



SCA volunteers hauled five tons of trash from Anacostia Park on MLK Day.

## Life's Most Urgent Question

**AMAZON.COM LISTS 183,321 BOOKS ON THE TOPIC OF LEADERSHIP.** Reading one per day, it would take more than 500 years to complete the list. Google the word "leadership" and you'll get 640 million results.

There are a lot of leadership models out there. They variously include vision, integrity, discipline, communication and countless other elements. But one thing experts agree on is that leadership requires service over self-interest.

Our Founding Fathers illustrated altruistic leadership when they fought for principles, formed a republic and declared independence, even if it cost them "our lives, our fortunes, our sacred honor." George Washington only reluctantly pursued the presidency for the good of his nascent nation.

Nearly two centuries later, Martin Luther King, Jr. courageously led a national movement that changed the lives of millions of Americans and ultimately cost him his own. Service was a core component of his leadership as well as his teachings.

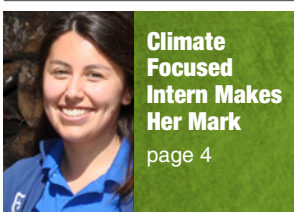
Dr. King once stated that "life's most urgent question is what are you doing for others?" and a few weeks ago, on a day named for King and dedicated to service, Roland Richardson repeated the civil rights leader's words while addressing 600 SCA volunteers at a frosty Anacostia Park in Washington, DC.

"Service is a central pillar of Dr. King's legacy," Roland stated, "and one that has had a profound impact on my own life."

Roland noted he served on SCA crews every summer while in high school, right there in the District. At 19, he taught environmental education and restored state parks in another

*(continued on page 2)*

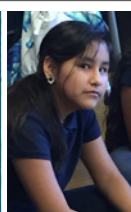
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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Mirroring the American Mosaic

This year's National Park Service centennial is a powerful reminder of America's spectacular natural legacy. It also reminds us that we still have much to do to ensure these and other public lands are relevant, accessible and welcoming to all.

When Liz Putnam founded SCA nearly six decades ago, she sought to prevent our national parks from being "loved to death." Sadly, today the torch for the great outdoors appears to be dimming. As more of our population migrates to urban centers and we spend more of our leisure time with technology, our culture is moving away from traditional experiences in nature. And those who do frequent parks represent only a small portion of our country's expansive demographic.

SCA is committed to providing conservation service opportunities to young people from all backgrounds who reflect the richly diverse fabric of our nation. In doing so, we are empowering a new generation of leaders who will safeguard our natural resources and thrive in an ever-more complicated global marketplace.

To achieve these objectives, we will protect more public lands and build new professional pathways by expanding signature programs including NPS Academy, the Career Discovery Intern Program, and our community crew program serving teens in major metropolitan areas.

We will create more resilient cities and increase local volunteerism by undertaking more community service projects, a concept we originally piloted in New York City to restore lands damaged by Hurricane Sandy, into other municipalities including Chicago and the San Francisco Bay Area.

We will connect more K-12 students with nature through our innovative Urban Tree House, and partner with other organizations also serving underrepresented youth to pair SCA's service-learning experiences with their proven programs, maximize youth development, and ensure a larger, more inclusive youth conservation movement.

And, with support from American Express, we will leverage opportunities including the National Park Service centennial, and advance other priority national service initiatives such as the 21st Century Youth Conservation Corps.

As SCA engages youth in all communities, I thank you for joining us in this important undertaking. Together we are starting tomorrow, today.

*Jaime B. Matyas*

### Life's Most Urgent Question *continued from page 1*

SCA program in Massachusetts. And here, at this American Express/SCA hosted "Find Your Park" service project to honor MLK, Roland revealed he'd just accepted a job with SCA.

"I am back where my journey began," he said, "ensuring the next generation of environmental leaders will come from all racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. And that is something Dr. King would be very happy to see."



