Behind every smile there’s a story.

Through the struggle there’s hope.

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Urban Corps is a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization, a Section 3 Business Concern, and an Equal Opportunity Employer. Federal Tax ID: 33-0352148.
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.

“I fell into depression during my teen years. I was incredibly overweight and I also discovered that my sexual orientation was gay. I struggled a lot.... Every day I tried to change myself. In high school I ditched a lot and eventually dropped out. It wasn’t easy, but I have finally learned to accept the person I am, and my Corps experience was a big part of how I did it.” — Jeremiah Ruiz

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 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.
MESSAGE FROM CEO ROBERT CHÁVEZ

Each year my task to write this annual message coincides with Thanksgiving, a time to reflect on what is most important in life and focus on all that you have rather than what you don’t. There is much to be thankful for and plenty to celebrate.

In the last year, Urban Corps celebrated its 25th anniversary of service, embarked on the final stretch of the landmark Chicano Park Recreation Improvement Project, and took the opportunity to refinance the mortgage on our facility thanks to an $8 million New Markets Tax Credit investment deal with Civic San Diego which is allowing us grow our program and hire more youth.

Our compassionate grant funders, partners and project sponsors continue to support our growth, acknowledge our work, and help us pursue opportunities for youth.

Yet, what continues to matter most is the personal achievement of our Corpsmembers. I am continually blown away to learn of the challenges they face and how they are confronting them head-on through participation in this program. Young people come to us from a variety of backgrounds. For many, this is the only way they can advance their education and support their families at the same time. Youth may have dropped out of high school due to gangs or drugs, becoming a young parent, or even having an undiagnosed learning disability that hindered their academic progress. Some are refugees from war-torn countries with limited English. Some aged out of the foster system. A growing number of youth we serve are homeless. Each has their own story. I’m proud to share—in their own words—a handful of these stories from some of our brightest stars. Their success is my greatest source of gratitude.

Sincerely,

Robert Chávez, CEO

Urban Corps' 25th Anniversary “Sunset on the Bay” at the Bali Hai was a smashing success with approximately 200 guests, Pride of Polynesia hula and fire dancers, riveting speeches by San Diego City Council President Todd Gloria and Corpsmember Ambassador Eliseo Nunez, and nearly $78,000 raised.

We are grateful to our sponsors AT&T, SDG&E, Faith Insurance Service, Stone Brewing, and many others who helped us honor this milestone Anniversary. Thanks to our generous sponsors and donors, Urban Corps was able to raise much needed core support, part of which will help fund youth services.
“My experience working on Chicano Park has been nothing but amazing. It feels great making a change in the neighborhood you grew up in....As a kid I used to play at the park, and now I am going to share what I helped create with my 1-year-old son. I have learned so many skills working with my fellow Corpsmembers...together we got the job done. I feel we gave something to the community, but we also gained so much experience, responsibility, dedication and perseverance. I feel proud and now I know you can do anything you put your mind to.” – Alfredo Silva
SCHOOL GARDENS

Urban Corps was contracted by Child Development Associates to implement playground construction at the Barrio Logan Child Development Center. The design featured unique play elements including a music wall which came to life when Urban Corps Supervisor Jose Macias turned everyday building materials into percussion instruments. A living wall was creatively expressed with zigzag rain gutters, accessible to little hands. The space won jurors’ commendation at December’s ASLA awards and was touted by jurors who felt “the project expressed strong intent and a potential pilot for lost spaces.”

Thanks to an SDG&E Environmental Champions grant, Urban Corps constructed a school garden at Gage Elementary. The area impacted at Gage was transformed from an unused dirt space to an active outdoor learning lab that engages students, faculty, and parent volunteers, who provided input for their garden. Gage gained a new demonstration garden space complete with raised planter beds, irrigation, and winding DG pathways and bioswale lined with decorative boulders.

CHICANO PARK GETS A FACELIFT

After 18 months of community outreach and design, the Chicano Park Recreation Improvement Project broke ground in May 2015. Park improvements were completed in fall 2015 and celebrated with a ribbon cutting event attended by public officials and community members. Improvements include playgrounds, a handball court, adult fitness area, a skate area, landscaping and fountain repairs. The project was funded through a grant from the California Department of Housing and Community Development.

“I could not be more proud of Urban Corps’ Design-Build team and construction crews,” said CEO Rob Chávez. “This is a landmark project for us and it’s thrilling to see Corpsmembers expand their skill sets by working on a major construction site.”

