almost five months at Job Corps, I earned six certifications, become the president of my dorm, and mentored new students twice; I have a third mentoring opportunity on the horizon. While doing all this, I also continuously reached out to both students and staff alike to aid in anything and everything, including, but not limited to, teaching new students the rules and expectations, decorating areas for the holidays, organizing files, and cleaning workspaces.

Of the things I mentioned above, my favorite thing about being a Job Corps student is interacting with everyone. As stated previously, I have mentored two groups of new students and have a third opportunity to mentor soon. Being able to introduce newcomers to the program and giving them the helping hand they need in the beginning is an amazing experience that not many people are able to do or enjoy. Mentoring also gives me the chance to show others that they are not alone here and that there is always someone who will listen to them when they need it most. Whether it be me, another student, or someone on staff, there is always someone there to talk to, crack a joke with, or even be a shoulder to cry on – something I have been more times than I can count!

Thanks to my hard work, plus the help and encouragement from staff, I was given the opportunity to apply for an internship with the United States Forest Service, which could take me to places I could have only dreamed of seeing before. If I am chosen for this position, it will all be thanks to Great Onyx Job Corps and the incredible staff I have here by my side. The same goes for my future career!

Job Corps is a family. Things will always be tough, but with the help of staff and the friends you make, you can achieve anything you set your mind to. Thank you, Job Corps, for giving people like me a chance to make something of themselves for sixty years and counting!

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Gila National Forest:** [Making it work on the Gila National Forest: A Forest Service Job Corps Pilot Program](#)
- **Blackwell Job Corps on Facebook:** [Careers Begin at Job Corps](#)
- **LBJ Job Corps on LinkedIn:** [Careers Begin at Job Corps](#)



(first row l-r) Thomas Drayton, Jon Mahan, Lieutenant Governor Larry Rhoden, South Dakota State Representative Sue Peterson, Antuan Duran, Jon Nowak, Gary Hudiburgh. (second row l-r) Joseph Looks Twice, Kenyon Hoey, Brendan Farrell, Norman Afraid of Bear, Alex Gonzalea. (third row l-r) Benjamin Gullickson, Takina Jones, Joseph Henriques, and Chris Patron. USDA Forest Service photo by Bonnie Fuller.

BOXELDER JOB CORPS STUDENTS ATTEND SOUTH DAKOTA LEGISLATIVE DAYS

Boxelder Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center students Joseph Looks Twice and Kenyon Hoey participated in Legislative Days at the Capitol in Pierre, South Dakota from February 22 – 23, 2024.

On the first day, Looks Twice and Hoey met with state government staff and elected officials who explained the responsibilities and duties of their jobs. Everyone who shared their story emphasized the importance of citizens being involved in local, state, and federal government.

“ I LEARNED A LOT ABOUT THE UNION AND HOW THE UNION AND LEGISLATURE CAN WORK TOGETHER. IT WAS GREAT EXPERIENCE MEETING LEGISLATORS AND TALKING TO THEM PERSONALLY, COMPARED TO SEEING THEM ON TV. ”
--KENYON HOEY

On the second day, Looks Twice and Hoey toured the South Dakota State Capitol where they met with more senators and representatives and also met with Lieutenant Governor Larry Rhoden who provided a warm welcome and reiterated the importance of participating in the government.

“This is an experience all Job Corps students should have,” said Boxelder Math Teacher Ben Gullickson.

The mission of the Forest Service Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers is to train eligible youth ages 16 to 24 with educational, social, and vocational skills while assisting in the conservation of the Nation's public natural resources.

MEET DUANE SWARTS COLUMBIA BASIN JOB CORPS CCC

From the perspective of Columbia Basin Job Corps Center Residential Living Supervisor Duane Swarts, Job Corps kids are no different from his own. “My four kids were 19, 22, and 25 when I started working with Job Corps,” he said. “I have always talked to my Job Corps kids the same way I speak to my own kids. I’ve found Job Corps students to be just as hard-headed as my kids, but with enough consistent support and honest conversations, they see we are truly here for them.”



Understandably, it disappoints him when Job Corps staff are unable to break through to a troubled student, losing them to negative lifestyle choices. Swarts shared that the qualities he most values in his

friends is being a good listener and giving honest feedback. Those two qualities are probably the most important skills that make staff on a Job Corps CCC successful in their work.

Swarts' Job Corps career began at Jacobs Creek where he was hired as a social services assistant (SSA) in December 2015. After being promoted to lead SSA, Columbia Basin Job Corps swooped in and enticed him with another promotion. He transferred there in July 2023. Swarts' work schedule in the dorms is Thursday through Monday on the 3PM to midnight shift. He feels the best part of his job is seeing students who begin as strangers come together, grow, and work towards success together. “It’s rewarding to see those students get excited as they end their Job Corps experience, secure employment, buy a vehicle, and find their first place to call their own.”



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- #jobcorpsfire

More exciting news can be found on our [Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers!](#) website!

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