*SCA's Roland Richardson and Interior Secretary Sally Jewell talk service with WRC-TV.*



Thousands of SCA alumni continue their commitment to service well beyond their SCA experience. Leslie Allen is a retired professional tennis player and was once ranked #17 in the world. In 1981, became the first African American woman to win a major tournament since Althea Gibson, and later became an athlete development specialist, a broadcaster, and a member of the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) board of directors.

Before all that, as teenager from Cleveland, Leslie traveled to Vermont's Merck Forest to join an all-girl SCA trail crew. "I'm reasonably sure that I am the only SCA alum to play on center court of every Grand Slam tennis tournament," she jokes.

"But I liked the fact that, early on, SCA was committed to offering outdoor experiences to a diverse mix of people. There were no girls' sports teams at my high school, so I loved the idea of girls from all across the country working together toward a common goal."

Decades later, Leslie follows a similar approach as executive director of the Leslie Allen Foundation. "Many young people dream of becoming professional athletes but soon realize they may not ever play," she notes. The foundation's Win4Life program helps youth develop skills in business and social etiquette, public speaking and other areas as a means of securing behind-the-scenes careers in pro sports and succeeding both on and off the field.

"Growing up, I understood the benefit of having superior life skills," says Leslie, who is also a real estate professional with

West End Residential. “I could navigate from a castle to the projects, but as a WTA spokesperson I knew if I didn’t have command of the King’s English, wear the right outfit, or if I was late, I wouldn’t be there.”



Leslie Allen, French Open, 1983.

Win4Life graduates are currently working in professional tennis, the NBA and Special Olympics, among other organizations. When one of her students recently spoke to a large group in Boston, “tears were streaming from eyes. She’d come so far!” Leslie beams.

“I operate from the premise of ‘what’s the point of knowing what I know if I don’t share it?’ The joy I get from that is far greater than any dollar value.”



The highest standard of service may well be defined by those who risk their lives so others don’t have to: firefighters, police, military personnel. After a stint in human intelligence with the US Army, Nick Murray of Oyster Bay, NY certainly would have been excused had he sought a job where the financial rewards are greater and the personal sacrifices are fewer. What he calls “the pursuit of tangible grandeur and the chance of immortality in material things.” But, like so many veterans, that’s not what Nick is about.

Today he is one of 50 young adults restoring, protecting and enhancing New York State’s natural resources with the just-launched Excelsior Conservation Corps, a 10-month program offered by the state, AmeriCorps and SCA. After the Army, Nick says he briefly fell into “consuming without replenishing.” The Excelsior Corps, he says, is an opportunity to “earn back the right to be an American citizen, learn more about our country, and why it is important to never turn our backs on her. I want to inspire other citizens, who may be like me, have strayed from their ideals.”

Leaders always ask more of themselves. Leaders always focus on others. Leaders always serve.

For nearly 60 years, SCA has empowered young leaders—not only conservation leaders, but those who advance the ideals of giving back and paying forward to enrich those around them. Seventy percent of SCA’s 80,000+ alumni are still active in conservation, and an identical percentage regularly volunteer in their communities—extending SCA’s influence and each alum’s impact well beyond the outdoors.

As Dr. King said, “The time is always right to do what is right.”

# SCA IS MOVING CONSERVATION FORWARD



**THE STUDENT CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION** strives to create hands-on experiences that transform both lives and lands. We empower young people to plan, act, and lead—while they ensure America’s natural legacy.

**THAT’S A REFRESHING VISION THAT  
SCA DELIVERS ON YEAR AFTER YEAR.**

2016 is a time for all of us to renew our commitment to that vision by helping to empower more under-served youth, who will **both strengthen our urban environments and advance the youth conservation movement** from our backcountry to our backyards.

**WE WILL RENEW AND  
UNDERSCORE OUR PROMISE:  
TO PROTECT AND RESTORE OUR  
CHERISHED WILDERNESS.**

Regardless of how much you are able to give, you will be helping to forge a brighter future for our land and our youth.

