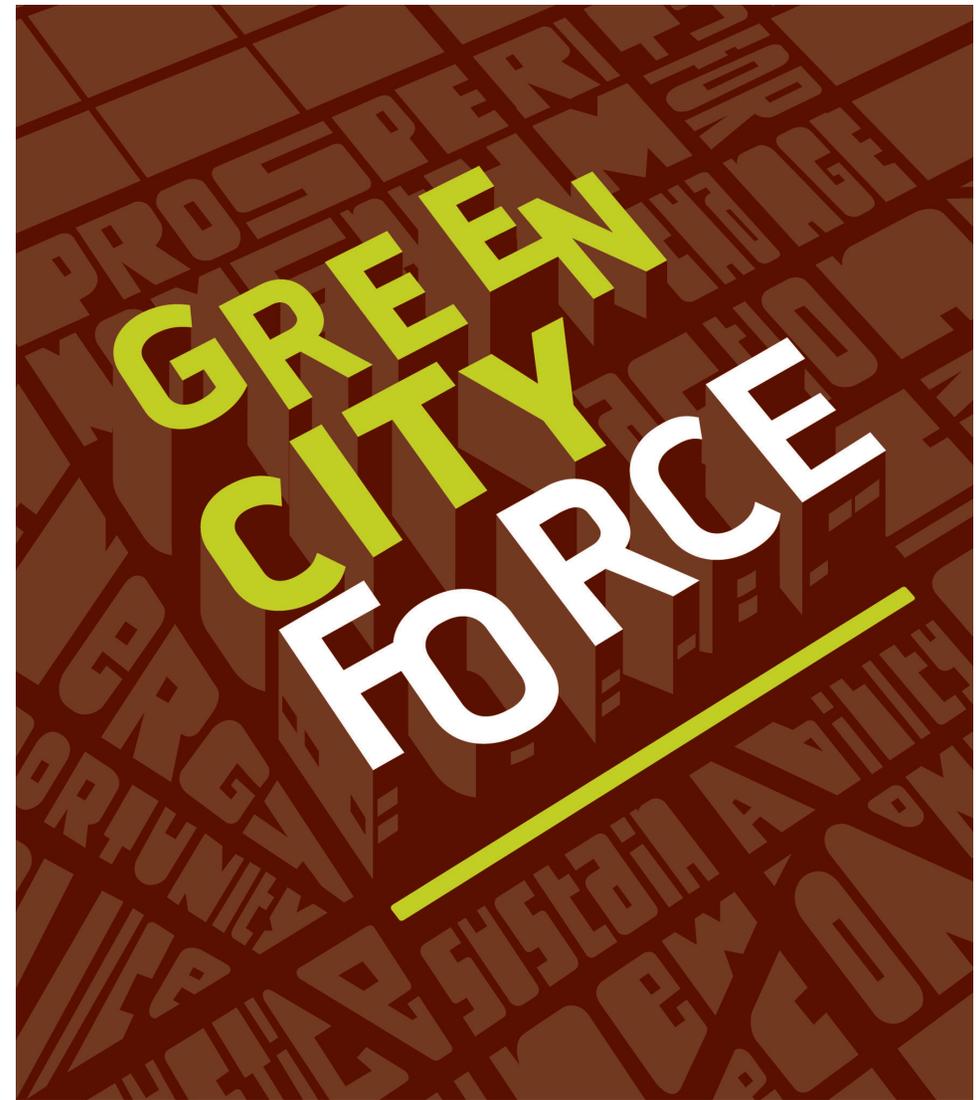




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CLEAN ENERGY CORPS

GRADUATION JULY 24TH 2014

CLEAN ENERGY CORPS

GRADUATION JULY 2014

**GREEN
CITY
FORCE**



Green City Force is an
AmeriCorps program



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**GREEN
CITY
FORCE**

CLEAN ENERGY CORPS

GRADUATION JULY 24TH 2014

Master of Ceremonies

- Dennis Acevedo, Senior Director of Programs, Green City Force

Program

- *Video Message:* Shola Olatoye, Chair & Chief Executive Officer, New York City Housing Authority, and Alicia Glen, Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development
- *Opening:* Denis Acevedo
- *Welcome:* Matt Nimetz, Co-chair, GCF Board of Directors
- *Address to Graduation Corps:* Natalie Y. Rivers, Executive Vice President & Chief Administrative Officer, New York City Housing Authority
- *Remarks:* Ritchie Torres, Council Member, and Donovan Richards Jr., Council Member, New York City Council
- *Accomplishments and acknowledgements:* Lisbeth Shepherd, Founder & Executive Director, GCF
- *Presentation of partner awards:* Michael Johnson-Chase, Director of Green City Academy, and Erika Symmonds, Service Director
- *Graduating Corps Member Co-speaker:* Krystal Ruiz
- *Presentation of Certificates:* Green City Force Staff
- *Graduating Corps Member Co-speaker:* Franklin Knight
- *Closing remarks:* Steven Berkenfeld, Member, GCF Board of Directors

