



# URBAN CORPS OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

25 YEARS OF LEARNING, EARNING & CONSERVING



[www.UrbanCorpsSD.org](http://www.UrbanCorpsSD.org)

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# MISSION

The Urban Corps of San Diego County is a not-for-profit local conservation corps and charter school founded in 1989. Our mission is to provide young adults with a high school education combined with job training and community service in the fields of conservation and recycling, which assist youth in becoming more employable while protecting San Diego's natural resources and instilling the importance of community service.



# WHAT WE DO

For 25 years, Urban Corps has given thousands of underserved, low-income young adults ages 18-25 the opportunity to improve themselves while improving their own communities. We provide a second chance at a high school education and paid green job training designed to encourage civic engagement, responsibility, and self-sufficiency.

# JOB TRAINING + EDUCATION

Through their participation in the program, Corpsmembers receive a paycheck on green job training projects such as tree planting, habitat restoration, graffiti removal, landscaping, green building construction and recycling.

In the process, youth work to earn a high school diploma at our onsite WASC-accredited charter high school offering an accelerated, needs-based, technology-rich academic structure and a low teacher-to-student ratio. Additional services through our Corps-to-Career department include career and psychological counseling, life skills workshops, case management, and one-one-one assistance with resumes, job and college applications, and job placement.



After completing the program, youth are more employable, have the skills and confidence needed to succeed in the workforce, and know the importance of resource preservation and giving back to the community.

**On average 90 percent of graduates are either placed in jobs following commencement or are enrolled in higher education.**

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Past Vice President Corporate Communications,  
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AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination)  
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## EXECUTIVE TEAM

**Robert Chávez**, CEO  
**Anne Bernstein**, COO  
**Kyle Kennedy**, CFO  
**Erwin Sanvictores**, Director of Operations  
**Dan Thomas**, Dean of Education

# MESSAGE FROM CEO ROBERT CHÁVEZ



2014 represents Urban Corps' 25<sup>th</sup> year of service to San Diego County's youth and community and it's my sincere pleasure to lead this great organization as we celebrate this milestone anniversary. It's also an honor to help carry on the Corps legacy.

It all started back in 1933, with the creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's answer to joblessness during the Great Depression. Fast forward to 1976: Governor Jerry Brown took the concept further and created the California Conservation Corps to address the problem of high school dropouts and job training amongst California's youth.

Then a few years later a small group of thoughtful committed citizens came before the San Diego City Council to take aim at the problem of youth dropout rates and joblessness. It took the support, energy, and advocacy of a team of private citizens and legislators for the pieces to come together. With seed money from the City of San Diego, they created an innovative social enterprise, fee-for-service organization now known as the Urban Corps of San Diego County. Thousands of young people have received a second chance education and job training since, and gone on to become productive members of society. The environmental contributions these young people have made throughout San Diego County is monumental—from recycling and tree planting, to park and trail building, graffiti removal, fire fuel reduction and habitat restoration....Which brings us full circle to President Roosevelt and his original vision for the Corps....

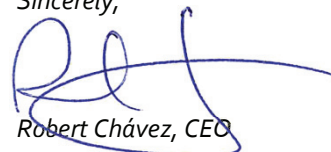
President Roosevelt's daughter-in-law Mary Roosevelt, now serving on the 25th Anniversary Honorary Committee, had this to say:

*"The Urban Corps in San Diego has taken FDR's and Eleanor's dreams a step further, with a high school education program and job training and community service in the fields of conservation and recycling. These disadvantaged youngsters are given the keys to their future success ... It is a win/win situation, and FDR would be very proud of you all."*

~ Mrs. Mary Roosevelt

This is a program that everyone can appreciate because it works for San Diego and it works for youth—like the young man shown below, Eliseo Nuñez. This is what it's all about: supporting individuals who are ready to stand up for their lives with a path to success. With this in mind, I look forward to the next 25 years with optimism and I continue to be humbled by the ongoing support and generosity of our partners and donors.