**HELP US BY RENEWING YOUR SUPPORT  
WITH A GIFT TODAY.**

Use the attached envelope or give  
securely online at

**THESCA.ORG/RENEWGW**



*Intern Christie Merino finds another “interpretive moment.”*

## Climate-Focused Intern Makes her Mark

Can a college senior turn back the clock on climate change? Lower global temperatures? Reverse rising sea levels? No. But she did help develop a sweeping strategy for mitigating climate impacts on a national park and ensuring its natural integrity for years to come.

Christie Merino, a political science major at Boston College, says “climate change has been central to my education” and her recently-completed SCA internship “provided an opportunity to take the things I’ve been discussing with peers and professors abstractly and apply them to a national park: energy, policy, science, communications.”

The park—Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park in Woodstock, VT—was a fitting location for her pioneering work. The site was the boyhood home of conservationist George Perkins Marsh, widely recognized as the first person to identify humans’ ability to affect climate. Later, the property was home to Frederick Billings, an innovator in progressive reforestation and farming. It’s most recent owners, Laurance and Mary Rockefeller, gifted the site to the National Park Service in 1992.

“The whole history of the place is so captivating,” Christie says. “It makes you feel small in a sense, but it’s incredibly motivating to see what a small group of people can achieve.”

In keeping with its pedigree, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP is active in the Climate Friendly Park program and embraces climate adaptation as central to its mission. With four primary areas of focus—Green Campus, Sustainable Forest Management, Community-Based Collaboration, and Demonstration and Education—Christie made significant contributions in every category.

“I performed a lot of different energy audits, calculating emissions for 2006 through 2014 on a park-wide level, by sector and by building,” Christie notes. “I did progressional analyses, comparing emissions with degree days. It was pretty complicated, but it was awesome.”

### Adapting and Educating

The data she compiled and the reports she generated have allowed park leadership to make informed operational decisions and justify new green infrastructure enhancements. Impending upgrades include the installation of geo-thermal and wood-fired heating units.

“The park is now able to specify ‘this is what we’ve done in the past, this is the impact we’ve had, and this is why we want to do more,’” Christie explains. “They can project the impact of each improvement made.”

In addition to data capture and analysis, Christie created public education tools to take advantage of the park's many advances. "The high-efficiency wood boiler is a perfect example," she says. "The park harvests wood from its sustainable-managed forest. It's awesome because it uses sources from right here, minimizing the transportation factor and loss of energy from the current grid system."

"It also provided a great interpretive moment for any ranger taking a tour past the garage. I developed tour plans and materials to encourage engagement and get people talking about the park's forest management program. I took jargon, numbers and graphs and turned them into something more compelling that connected with visitors on a deeper level."

Christie contends much of the current climate change narrative has become overly partisan. "It's very controversial and most people don't want to engage in that dialogue," she asserts. "We have an obligation to move people away from that mindset, educate visitors and show that climate change touches every single one of us."

Christie got her position at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller through the SCA-NPS Academy, a job training and workforce diversity program that since 2011 has provided national park internships to nearly 500 students from all backgrounds.

"As a kid, I always saw rangers as educators," she says. "The thought of teaching people about landscape and animals was so exciting to me."

"With SCA, I had little moments every day where I made a graph, saw trends I'd known existed and could suddenly share with others. I felt the need to take care of the park and do my part to make sure generations unborn can enjoy places like it."



"Climate change touches every one of us," says Christie.

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:

### MICHAEL LIANG



*SCA alumnus Michael Liang is a visual information specialist with the National Park Service and "spokes-ranger" for the LGBT community. Michael, who is gay, was recently profiled in Out magazine. We asked him about his sudden celebrity, the quest for inclusivity and more.*

#### **SCA: What's been the reaction to your Out interview?**

**ML:** Well, I'm sure half the page hits are from my proud mom but in all seriousness, I've been pretty overwhelmed by the positive responses. There were some negative comments when the National Park Service shared the article on Facebook, [but] I was inspired by other Facebook fans who stepped in to defend the agency.