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Our sincere apologies for anyone we may have omitted or not properly recognized. Please contact Gwen@greencityforce.org to rectify.

A FORCE

FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVES AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

GREEN CITY FORCE (GCF) is an AmeriCorps program that prepares urban young adults for success in their chosen careers by engaging them in a six-month program encompassing service, training, academics, and skills-building experiences related to the clean energy economy and resiliency. In doing so, GCF encourages them to lead socially and environmentally responsible lives. Our ambition is that national service directed at reducing green-house gas emissions and improving the environment becomes an avenue to prosperity for a generation of urban youth, as well as a means to build a culture of sustainability that can drive the growth of the green economy.

Our Clean Energy Corps in New York City reduces greenhouse gas emissions, inspires passion for sustainability and service, and creates service pathways to careers for aspiring young adults. We target young people who live in public housing, have their GED or high school diploma, and are unemployed or underemployed. Corps Members spend four days a week in the field, working in teams under the supervision of a GCF Team Leader. GCF provides Corps Members with a stipend, transportation, support services, an AmeriCorps educational award, help with job and college placement, follow-up support and access to an active alumni network.

SERVICE

Corps Members support NYCHA's Green Agenda and the goals of PlaNYC, the city's climate action plan, in multiple ways. This cohort, Corps Members engaged in the following service:

Energy Efficiency And Renewable Energy Teams conducted outreach for the NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) EmPower program—educating individuals about the program, supporting qualified residents to sign up for energy efficiency services, and conducting energy audits in resident's homes. // In partnership with GRID Alternatives, installed solar electric panels on four homes in New Jersey, saving low-income families money and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. // Expanded the Love Where You Live Challenge within NYCHA, educating hundreds of residents on specific actions to take in their homes to conserve energy.

Urban Agriculture, Greening, and Food Access Provided support at the NYCHA Greenhouse, helping resource the hundreds of community gardens in NYCHA, and the NYCHA Garden & Greening Conference in March. // Transformed tons of food scraps that would have otherwise gone to landfills into nutrient-rich compost with Added Value's community composting program. // Cared for trees at housing developments in Coney Island with New York Restoration Project. // Removed invasive vines from trees along the Bronx River with Bronx River Alliance. // Helped construct and maintain resident gardens at Ingersoll, Marble Hill and Marcy developments. // With Food Bank for New York City, packed and handed out food for thousands of families in need. // Cultivated fresh food for local residents and performed outreach around urban agriculture and nutrition at the NYCHA Urban Farm at Red Hook West Houses with NYCHA and Added Value. // Maintained Planters Grove, a sustainable park at Lillian Wald Houses which past GCF cohorts helped build.

TRAINING & ACADEMICS Corps Members participate one day a week in Green City Academy, covering remedial math and English, job readiness, career development, technical training and eco-literacy that exposes Corps Members to a range of career opportunities in the green economy, leads to certification for entry-level work in energy efficiency and prepares those oriented towards college for success on entrance exams. 100% of Corps Members in the Winter 2014 cohort passed their US Green Building Council GPRO certification exam. Service in the field is conceived to build transferable, 21st Century skills and experience relevant to entry-level work in energy efficiency, renewable energy, greening, and outreach and education. Corps Members trained in construction and building science by assisting with ongoing reconstruction of homes damaged by Hurricane Sandy in Brooklyn and Queens, in partnership with Canarsie Coalition, Rebuilding Together NYC and Friends of Rockaway. Corps Members held service internships with the Association for Energy Affordability (AEA), NYSERDA's EmPower program, GRID Alternatives and GCF's Love Where You Live Challenge.