Sincerely,



Robert Chávez, CEO

## CORPS STANDOUT

Corpsmember turned staff member Eliseo Nuñez—who graduated in 2013—became an Urban Corps star this year! First, he was honored with a National Corpsmember of the Year Award at the Corps Network Annual Conference in Washington D.C. Eliseo was later featured in the San Diego Union-Tribune in an in-depth story about his life and job at the Corps. Finally, on March 18, 2014, the San Diego City Council proclaimed "Eliseo Nuñez Day in the City of San Diego."

Eliseo was honored by Council-member Marti Emerald for transforming his life and now serving as an outspoken role model for Corpsmembers and San Diegans.



THE SAN DIEGO  
**U-T**  
UNION-TRIBUNE

## CORPS HONORS 'WARRIOR OF CHANGE'

Former gang member lauded for efforts to help others rise above their troubled pasts

PAM KRAGEN • U-T

SAN DIEGO

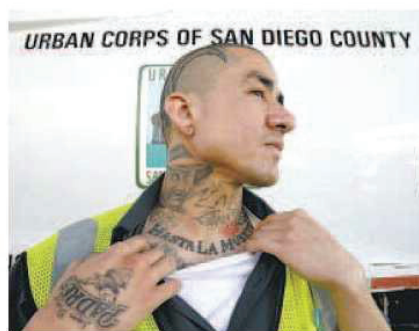
Probably the first thing you notice about Eliseo Nunez are the gang tattoos that cover his body, from the top of his head to the stylized toe tag on his foot. But underneath the ink is a driven college freshman who just received a national leadership award in Washington, D.C.

Last week, the 27-year-old San Diegan was honored as National Corpsmember of the Year by the Corps Network, a national as-

sociation for conservation corps issues. He was one of just six corps members chosen for the honor from a pool of 27,000 nationwide. Nunez was nominated for the honor by his colleagues at the Urban Corps of San Diego County, where he has distinguished himself over the past two years as a dedicated student and employee on the rise.

"This young man has really shown me, more than anyone I've met in my life, that you can't judge a book by its cover," said Robert

SEE NUNEZ • B4



Eliseo Nunez says his tattoos could offer inspiration to gang members looking to turn their lives around. CHARLIE NEUMAN • U-T

To read the full story, visit [www.urbancorpsd.org/news](http://www.urbancorpsd.org/news)



# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

## CCC PARTNERSHIP



Urban Corps partnered with The California Conservation Corps (CCC) to provide charter high school services to members of the CCC's San Diego Center in National City and the CCC satellite center in Vista. The groundbreaking partnership represents the first time the CCC has partnered with an independent local conservation corps to provide academic services.

CCC Director David Muraki and Center Director Victor Avila have both praised the new partnership.

"This is only week one but I have to say you and your staff have been 'better than your word,' Avila wrote to Robert Chávez, CEO of the Urban Corps. "I am very impressed with the level of professionalism and commitment they have demonstrated. I even had one corpsmember thank me for making this choice."

## BARRIO LOGAN SERVICES



Urban Corps began providing services to the Barrio Logan Maintenance Assessment District (MAD) in association with the City of San Diego and the Barrio Logan Association (BLA). Services are implemented five days per week and include: sidewalk maintenance; graffiti removal; power washing; bulky item/litter removal, and landscaping & weed abatement. Additionally, Urban Corps is working with the BLA to improve district identity, including the planning and implementation of an area website, a concert series, tree planting and other beautification projects.

## URBAN GREENING GRANT

In June 2014, the California Strategic Growth Council awarded Urban Corps \$856,550 under the Urban Greening Program to carry out the Neighborhood Canyons Access and Enhancement Project. Crews will enhance 20 acres of habitat and improve 3.3 miles of trails in Encanto, Radio, and Emerald Hills Canyons. The project will start in 2015 and will provide active transportation and recreational opportunities to the local community in partnership with Groundwork San Diego-Chollas Creek.