#### **SCA: Tell us about your role with the Park Service.**

**ML:** I'm serving as a Centennial Ambassador. There are five of us doing these sorts of interviews, intentionally reaching specific demographics through a variety of media platforms. It's been awesome to be part of the Find Your Park campaign and it's only going to get more exciting as we near the anniversary.

#### **SCA: Are you concerned about being seen only as "The Gay Ranger"?**

**ML:** I'm not concerned because while I know that it's an important part of my identity, it doesn't exclusively define me. We all have complex identities. I will say that if sharing that I am a gay park ranger helps inspire members of my community to feel connected to their national parks, I'm happy to serve in that capacity.

#### **SCA: What lure do national parks hold for you?**

**ML:** Many of our more recognizable national parks are famous because they are inherently beautiful and awe-inducing. I'm not immune to such grandeur, but I've become more interested in the hidden histories that require a bit of handholding and deliberate unveiling.

#### **SCA: How do you express that as a ranger and visual artist?**

**ML:** People who work in creative media are always making decisions about what to emphasize and I try to use those opportunities to share the new, forgotten, or undervalued. I've become a big advocate for the little guys, one might say.

This is an edited version of a more extensive interview. Read more at [thesca.org/liang](http://thesca.org/liang).

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT: BOB KACHINSKI



“SCA gave me more in that three month period than I could begin to repay.”

In 1983, Bob Kachinski’s biology degree was his ticket to Worland, Wyoming. He’d never been out West before but his college professor had recommended SCA, and now he had a summer internship surveying elk habitat with the Bureau of Land Management. “The vastness of Wyoming and the culture shock of trying to blend in with the local cowboys was a real eye opener,” Bob recalls.

To get off on the right foot, he quickly purchased a pair of boots. To his chagrin, Bob discovered that proper cowboy boots have pointy-toes only after he showed up at work wearing square-toed boots. His BLM colleagues forgave the indiscretion and his boss, a big-game hunter, regularly invited Bob over to share the bounty of his freezer.

Following SCA, Bob moved back to Massachusetts and worked a variety of outdoor jobs before starting his own property management company. He is also very active in the community, working with the area housing authority to assist families in need and serving on the local conservation commission, amid other volunteer positions.

Bob says he is still guided by the strong sense of “stewardship for the land and for future generations” instilled by SCA. To help create conservation service opportunities like the one he enjoyed, Bob has long been a financial contributor to SCA. Recently, he and his wife, Diane, decided to make an even greater commitment to tomorrow’s stewards by leaving a generous legacy to SCA in their will.

“Like most SCA alumni,” Bob says, “I developed a real appreciation for our nation’s beauty and I still keep in touch with my old boss at BLM. As far as I am concerned, SCA gave me more in that three month period than I could begin to repay.”

## Your Investment in Their Future Can Produce Many Happy Returns ... For You *and* For Them

Would you like to make an investment in the future of SCA’s youth conservation service work that will pay dividends far into the future? Consider a charitable gift annuity with SCA and receive income for life and a charitable tax deduction in the year of the gift. At the end of your life, the residual would be used to support SCA’s mission.

For example, a 75-year-old making a \$10,000 gift to SCA could enjoy lifetime income of \$580/year (5.8%) and could also enjoy a tax deduction in the year of the gift of \$4,503.

*\*This is for informational purposes only. Those considering a planned gift should check with their advisers.*

To learn more, please contact Wilke Nelson, SCA’s Director of Gift Planning, toll free, at: 1-888-722-9675 x2024 or by email to: [Wnelson@theSCA.org](mailto:Wnelson@theSCA.org). To learn more about charitable gift annuities and other gift planning options with SCA please visit:

[thesca.givingplan.net](http://thesca.givingplan.net)



## SCA Delivers “Ah-Ha” Moments for Chicago Youth

For a child, few places pack the wonder of a tree house. A tree house spurs recreation, observation and imagination. As the youngster climbs, the mind soars and even the stars seem within reach.