SUSTAINABILITY Corps Members are challenged to develop sustainable living practices in their homes and personal lives. Together, we are working towards a Green City, based on economic, social, and environmental justice.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CORPS

HONORING MARGARITA LOPEZ

The entire corps and staff attended the goodbye ceremony for Margarita Lopez, champion of GCF and recipient of the GCF Force Award for her tireless efforts to advance the NYCHA Green Agenda. Lopez's parting words were: "Believe in the Corps Members of Green City Force!"

GREEN CITY ACADEMY HOUSED AT THE NYU URBAN FUTURE LAB

Through this new partnership, GCF's Friday training and academic program took place in this clean tech incubator located in downtown Brooklyn, and featured speakers drawn from start-ups to the labor movement, such as James Herndon of BlocPower and Lenore Friedlaender of 32BJ.

SUPPORTING THE FRANKLIN PROJECT'S GOAL OF 1 MILLION YOUNG ADULTS IN SERVICE

Alumni Jazzmine Arrastia and Jorge Casamiro joined new GCF board member Alan Khazei, co-founder of the Franklin Project, at the National Service Summit in Gettysburg. Jazzmine brought the voice of opportunity youth to the conversation when she urged that more youth aging out of foster care be engaged in service, during a plenary session at the conference.

FINANCIAL LITERACY, FROM SAVING TO GIVING

Carver Bank supported Ryan Mack from Project Hope to teach Financial Literacy through our Academy with topics such as spending, building, marketing strategies that influence people to spend money, bank accounts, credit, debt, investing, entrepreneurship, homeownership and giving back.

WOMEN'S SOLAR INSTALL WITH GRID ALTERNATIVES

Ten female Corps Members participated in an all-women solar installation in Eatontown, NJ in May. The project was part of GRID's nationwide initiative to bring more women into the solar industry. Corps Members installed the panels on the home of a family displaced by Hurricane Sandy.

CORPS MEMBERS RAISE THEIR VOICES

Corps Members spoke to peers in Manhattanville Houses to share their experience with GCF as an alternative to gangs. They recorded video testimonials (see our blog at greencityforce.org) and formed a Communications Committee to organize creative ways to get the word out about GCF. Corps Members and alumni took part in GCF's first live Twitter Chat, #GoGCF, in partnership with NYCHA, as part of our city-wide recruitment effort. Service Associates Abdu Rodney and Freddy Melendez participated in Brooklyn Insights and Abdu was their first on-line profile.



URBAN FUTURE LAB



THE CORPS MEMBERS OF GREEN CITY FORCE



GCF is career and life bootcamp

— JOHN VICENTE, Corps Member



ELISA ALMONTE Age 19, Bronx

Green City Force has given me an opportunity to help my community and contribute to making the world a greener, more sustainable place. Before GCF I was working as a cashier in a frozen yogurt shop. I would never have imagined that I might become a part of something so meaningful. The most important thing I learned during my time with GCF was to always be open to growth and change; GCF is the epitome of professional and personal growth. My plans after GCF are to continue my education and ultimately obtain a bachelor's degree. I would like to thank Aubrie for everything. She has been the most amazing supporter during my time at GCF. I would also like to thank Lawrence for being the best Team Leader I could have ever asked for. He has truly been a mentor and a role model. Finally, I would like to thank Corps Members Ashley and Demi. I will truly cherish our memories together forever.

OSEI BALLESTEROS Age 18, Brooklyn

Participating in Green City Force's Eighth Cohort has been a great experience for me. I really tackled a lot of obstacles and feel like I grew as a person in the six months I spent here. I came here with some confidence and wanted to showcase that I was capable of doing great things if given the opportunity. I feel like I got the most out of my time here and I'm truly grateful for being a part of what GCF does and the platform they gave me. I truly believe in the GCF mission and the wonderful things they can do for future Corps Members, knowing what GCF has done to build my confidence and skills. In closing, I want to thank GCF for being worthwhile and bringing the superstar out of a young kid from Brooklyn.

AMANI COLEMAN Age 23, Brooklyn

I learned about GCF about a year ago. I lost the flyer and had to go through a long process but it was worth it at the end. I have always been interested in learning new things and skills. While I was in this program I learned about the green sector. GCF helped me develop professionalism and time management skills. GCF has also helped me become GPRO certified and gave me the opportunity to do training with the Association for Energy Affordability and become an Intern with the Con Edison Green Team. The Con Edison Green Team helps family homes become more energy efficient by switching their old incandescent light bulbs to CFL bulbs, and helps install smart strips to help prevent brown and black outs, etc. After this program I want to work with a non-profit organization. I will also go back to college in the spring semester of 2015 and major in Physical Education. I want to thank the staff and team leaders who worked with me at GCF for keeping me in shape, and making sure that I didn't slack off. I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of their organization. Thank you Green City Force!