## CHICANO PARK PROJECT



Urban Corps was contracted by the City of San Diego to implement a \$1.08 million park improvement State grant at Chicano Park in Barrio Logan. Urban Corps is responsible for outreach, planning, design and construction management.

After an extensive community outreach process, the community and the City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department have given the thumbs up to the proposed plan, which includes new playgrounds, a handball court, adult fitness area, lighting, a skate area, landscaping and new benches, picnic tables, signage and drinking fountains. Construction is expected to commence in the first quarter of 2015.

## YOUTHBUILD TAKES SHAPE

The first cohort of YouthBuild students made history at Urban Corps this year. We awarded 8 Building Science Principles certifications, 8 OSHA 10 certifications, and 13 First Aid/CPR certifications.

In addition, students helped build a pocket park in Barrio Logan and rehabilitate and weatherize 123 homes throughout San Diego.



**YouthBuild**  
U.S.A.  
AFFILIATED NETWORK



# CORPSMEMBERS IN ACTION

## ENVIRONMENT



**1600 Trees Planted**



**7 Million CRV Recyclables Collected**



**11 Miles of Trails Improved**



**10 Miles of Watershed Restored**



**2,000 Acres of Fire Fuel Cleared**



**5.5 Acres of Habitat Restored**

## COMMUNITY



**1,592,694 Million Sq. Ft. Graffiti Removed**



**123 Homes Rehabilitated &/or Weatherized**



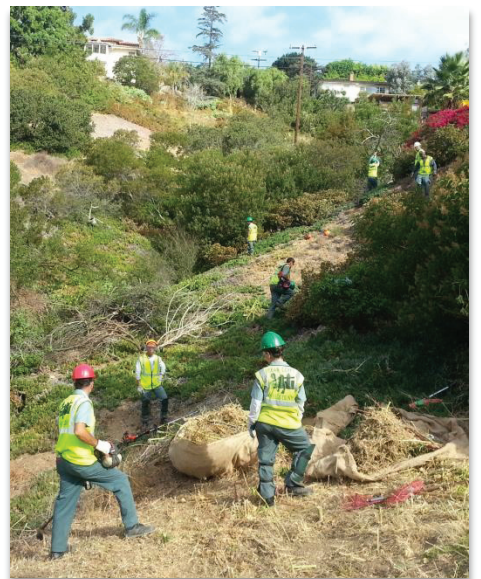
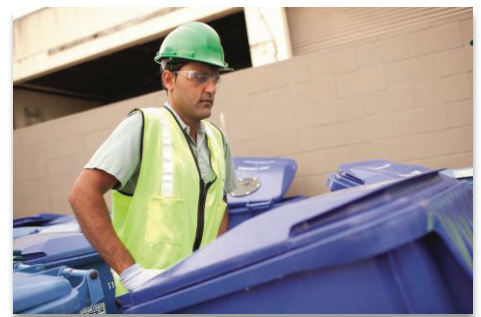
**18, 873 Cubic Yards Litter Removed**



**2700 Volunteer Hours Contributed**



**83 Special Events Serviced, Rain or Shine**



## GRADUATE STATISTICS

## EDUCATION

**80% Graduation Rate** (among seniors)

**104 Earned a High School Diploma**

**70 % Placed in Employment**

**19 % Enrolled in College**

**151 Earned Certifications**

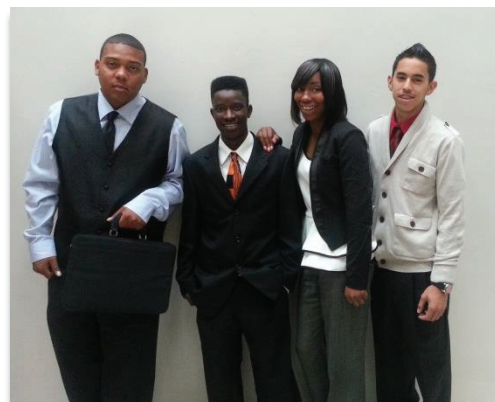
## COLLEGE BOUND

## STUDENT SERVICES

Urban Corps continually strives to broaden the level of support services offered to Corpsmembers. In the past year students benefited from: free flu shots, nurse advice, a health fair, free suits at graduation, help with professional certifications, job and psychological counseling, job placement, transportation assistance, and so much more.



