



PowerCorpsPHL Graduation Celebrates Service Work Across Philadelphia

Graduates complete City's renowned environmental and workforce development program

PHILADELPHIA (March 31, 2017) – Completing their service in a unique City of Philadelphia program that trains young adults for new careers while improving Philadelphia's natural assets, a total of 49 members of PowerCorpsPHL "Cohort 7" today were officially graduated from the renowned workforce development program.

At a ceremony held at the Free Library Parkway Branch, the graduates – women and men ages 18 to 26 – were honored for their commitment and service by the program's sponsors: the City of Philadelphia, EducationWorks, and the Philadelphia Youth Network, who all partner to operate the PowerCorpsPHL program. Individual participants earned numerous awards for their unique contributions to the program. Collectively, all members who served this past cohort in a variety of capacities completed 49,676 hours completing environmental improvement and maintenance projects across more than 60 sites in Philadelphia through the program.

"Today we celebrate young women and men who have taken steps to improve themselves and to improve the City by participating in this program," said Miles Wilson, Executive Director of EducationWorks. "These young adults are preparing themselves for new opportunities that will help them build successful careers and productive lives. And at the same time, they have provided important service in improving and maintaining the City's natural assets."

Cohort 7, the graduating class, started service in September 2015 in six crews: two working with the Philadelphia Water Department and four working with the City's Department of Parks and Recreation. Service sites included locations in South Philadelphia, such as Marconi Plaza and East Passyunk Community Center; a rain garden at Olney Playground in North Philadelphia; and pedestrian trails at Tacony Creek Park. The group alone restored 368 acres of land, collected and recycled 32 tons of debris, and planted 2,081 trees and plants.

"The partnership with the City's Parks & Recreation and Water Departments allows the members to be exposed to a variety of natural resources and public land used by many in the community that many members never knew existed," said Executive Director Lisa Varon. "PowerCorpsPHL also provides young adults with the unique opportunity to do service projects in their own communities."



PowerCorpsPHL launched in 2013 as a City of Philadelphia AmeriCorps program administrated by EducationWorks in partnership with Philadelphia Youth Network. The program enrolls approximately 160 young adults between the ages of 18 and 26, who serve 6-month terms as AmeriCorps members. Partnering with the Philadelphia Water Department and the Philadelphia Parks and Recreation Department, each cohort completes environmental service and site improvement projects across Philadelphia, including green stormwater infrastructure maintenance, and enhancements to the land around and the spaces inside recreation centers. Once service hours are completed, PowerCorpsPHL provides participants with transition and workforce supports designed to propel members into employment opportunities in various environmental careers, post-secondary education, and/or additional service with AmeriCorps.

Within PowerCorpsPHL's first three years, participants have planted 3,000 trees, revitalized 3,000 acres of public land, educated 18,000 residents in watershed preservation, and connected approximately 480 young adults to meaningful employment, post-secondary enrollment, or continued national service, with a 90% percent successful transition rate for those who have completed their service.

The graduation ceremony also served as an induction for Cohort 8, the next class of PowerCorpsPHL participants, who will begin service work in April. Cohort 8 consists of six service crews, totaling 43 individuals.

About PowerCorpsPHL

PowerCorpsPHL is a City of Philadelphia Partnership with EducationWorks and the Philadelphia Youth Network. PowerCorps is an AmeriCorps Initiative designed to support the City of Philadelphia's environmental stewardship initiatives, youth violence prevention and workforce development priorities. Partnering with EducationWorks PowerCorpsPHL will annually enroll 160 individuals, ages 18-26, in a 9-month program: 6 months of full-time service and professional development as AmeriCorps members with City departments of Parks & Recreation & the Water Department followed by 3 months of intensive job placement support.

About EducationWorks

EducationWorks engages children and young people by providing high quality educational programs that make the school day whole and reengage disconnected young adults to education and career readiness. Recognizing that each child has unique needs, our staff works directly with community and school leaders to identify challenges and create customized programs that will have the greatest impact. From in-school programs to out-of-school time and AmeriCorps service, youth from six years to adulthood are positively impacted by EducationWorks programming. ***EducationWorks creates Opportunities for Learning and Skills for Life.*** Learn more about EducationWorks at educationworks.org.

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