TYMEL CUTLER Age 19, Brooklyn

Before I became a member of Green City Force I attended the Borough of Manhattan Community College where I completed two semesters of school. After my second semester I had to stop going because I was academically dismissed. After leaving school I started thinking hard about what I wanted to do while I wasn't in school. Over the summer I attended a program with Bed Stuy Restoration located in the Pfizer building. A couple of months later, my Resource Coordinator, Zakiya Adams, recommended I attend a GCF information session because she felt that coming to this program would really help me gain a sense of what I wanted to do with my career. Now that I'm a Green City Force AmeriCorps Member, I feel like I have learned so much spending my six months with the team. The most important thing I learned to do during my time with GCF was how to become more of a leader through doing service projects. I want to thank my family, the whole staff of Bed Stuy Restoration, Green City Force and AmeriCorps.

FLORMARIA DELAROSA Age 20, Brooklyn

I joined Green City Force because I wanted more than the conventional; I wanted the unconventional. I didn't just want to make money; I wanted to make money while being sustainable and helping people. Before I was accepted into GCF, I was a full-time mother to my one-year-old son, Nazayah. I was dependent on my mother as the main support system for me and my son. At GCF, I learned how important it was for us to have a triple bottom line, also known as the 3 P's: people, planet, and profit. The triple bottom line consists of social equity, economic, and environmental factors. As soon as I graduate from GCF, I will be attending Envirolution for some more training in Small Business Direct Insulation (SBDI). I would love to thank my son for giving me the strength to complete this six-month journey. I would also love to thank Kenta for never getting off my back and for the professional development classes. I would like to thank Michael for my awesome resume, and thanks Mara because you're awesome.

DANIEL EGIPCIANO Age 25, Manhattan

Before my time at Green City Force I was stuck in a dead end job and didn't know what I wanted to do with my future. GCF has broadened my horizons by introducing me to the intricacies of sustainable living and providing me with hands-on skills through humanitarian efforts. I found training through Hurricane Sandy relief organizations with the laborious, gritty, and completely non-glamorous portion of volunteer work to be particularly rewarding. In addition to the skills and certifications GCF has provided me with, it has also facilitated my own personal growth: both with my confidence and general perception of the world. Now I am equipped with the knowledge and experience to pursue a career in the green industry. I would like to thank all of the Corps Members I have had the chance to work with and all of the staff for their support throughout this journey.



JERRELL ELDRIDGE Age 20, Bronx

For starters, I'd like to thank the entire Green City Force staff and Corps Members for supporting me and contributing to my progress. Everyone has been exemplary. The community established over the course of this cohort was friendly and enriching. GCF has given me a lot of opportunities for employment in New York City. I was presented with more opportunities in the first two months of this program, than in previous searches through numerous agencies. The program has also enabled me to live a dream I have had since the age of five: to travel all over New York City. The primary reason I chose to become a Corps Member with GCF was my genuine concern for the environment. When I saw the flyer advertising the program, I was focusing on being able to make more noticeable efforts to restore or improve the natural environment. I learned that work isn't as black and white as I thought it was. People can establish friendly communications with others without having to be dull and strict all the time. After GCF, my goal is to make myself financially stable, and then return to college.

SHAHEED FARRELL Age 20, Brooklyn

Before Green City Force I was a high school graduate who did not know what was to come next. I wasn't prepared for college because I thought that I was getting a scholarship to go to school until it got taken away because of my knee injury. I was pretty lost and scared until I was given an awesome opportunity to be a part of this great AmeriCorps program. They helped me so much in my development of being a professional and building my confidence in what I want to do. GCF gave me another perspective on life that I was never exposed to. I greatly appreciate that. I am greatly thankful for the amount of help GCF has given me and my peers. GCF has had such an impact on my life because it inspired me to help more people in my community. It opened my eyes to new opportunities and career paths that I plan on following. Thanks to Green City Force, I am truly happy again!!