In addition, through the National School Lunch Program, each Corpsmember receives a healthy breakfast, lunch and snack provided at no-cost to the student.



**A record-setting four Seniors earned \$10,000 Price Scholarships to City College this year. The scholarship program is helping James Blackwell, Hatungimana Didier, Shakendra Belisle and Joel Diaz achieve their educational goals while participating in volunteer community service.**

*Please see page 8 for their stories.*

# FINANCIALS

*Urban Corps' overall revenues from both programmatic operations and Urban Corps Charter School represent a \$10 mil combined budget. Charter School financials remain separate and are not represented in charts below.*

## Audited Financial Highlights (Urban Corps Corp.)

- Total Contributions & Revenue: \$7,555,000
- Total Operating Expenses: \$6,920,000
- Net Increase in Assets: \$635,000
- Ending Net Total Assets: \$8,153,000
- Administrative Overhead: 14.4%

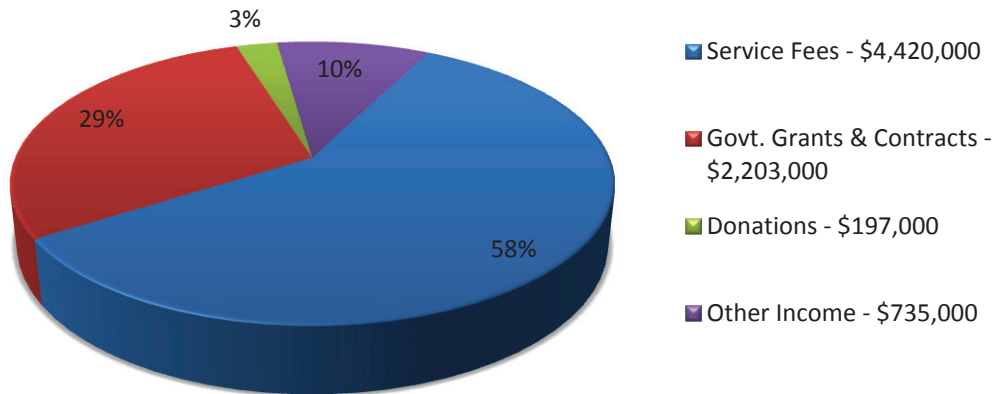
## Urban Corps Charter School Budget

- FY14: \$2.2 Million *(includes Charter School Start-up Grant)*
- Proposed FY15: \$2.1 Million

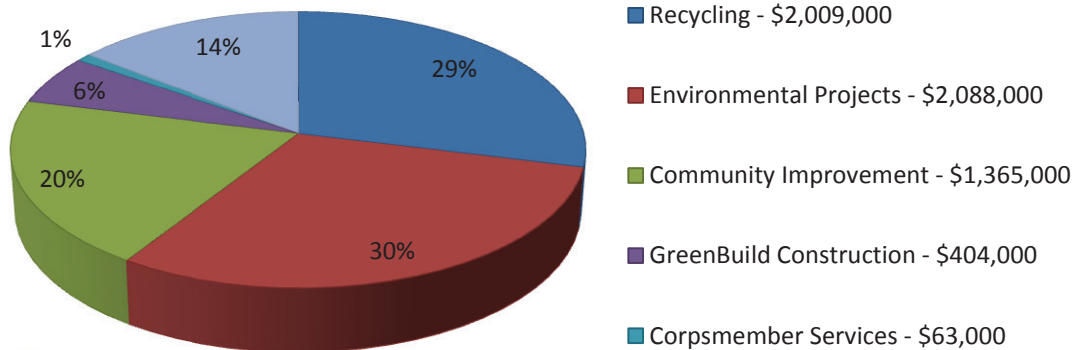
*The state of California funds Urban Corps Charter School based on student attendance, also known as Average Daily Attendance (ADA).*

