



SAN JOSE CONSERVATION CORPS+CHARTER SCHOOL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New partnership connects youth to environmental career training

Los Altos, CA [October 10, 2018]— A new partnership between the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District and the San Jose Conservation Corps + Charter School has local youth learning job skills while earning an education and a paycheck in Midpen's Windy Hill Open Space Preserve this week.

The San Jose Conservation Corps + Charter School provides a free, comprehensive high school curriculum to local youth, ages 18-27, who have become disconnected from mainstream education. The students have opportunities to participate in paid job training and career technical education in the fields of environmental conservation, recycling, green energy and construction through a new tiny house project.

"For many of these students, it's their first introduction to the open space preserves," said Midpen's General Manager Ana María Ruiz. "We hope the experience plants seeds for deeper connections to nature, and opens doors to the environmental field for the next generation."

A group of 11 students are creating a fuel break in a closed area of Windy Hill Open Space Preserve to increase wildfire safety. Each night, the group is camping out under the stars at Midpen's nearby Black Mountain backpack camp and enjoying presentations by Midpen rangers and other staff about working in the conservation field. For many, it's also their first time camping.

"This partnership is offering a unique experience to inner city youth, who otherwise would not be able participate. The San Jose Conservation Corps + Charter School gives young people the skills they need to live healthy, productive lives," said Operations Director Sal Munoz. "They learn technical and life skills while working on natural resource management projects. These few days working at the Windy Hill Open Space Preserve are part of the students' one year personal transformation process. It is an experience they will remember for the rest of their lives."

Midpen staff attended a luncheon put on by the San Jose Conservation Corps + Charter School earlier this year, and were inspired to begin partnering with them on conservation projects because of the many benefits provided to the students, Midpen's public open space preserves and the community.

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The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District is a public agency created by voters in 1972. Its mission is to acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space land in perpetuity, protect and restore the natural environment and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education. throughout Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. www.openspace.org