ANDREW FRAGOSA Age 18, Queens

Green City Force is a place of opportunity and change. It is a place where you can grow as an adult and start off on your career path. I chose to join GCF when I learned about the opportunities they open up for Corps Members. They can open the door to success for us, but it's our choice to walk through that door. Before GCF I was working off the books at a grocery store in Jamaica, Queens. I wanted to grow and GCF gave me that opportunity. GCF has taught me that if you wish to live a successful life you have to work hard at every little thing you do. Thanks to GCF I am now going to college to pursue my dreams of becoming a paramedic. I have to thank Mr. Elliezer Villanueva for always believing in me. He always knew I could do whatever I set my mind to. Whenever I slacked off he made sure I realized and understood that I can't make it if I slack. The program is really tough; I even thought about leaving, but Elliezer never let me quit. He always had my back. If there were ever a person whom I would call my role model, it would be Mr. Elliezer Villanueva.



TAYSIA GARCIA Age 20, Manhattan

At Green City Force I developed hands-on job and networking skills. Before GCF I was a turtle in its shell and never wanted to open up to people. I didn't like meeting new people and speaking in front of crowds. I was always shy and never wanted to ask for help when I needed it - especially in math. Through this program I noticed that in order to complete a task in life sometimes you need to ask for help. Asking for help isn't a problem because everybody needs help sometimes. Now I prefer to ask for help rather than pretend I know something and then get stuck later. GCF helped me realize that. GCF also made me realize that choosing to help people rather than thinking about myself and my little problems is a beautiful thing. GCF made me grow as an individual woman both physically and mentally. I truly appreciate everything the staff have done for me. I wasn't getting anywhere by being a bedbug and staying home all day. They took me out of that state. I would like to say thank you to all the staff at GCF for making a successful and strong impact on my life.

DECATUR GOODEN Age 19, Bronx

Ever since I began my time at Green City Force, my success has been in question. Ultimately I proved otherwise. In order to participate in GCF I had to overcome internal obstacles. Through both service work and academics, the program allowed me to develop professionally and personally in ways that I could not have imagined in such a short period of time. I'm very thankful for all of the time and effort the GCF staff has invested in me. The most valuable things I'm taking with me after graduation are communication skills, professionalism, networking techniques, and consistency, because those things will get me to where I need to be with my career path.

MICHAEL GRIFFIN Age 25, Brooklyn

Green City Force has taught me to be more independent, manage my time better and be a more hands-on worker. I chose to become a Corps Member for GCF because I wanted to give back to my community, become a better person, and learn about the green economy. Over the course of the six-month program, I have learned a vast amount of knowledge. One of my favorite experiences was hands-on training with Grid Alternatives, in which we learned how to install solar panels for low-income families. At first I was nervous about being on top of the roof but once I went up, I felt like the king of the world. I felt so accomplished and fulfilled with what I did that day.

Before joining GCF, I was looking for employment and filling out resumes. I spent most of my time at home watching TV. When I got bored I would go to the library, and draw cartoon characters. I would say I always wanted to be active and productive even when I couldn't find anything to do.



The most important thing I have learned with GCF is that the work you put in results in bigger things and long-term success. I've seen Corps Members in my cohort doing bigger and better things due to their hard work, determination and willingness to persevere. I have also seen big changes in myself, such as having more leadership skills, becoming more focused and having fewer problems with procrastination. I would like to thank all of the GCF staff for letting us Corps Members never settle for less and making us keep going forward without quitting. To me, GCF means making positive change for the world and making it a safer environment so we can live to see another day. I am thankful for this experience and I wouldn't trade it for anything.

TARIK KELLMAN Age 22, Bronx

Green City Force has made a significant impact on my life by teaching me about the harmful effects of excessive consumption of our resources on the environment. I have learned about the different components needed to build and maintain an energy efficient building while also improving the environment around us. I have been fortunate to be a part of this program because the level of violence in my community has skyrocketed to new heights. GCF has helped deter me from wasting my time on the streets and has kept me in the books. I have been lucky enough to be a part of a solar panel installation, service devoted to packing healthy food for elderly people, and a project in which I trained by rebuilding homes for the victims of Superstorm Sandy. I achieved all of this while learning proper business etiquette and pursuing an opportunity to advance to college. I see the looks from those in my neighborhood when they see me in my GCF uniform and I can tell that they want to be a part of something bigger than the nonsense that they see every day. I will continue to absorb all of the information provided to me so that I may continue to ascend to bigger and better opportunities.