*86 cents of every dollar goes towards programs.*

## 2013-2014 Revenue



## 2013-2014 Expenses



## Programmatic Expenses

- Recycling - \$2,009,000
- Environmental Projects - \$2,088,000
- Community Improvement - \$1,365,000
- GreenBuild Construction - \$404,000
- Corpmember Services - \$63,000

## Administrative Expenses

- Management & Fundraising - \$991,000





# GRATITUDE TO OUR FUNDERS AND DONORS

## \$150-999

Buffalo Exchange  
Cintas  
Don Cotton  
Sam Duran  
Dick Freeman  
Fullers Liquor  
Richard Gleaves  
Ramon Hershman  
Kyle Kennedy  
Michael Martinka  
Connie Matsui  
Michael Meacham  
Daniel Morales  
David & Dona Porreca  
The Honorable Lynn Schenk  
Bob Stivers Shell  
Turk Family Foundation  
Alison Whitelaw, Platt-Whitelaw  
Architects  
Tracey Williams  
Ralph Williams  
Dennis Wilson

## \$1000-\$4999

County Employees Charitable  
Organization (CECO)  
Cox Cares Foundation  
Berit & Tom Durler  
Earthshare  
Joseph & Patricia Gilbreath  
Ivan Farber, Dynamicard  
Tim McConnell, Holdrite  
Eric Leitstein, Union Kitchen & Tap  
Damian McKinney, McKinney  
Brokerage Group  
Michael & Christie Meehan  
Chuck Miyahira, HM Electronics  
Christine Moore  
Ingrid Nielsen  
Kari Nielsen Martone  
S. Falck Nielsen Fund  
Niel Pollock, Nielsen Construction  
Frank & Maggie Riley  
Jerry Rollins, Rollins Consulting  
San Diego Futures Foundation  
Astrid Shannon

Torrey Pines Bank  
The Gary and Mary West  
Foundation

## \$5000-\$9999

Aimloan.com  
Robert Chávez  
Chuck Faith, Faith Insurance  
Services  
Sycuan Casino  
US Bank

## \$10,000-\$100,000

Anonymous  
Jon and Bobbie Gilbert  
County of San Diego  
Las Patronas  
Price Charities  
Qualcomm Foundation  
Richard J. Donovan Correctional  
Facility  
San Diego Gas & Electric  
Starbucks Foundation  
Walmart

## OUR FAMILY OF SPONSORS

Adams Avenue Business  
Improvement District  
Aramark Facility Services  
Aerostar  
Barrio Logan Association  
BAE Systems  
CAL FIRE  
CalRecycle  
California Fire Safe Council  
California ReLeaf  
California Conservation Corps  
Caltrans  
Cannon Constructors  
Child Development Associates  
City Heights BID  
City Heights Community  
Development Corp.  
City of Carlsbad  
City of Chula Vista  
City of San Diego

City of Santee  
Civic San Diego  
Commission if Arts and Culture  
County of San Diego  
Council of Philippine American  
Organizations  
Community Research Foundation  
Community Housing Works  
Discover Pacific Beach BID  
Emmerson Construction, Inc.  
Frontera Construction Corp.  
Friends of Cardiff and Carlsbad  
State Beach  
Groundworks San Diego  
Kennsington Business Association  
Kumeyaay Elementary School  
Metropolitan Transit System  
Nuera Contracting & Consulting  
PALA  
PAR Electrical Contractors

Petco Park  
Port of San Diego  
Overland Pacific & Cutler Inc.  
Qualcomm  
Resource Conservation District of  
Greater San Diego County  
River Partners  
San Diego Gas & Electric  
San Dieguito River Park  
San Diego River Park Foundation  
San Diego Unified School District  
Sweetwater Authority  
Stephen Hawkings Charter School  
Sweet Water School District  
State of California State Assembly  
Rules Committee  
Valley Center Fire Safe Council  
Unified Port of San Diego  
University California San Diego  
Viejas Fire Department