This project represented an exceptional opportunity to fulfill our mission, offering 70 youth a chance to learn technical construction and landscaping skills as they earn a high school diploma. More than ever, Corpsmembers broadened their skill sets by working on a variety of tasks. They demolished existing amenities, installed fencing, excavated foundations, laid footings, constructed framework, placed boulders, installed landscaping, laid sod, bent rebar, poured concrete, operated heavy machinery, and worked side-by-side with subs.

“This project is an example of acknowledging the importance of local voices within the community and showcasing the creative energy of the Urban Corps in a unique partnership with the City,” said City of San Diego Principal Planner Brian Schoenfisch. “This is a great way to show that we can make a difference working together.”

COMMUNITY SERVICE COURT

Urban Corps partnered with the Office of the San Diego City Attorney on the Community Court Program, a pilot program launched by the City Attorney in association with the Sheriff’s Department, Public Defender’s Office. The program allows offenders who are charged with low-level misdemeanors to pay their debt to society through two days of volunteer service at the Corps on projects such as tree planting, recycling, and graffiti removal.

A press conference was held in April 2015 to celebrate the successful launch of the program.
CORPSMEMBERS IN ACTION

✓ 1400 Trees Planted
✓ 5.5 Million CRV Recyclables Collected
✓ 1,400 Linear Feet of Trails Improved
✓ 16 Acres of Fire Fuel Cleared
✓ 2,700 Tons of Brush Cleared
✓ 2 Million Sq. Ft. Graffiti Removed
✓ 75 Homes Rehabilitated &/or Weatherized
✓ 2.8 Million Lbs. Litter Removed
✓ 3,500 Volunteer Hours Contributed
✓ 128 Special Events Serviced, Rain or Shine

CHARTER SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT

✓ 90% Graduation Rate (among seniors)
✓ 119 Earned a High School Diploma
✓ 68% Placed in Employment
✓ 36% Enrolled in College
✓ 219 Certifications Earned

C2C: STUDENT SERVICES

Urban Corps strives to broaden the level of support services offered to Corpsmembers. In the past year students benefited from:

- Case management, mentoring
- Job and psychological counseling, job placement
- Life Skills workshop series
- Assistance with transportation costs
- Referrals and assistance with outside services
- Access to career and personal counseling
- Read San Diego tutoring
- Free flu shot clinic in partnership with Live Well San Diego
- Calfresh (food assistance program) signup event
- Monthly MediCal signup events with Family Health Centers
- Certified Conflict Resolution Training with the National Conflict Resolution Center
- Monthly nurse visit in partnership with North Central Public Health Center
- Sexual Health and Healthy Relationships Workshop with Teen Health Centers
- SDSU Nursing Student presentations on drug and alcohol awareness
- Financial wellness workshops with Money Management International and Mission Federal Credit Union
- Free suits at graduation thanks to the Men’s Wearhouse partnership

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

Behind every smile there is a story. Every tear drop has a tale. Behind the lies there’s the truth. Through the struggle there is hope. Best believe that behind all that comes success.

If I did it, anybody going through the same situation can. Every day was an obstacle. Every tear hardened my soul. I’ve never had a family that would tell me “we are proud of you!” I only had a family that pushed me away and erased me off the family tree. I never had a room to myself, or even my own bed. All I slept on was the floor.

After warm nights sleeping under a roof with warm blankets, I find myself sleeping in alley ways, cold nights. My bed wasn’t warm; it was a cold flat cardboard box. What I had as a blanket was newspapers with cardboard on top. I grew up in the streets.

Urban Corps gave me a second fresh start. I’m no longer that guy.

-Anonymous
“We all have different stories, different backgrounds, I don’t praise myself for the life I’ve lived but I don’t get discouraged. When I think about where I am and where I came from, it’s not hard to imagine myself as an inspiration and success story. Urban Corps has been a big part of my journey and impacted me greatly. I am forever grateful to the education department, supervisors, and staff that have saw me through this journey...the advice, support, and not to mention all the doors they have opened for me to broaden my horizons. I’ve conquered my greatest foe, myself. If I can do that, then the rest of the world shouldn’t be such a problem.”

Buddy Hearod, Class of 2015
Urban Corps’ overall revenues from both programmatic operations and Urban Corps Charter School represent a $10.7 mil combined budget. Charter School financials remain separate and are not represented in charts below.