“ I have been fortunate to be a part of this program because the level of violence in my community has skyrocketed to new heights. GCF has helped deter me from wasting my time on the streets and has kept me in the books...I see the looks from those in my neighborhood when they see me in my GCF uniform and I can tell that they want to be a part of something bigger than the nonsense that they see every day. ”
– TARIK KELLMAN, Corps Member



SHAQUINA KERSHAW Age 20, Bronx

Before I came to Green City Force, I had just finished an internship at CVS Pharmacy in October, in hopes that they would hire me. When that didn't happen, I was home all day doing nothing. One day, my mom came home from work and gave me a recruitment flyer for GCF. I chose to become a Green City Force Corps Member because I wanted to obtain more job experience as well as learn more about the Green Industry. During my time here, I have learned how to use power tools safely and how to work with a team on a daily basis, just to name a few. The most important thing I have learned is that the decisions we make, whether socially or environmentally, will impact others in some way. All of the services that we did throughout the city were very inspiring and heart-warming. I never thought that I was going to be able to impact thousands of people and improve the environment. My plans after GCF are to work at a well-paid job and eventually go back to college. I would like to thank all of the GCF staff members for their help and support. I would also like to thank all of my fellow Corps Members for making my time here very enjoyable and memorable.

FRANKLIN KNIGHT Age 23, Brooklyn

As a Corps Member at Green City Force, I feel that the organization has been a great platform to help give me the chance to grasp my dreams with the proper tool kit and skill set. I find this pretty epic because my original intent was to get a feel of the program, but mostly earn the educational award offered so I could continue to pursue my education. Prior to GCF, I was working a retail job at the Gap, which I felt was only giving me a loop of the same tasks, with no room for growth, and certainly no opportunity to contribute socially to the world and the environment. I can honestly say that most of the job skills I have today, I gained during my time spent with GCF. Now I am actually on the path of taking the world by storm by continuing my education, pursuing a career in the clean energy sector, while continuing a career in music. I thank all of the GCF staff members, and those from Green City Academy in particular, for sacrificing constant hours of their own time to make sure our lives were better directed. Thank you again Green City Force!

ROBERT MALCOLM Age 21, Manhattan

My experience with Green City Force has been phenomenal. I'm impressed with my extreme growth in both my responsibility, and my new relationships with my co-workers. I would like to congratulate everyone who has helped me reach this far. That includes the entire GCF staff, my family and my cohort. I love you all! We made it! I think the best thing about success is when you achieve it, you finally realize the entire importance of it. This program was not an easy one. It took my utmost attention for the past 6 months, so much so that some people even wondered whether or not I was still alive due to how busy I have been. But we are here. In closing, I'm so proud to say I've made it. Green City Force - we are the best!



KENNY MCCALL Age 24, Bronx

My decision to join Green City Force was a life-changing one. GCF has equipped me with a variety of skills such as flexibility, sustainability knowledge, soft skills, familiarity with the Green Economy, and most of all job readiness. My time at GCF has been great. I've met all kinds of different people who share similar interests, and one common goal: change. Everyone in the program wanted to make a change whether either in their community or within themselves. The most uplifting experience for me was the Hurricane Sandy relief service that I and other Corps Members participated in alongside Friends of Rockaway. I worked on multiple homes in the Rockaways, Queens. At the end of every day I left feeling good about myself and the work that I had done. The feeling of knowing you are helping someone get back to living in their home is priceless. The residents were very thankful and appreciative. Before GCF I was not doing anything but sitting at home and wasting time. I decided to become a Corps Member because I wanted to learn the true meaning of service, and that is what AmeriCorps is about.

EVAN QUIÑONES Age 22, Manhattan

Green City Force has meant so much to me in such a short period of time. Because of this program, I can go out into the world and proudly state that I have made a huge difference in my community. I can say that I am a better human being. I chose to become a Green City Force Corps Member because I wanted to make a change not only in the world I live in, but also within myself. Before GCF, my daily routine consisted of watching too much television and playing a lot of video games. I joined GCF to give my life meaning and to give meaning to the nickname that my brother gave me several years ago: EVALution. I initially wondered why he would give me such a peculiar nickname. GCF made me realize it was because I have the power to provoke change and make a difference. Actually, we all possess that power. Whether we choose to utilize it is completely up to us. We all have the power to evolve positively within ourselves, and in turn make the world a better place. The only people we should focus on being better than are the people we were yesterday. This is a lesson I will cherish and take with me for the rest of my life. After GCF, I want to go back to college for the Spring 2015 semester and major in Communications and/or Sociology. I now know that the sky is the limit and the amount of possibilities are beyond the horizon. In closing, I want to thank the entire GCF staff for allowing me to break free from my shell and grow as a person; for giving me the opportunity to give back to the community which I care so deeply about. I want to thank my fellow Corps Members for embracing me with open arms and accepting me for who I am with all of my flaws. I have made lifelong friendships here at Green City Force, and I am so grateful for that!