Last fall, SCA brought its Urban Tree House to Chicagoland. A unique environmental education curriculum, the Urban Tree House connects city kids with the natural world around them... a world that for many had yet to be discovered.

“There were so many ‘ah-ha’ moments,” recalls Urban Tree House instructor Diana Sanborn. “To see the looks on their faces, all the excitement. It was really impactful.”

In its first semester, the program engaged more than 2,000 K-12 Chicago public school students as Diana taught as many as 15 lessons a week in classrooms across the city. The concept is based on SCA’s long-running Urban Tree House in Washington, DC and is offered to schools for free, thanks to underwriting from BP America.

“The activities are well thought out and developed, and the interest level of students has definitely increased,” notes Yollande Gottlieb, a fifth grade teacher at Walt Disney Magnet School on Chicago’s North Side. “Diana has really made a difference.”

Triggering the brains of students across such a broad age range can be challenging but Diana, with the aid of interns Angela Flores and Maya Navarro, makes it look easy. With kindergarteners, for example, she distributes toy fishing poles outfitted with magnets instead of hooks. Metal fish of various sizes and colors represent the diversity of life on our planet, and as the children reel in their catches, the conversation turns to overfishing. “I want to make it fun,” she says, “not a lecture.”

In older classes, Diana has students stand in a group and draw cards bearing the names of different animals and or



SCA’s Diana Sanborn brings hands-on lessons to Chicago schools.

plants. Then she uses a ball of yarn to spin a “web of life” and show how all species are interconnected and what happens if even one of them disappears.

“Many students are unfamiliar with basic concepts like extinction and migration,” she says. “I spent a lot of time playing and exploring outside as a kid, but children today are spending more and more time with iPads, computers and TV. They’re missing out on a whole part of learning. We need to help them understand the need to conserve and protect the environment for generations to come.”



## SCA Founder Honored

Liz Putnam, the founder of SCA and matriarch of the nation’s youth conservation movement, is once again being recognized for her contributions to the field of environmental stewardship. As *The Green Way* went to press, The Wilderness Society was preparing to grant Liz its highest citizen’s honor—the Robert Marshall Award—at a ceremony in Washington, DC.

Marshall was an ardent advocate for wilderness and a principal founder of the Society. The award is presented annually to an individual who has devoted long-term service to conservation and who has had a notable influence in fostering an American land ethic. Previous recipients include naturalist and adventurer Mardy Murie, Pulitzer Prize winner Wallace Stegner, and author Terry Tempest Williams.

“Receiving this award is a tremendous honor, but the people who really earned it are the 80,000 young people who have served with SCA since 1957 and who continue to protect our planet today,” says Liz, who has also been granted the Presidential Citizens Medal, the Audubon Society’s Rachel Carson Award, and the National Wildlife Federation’s Conservation Achievement Award, among many other citations.



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The American Institute of Philanthropy and Charity Navigator rank SCA among America's top conservation charities for fund-raising efficiency.

SCA is a nationwide conservation force of college and high school volunteers who protect and restore America's parks, forests, and other public lands. SCA's active, hands-on approach to conservation has helped to develop a new generation of conservation leaders, inspire lifelong stewardship, and save our planet.

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## THE GreenWay

SCA'S CONSERVATION QUARTERLY | WINTER 2016

### SCA'S CONSERVATION QUARTERLY IS GETTING A MAKEOVER!

We always enjoy hearing from our loyal readers, and we always strive to be responsive to your feedback. **So, be ready for our May issue which will bring an exciting new look to *The GreenWay*** as well as more in-depth reporting on SCA volunteers, more updates on SCA alumni, and more insights into the many advances made possible by your generous support of SCA.

We'll also share what's been happening on SCA's social media, your favorite photos and much more.

Above all, we know you most enjoy sharing SCA members' experiences in the field, and *The GreenWay* will continue to deliver. Conservation begins here with the next generation of conservation leaders!

Once you see our new pages, we invite you to continue to comment. Send your thoughts to [thegreenway@thesca.org](mailto:thegreenway@thesca.org).

**And thanks for reading!**