### Audited Financial Highlights (Urban Corps Corp.)
- Total Contributions & Revenue: $8,379,000
- Total Operating Expenses: $8,126,000
- Net Increase in Assets: $253,000
- Ending Net Total Assets: $8,406,000

### Urban Corps Charter School Budget
- FY15: $2,340,000
- Proposed FY16: $2,740,000

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

### 2014-2015 Revenue
- Service Fees - $5,523,000
- Govt. Grants - $1,624,000
- Donations - $227,000
- Other Income - $1,005,000

### 2014-2015 Expenses

#### Programmatic Expenses
- Recycling - $1,990,000
- Environmental Projects - $2,264,000
- Community Improvement - $1,634,000
- GreenBuild Construction - $990,000

#### Administrative Expenses
- Management & Fundraising - $1,174,000

86 cents of every dollar goes towards programs.
GRATITUDE TO OUR FUNDERS AND DONORS

$100-$499
America's Charities
Gail Auka
Bob Benson
Capri Lodge
Diane Chalmers
Council of Philippine American Organizations
Michen and Mark Denney
ESRI San Diego
Chris Fox, Port of San Diego
Grondin Construction
Ramon Hershman
Kyle and Susan Kennedy
Daniel and Maria Elena Paramo
Daniel Perez
Patrick Roybal
Bruce Saito
Robert & Dottie Surdi
Ed and Shelby Wilbur
Joaquin Zavala

$500-$999
American Benefits - Richard Joseph and Frank Crivello
Richard J. Donovan Correctional Facility
EarthShare California
Rich Geisler
Julianne & Craig Klein
Christine Moore
San Diego and Imperial Counties Labor Council
The Honorable Lynn Schenk
Tracey Williams
Dennis Wilson

$1000-$9999
Barona Band of Mission Indians
Celeste Brodigan
Robert Chávez
Cox Communications
Sam Duran
Tom and Berit Durler
Lowe’s
Michael and Christie Meehan
Ingrid Nielsen
Gene and Taffin A. Ray
San Diego Chargers
San Diego County Employees’ Charitable Org. (CECO)
Sea World

$10,000-$100,000
Aimloan.com
AT&T
Bank of America Charitable Foundation
Calif. Public Utilities Commission for Energy Upgrade California
County of San Diego
Chuck Faith, Faith Insurance Services
National Fish & Wildlife Foundation
Price Charities
Qualcomm Foundation
San Diego Gas & Electric
Stone Brewery Co.
Jing and Vera Wang

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Point Loma Association
Price Charities
Ocean Discovery Institute
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Recon Recycling
Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County
River Partners
San Diego Gas & Electric
San Dieguito River Park
San Diego Canyonlands
San Diego Commercial, LLC
San Diego Foundation
San Diego Housing Commission
San Diego Park & Recreation
San Diego River Park Foundation
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Keith Sekby
Sweetwater Authority
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Tree San Diego
Valley Center Fire Safe Council
UCSD Nimitz Marine Facility Improvement District
Unified Port of San Diego
University California San Diego
Valley Center Fire Safe Council
Valley Center RCD
Viejas Fire Department
Whalen & Assoc.
“I have noticed a lot of people complain about their communities, yet none seem to take any action to address their concerns. As a Corpsmember I have planted trees, removed graffiti, and cleared miles of debris from our city streets. This work has shown me what it takes to improve our communities and inspired me to work in a field that helps to strengthen our neighborhoods and to solve problems of poverty and homelessness.”

– Donnie Knight

“Coming to San Diego from Mexico was completely new and different for me. School was difficult because all I knew was one language, Spanish. Slowly, but surely, I began to learn how to speak, write, and read in English.”

– Heydy Sotelo

“My only dream now is to get my high school diploma. I would also love to go to college and then a university to study what I dreamed of when I was a child. I always dreamed of being a doctor in order to help patients get good treatment with deep love and care.”

– Dina Batros

“I am finding more and more joy in learning and it’s a beautiful feeling. I am becoming more confident in myself every day. I used to doubt myself and think that I didn’t have the smarts to do it, but now I know that I can.”

– Louis Salazar

“One day, the names of those who had passed the exit exam were called out. When my name was called at the end of the list I was so happy! If it was not for Urban Corps I would not have my high school diploma. I have learned a lot from the Urban Corps staff, and I would like to thank the teachers, supervisors, and everyone else for helping me.”

– Rami Somo