MIGUEL A. RODRIGUEZ Age 21, Manhattan

The Green City Force staff instilled in me so much information about the green sector and potential green careers. All the interactive lessons and time accumulated, culminated in a monumental shift of consciousness and awareness. There aren't enough words to describe the advancement in perception they invigorated in me. I have so much appreciation for the entire GCF staff but most recognition I would give to Lawrence and Michael. Both of them have taught me many life lessons and skills that will surely help me make a smooth transition to pursue a life in solar after my term with GCF. Besides the hard skills that I picked up out in the field, the most important thing I learned was to remember to remain courteous, humble, and gracious because there are many people that aren't fortunate enough to indulge in this movement. These last 6 months have given me many keys of wisdom to be successful and it makes me upset that this will end soon because this journey has been inconceivably awe-inspiring. This program has made me very proud to be an activist serving for low-income communities and I look forward to what becomes of the near future.

JENNIRA ROUNDTREE Age 20, Queens

What Green City Force means to me is a better opportunity for young adults like me to escape the mindset that "if you live in public housing you don't have a chance." I also feel like GCF has helped and encouraged me to stay focused on where I want to be in my career. Before I joined GCF, I started doubting myself and thought nothing was going to come together. I was filling out job applications and I was not receiving any responses. I started hanging out and doing nothing with myself. When I applied for GCF, I got a response which really gave me hope. After GCF, I would like to start a career in green construction. I want to thank everyone from the GCF Staff and all the Corps Members. First the staff for allowing me to work under them to help keep the GCF brand running and making it known to people. I would also like to say thank you to the Corps Members because they showed me that even though we may all have different situations we can continue to stay strong, push problems aside and aim for what we want in spite of where we come from.

KRYSTAL RUIZ Age 21, Manhattan

Green City Force taught me how to live a sustainable life. I have taught my family and many others about living a sustainable life and finding ways to become more energy efficient, because it is important for the safety and future of our generation. GCF gave me the knowledge I need for my health and my wealth. GCF is a place where I feel I belong, and one where I have learned to help others like myself. GCF is great because it is a place where you can live up to your full potential. The co-workers really set you up for success. During my time at GCF, I gained the work experience that I needed to further my career. I have learned through having leadership roles while installing solar with GRID, taking leadership



in my cohort, constructing homes and, overall, working for the greater good. If it were not for GCF I would not be in the wonderful position I am in now. This program has helped me build character and has taught me to never sell myself short of anything. During my time at GCF, I learned that anything you can see you can grasp as long as you put your full effort into your endeavors and have passion for what you do. I realized over the course of my term that my passion led to my success at GCF. I had the passion to become a better me, the passion for communities, the passion for the environment, and the passion towards people. I wanted to be the best I could be for myself, my family and GCF. I learned that overcoming every obstacle starts with making a decision. I learned through GCF that there is always a right decision as long as you make the right choices. GCF is like one huge family. I would not trade this wonderful experience for anything else in the world.

JOHN VICENTE Age 23, Manhattan

Green City Force is a movement that makes changes for the young adults involved in the program, and the people and communities around the five boroughs. It's a way to gain and enhance skills for the job market and to further the education of your choice. I chose to become a Corps Member with GCF for college preparation and for the doors it would open up for different opportunities. What impacted me the most about GCF was learning that global warming is real, and it's causing a climate change crisis in the world we live in. Nothing lasts forever, so living a more sustainable life will save resources for future generations. Our daily activities affect the ozone layer by burning fossil fuels that send toxins into the air, such as carbon dioxide. This fact makes me more inclined to limit our ways of spending our precious resources and becoming more energy efficient. I would like to thank everyone who helped me during this stage of my life to make me who I am today. Through my trials and tribulations I've become stronger and wiser. Thank you to GCF's great staff members, who helped me strive for the better and gave me a chance to continue to prove myself to the world.