*Class of June 2014, Keynote Speaker: San Diego City Councilman Scott Sherman*



# SCHOLAR STORIES: IN THEIR OWN WORDS

## JAMES BLACKWELL

*"I'm sticking to my word, and I'm staying straight. I'm still dealing with my past actions, but I am making progress every day. I love gaining knowledge and learning now, I only wish that I had this drive to learn when I was in high school... I will be the first in my family to attend college, and I hope to be the first in my family to graduate."*

*"I have lived a real interesting life, dysfunctional and violent, but it made me strong. I would do anything to get my brother back. From the gangbanging, deaths, drugs and violence, I'm making it out. I talk to the young people in my neighborhood now; I try to get them thinking right. I tell them to stay in school and soak up all the knowledge that they can. They see that if I can change, it must be real."*

**James graduated in June 2014 and is now working for the San Diego Park and Recreation Department.**



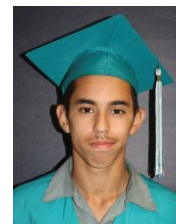
## JOEL DIAZ

*"I grew up with no one to look up to. As I entered high school I had no motivation. I became another statistic; a Latino high school dropout."*

*"One day while ditching school I encountered someone who would change my life. She was a beautiful girl...we soon fell in love. After a year, that love evolved into teen parenthood. I needed to get serious about my education. I worried that it was too late, but then I found Urban Corps. I have really enjoyed helping my community as a part of the Urban Corps team."*

*"My whole life I never cared about education. But now I have set my sites on something I never imagined possible; a college degree. I went from a sick boy on the sidelines, to a lost teen with no support structure. Finally I am becoming a man. I have found my motivation, and now am a proud parent with goals and a new outlook on life."*

**Joel graduated in June 2014 and is currently working as a welder at Nassco.**



## HATUNGIMANA DIDIER

*"I was born in a small country called Burundi in Southeast Africa. The country has suffered from warfare, corruption, and poor access to education. As a child, I remember hearing guns and grenade explosions as I fell asleep each night. Many people were getting killed around us each day. My family left when I was 5."*

*"In 2007 a humanitarian group came to our refugee camp and offered us something that would change my life forever, the chance for my family to immigrate to America."*

*"When I arrived in San Diego, I started High School but I had trouble with my English exit exam. I could not pass. I had to leave school when I turned 18. I sat home for one year. That's when my older brother told me to apply at Urban Corps."*

*"I finally passed the English exit exam! I have no doubt about attending college; it has been my dream since I was a little boy at the refugee camp in Tanzania. I have made it all the way to America, and graduated from high school, and I know since I achieved these goals, then I can achieve anything! I love school and I see education as the most important thing in life."*

**Didier graduated in June 2014 and is now attending San Diego City College and volunteering at Urban Corps Charter School.**



## SHAKENDRA BELISLE

*"My family and I lived in a homeless shelter for about three years due to my mother being a paranoid schizophrenic and my father being out of work."*

*"When we finally moved out of the shelter, I felt like an outcast and decided I did not want to go to school. It was easy for me to do this without catching my parents' attention. At the apartments where I lived I found a friend, which became an abusive relationship. I cared even less about my education. I turned sixteen and got pregnant. I was a child myself. Throughout my pregnancy I would visit my son's father and he was just as violent as always. I gave birth on March 8, 2010. After two years of struggling with my child, I realized I needed to make a change. An old friend told me about Urban Corps."*

*"Urban Corps taught me how to adapt to fast changes and how to become professional. It taught me that you have to work for what you want and nothing will come to you unless you do it. Urban Corps honestly changed me as a person and inspired me to become the woman I want to be. But most importantly, I know my worth. I am absolutely thankful for this opportunity."*

**Shakendra graduated in June 2014 and is now attending San Diego City College and working for and volunteering at Urban Corps Charter School.**