Joining Green City Force was one of the best decisions I've made in my life. GCF has helped me develop important skills such as interpersonal communication, teamwork and professionalism strengths. During my time at GCF, I was placed in situations where I had to convince a person to give me some of their time to educate them on how to be more environmentally-friendly. This can be quite challenging for an introverted person, especially in this fast-paced city. I have been challenged in every way possible in this program. I've tried things I haven't done before. If I could summarize GCF in a few words I would say it's career and life bootcamp. It's human nature to be afraid of change, but GCF helped me fight that fear, and now I'm ready for life's challenges.



OLIVIA AMBROISE Age 19, Staten Island

Green City Force is the best program I have ever been a part of. I am appreciative of the people I met, as well as the things I have learned through the program. I have been taught so many things by the GCF staff. My passion for service, environmental knowledge, and professionalism has improved immensely since the start of my cohort. GCF has given me many great opportunities. My soft skills and hard skills have been developed every day in this program. In my time here, I am happy to have acquired such a great network. Thank you, Green City Force.

DEMI SANTANA Age 23, Brooklyn

Green City Force is a movement that makes a change for the young adults involved in the program, and the people and communities around the five boroughs. It's a way to gain and enhance skills for jobs, as well as college, to further the education of your choice. I chose to become a Corps Member with GCF for college preparation and for the doors it would open up for different opportunities. I've worked with other job readiness programs before, but GCF is more of a hands-on training experience. We were able to engage and educate residents from NYCHA as well as low income families affected by Hurricane Sandy by volunteering our services to make a better tomorrow. What impacted me the most about GCF is that global warming is real, and it's causing a climate change in the world we live in. Nothing lasts forever, so living a more sustainable life will save resources for future generations. Our daily activities affect the ozone layer by burning fossil fuels that send toxins into the air, such as carbon dioxide. This fact makes me wiser to limit our ways of spending our precious resources and becoming more energy efficient. After I finish my 6 month term with GCF, I plan to attend BMCC as a freshman studying sports management. I also plan to hold a part time job as a field representative with NYCHA. I would like to thank everyone that helped me during this stage of my life to make me who I am today. Through my trials and tribulations I've become stronger and wiser. Thanks to GCF's great staff members who helped me strive for greatness and gave me a chance to continue to prove myself to the world.



IRVING WRIGHT Age 24, Manhattan

My time at Green City Force has been an odyssey that I will never forget. I remember the first day I stepped into the Pfizer building and my adrenaline was rushing; I did not know what to expect from the program. Thoughts wandered through my head and my only option was to be optimistic. After meeting and being introduced to the staff at GCF, I knew that I would be in good hands and have opportunities for the future. It all started with a three-week-long orientation where we, the Corps Members, were able to get acquainted and learn about the clean energy economy. Subsequently, we were sent out to do meaningful service that would contribute to our community and simultaneously provide us with technical skills. As a Corps Member I have become more open-minded and gregarious, which helped me to develop my networking skills. GCF has instilled confidence in me that will encourage me to go back to school or find employment. One of my favorite projects with GCF was our partnership with Rebuilding Together to help rebuild homes affected by Hurricane Sandy. I am proud to say that I am a Green City Force Corps Member who has acquired transferable skills by contributing to the urban community and promoting sustainability.

TURNEY WRIGHT Age 21, Brooklyn

My life before Green City Force was boring and I wasn't doing anything productive. One day I came across the Green City Force flyer and decided to give them a call. After a difficult interview process I was chosen to become a Corps Member. Through service I was given the opportunity to give back to my community. The most memorable service was the Sandy Relief project in Canarsie. To see the faces of the families after they were allowed to move back in their homes after a long time was amazing. GCF pushed me out of my comfort zone and showed me a different way of life. The GCF staff helped me recognize my potential future as a building retrofitter. Along the journey I came in contact with some amazing people alongside me as Corps Members by the names of Daniel Egipciano, Chance Brown, and Miguel Rodriguez as well as Team Leader Elliezer Villanueva. I would like to thank the whole GCF family for their amazing support with my transition in life.

WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO RECOGNIZE THE
GREEN CITY FORCE SERVICE ASSOCIATES:

FREDDIE MELENDEZ⁺

CESNISHA SPELLER⁺

ABDU RODNEY

LAYZA VELAZQUEZ⁺

MONASIA WADE

⁺ *Indicates Service Associate's graduating from their second
AmeriCorps term today.*

**CONGRATULATIONS
GRADUATES OF COHORT
8 OF GREEN CITY FORCE'S
CLEAN ENERGY CORPS!**