Dear Green Corps Sponsor,

It is an extraordinary time for the environmental movement. Never has there been as much opportunity and hope for environmental change.

But we know that change doesn’t come easy. Never has there been such a need for well-trained environmental organizers. They’re the ones who will translate that hope into the effective public pressure that we’ll need to combat special interests and move our elected officials to implement the solutions our planet desperately needs.

Thanks to your support, Green Corps organizers and graduates are on the frontlines of today’s most pressing environmental campaigns. I am proud to introduce the new Green Corps Class of 2010 and report on two Green Corps alumni who are leading organizations for environmental change.

The Green Corps Class of 2010

Each year, Green Corps reaches out to thousands of college seniors nationwide and selects the top applicants to participate in our Field School for Environmental Organizing after graduation. The 27 members of the Green Corps Class of 2010 were selected from 2,466 applications. Green Corps provides classroom training and hands-on learning experiences to help them launch their careers in the environmental field.

The trainees spent three weeks in Boston this August participating in our Introductory Classroom Training, which featured dozens of environmental leaders. Guest trainers included Union of Concerned Scientists President Kevin Knobloch, Coal River Mountain Watch Co-Director Judy Bonds, and Center for Health, Environment, and Justice Director Lois Gibbs.

Fall Campaign Preview

At a time when scientists are telling us that we need to reduce our carbon emissions by at least 80 percent by 2050, we have more than 500 dirty coal power plants across the country. These plants release more than 2 billion tons of carbon dioxide each year across the United States.

From the mine to the plant, coal is our dirtiest energy source. In addition to contributing to global warming, burning coal causes asthma and other health problems, destroys our mountains, and releases toxic mercury into our air and water. Green Corps is partnering with Sierra Club to end the nation’s dependence on coal and bring about a clean, secure energy future. In 2008, Green Corps organizers helped launch Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal Campaign—activating citizens in Michigan, Iowa, Arkansas, Texas, Nevada, Georgia and Louisiana to call on the Houston-based coal giant Dynegy to drop its proposals to build new coal plants.

In response to an outpouring of grassroots pressure, the company dropped its plans for six of the eight coal plants in January 2009. Seven months later, Dynegy officially terminated all of their investments in coal, including selling its shares in a coal-fired power plant currently under construction. Green Corps was thrilled to play a pivotal role in Sierra Club’s most successful national grassroots and corporate accountability campaign to date.

This fall, Green Corps organizers are launching a new phase of Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal Campaign, aimed at accelerating the replacement of existing college and university coal plants with clean energy alternatives. Working on 11 campuses across the nation, Green Corps organizers are engaging students, faculty, alumni and key allies within the campus communities to persuade college administrators to set timetables for phasing out coal on campuses. Through public education and action events, the Green Corps organizers will engage thousands of students and train new activists for a clean energy movement.

For example, Green Corps organizer Laura Stevens is mobilizing student support at UNC-Chapel Hill. “Students have always been on the forefront of social change movements. Global warming is our generation’s most important challenge,” said Stevens. “It’s exciting to see so many young people coming together to demand solutions that will put us on a path to a clean energy future.”
Phil Radford, Class of 1999: Taking the Helm of Greenpeace at Age 33

Phil Radford launched his environmental career with Green Corps in the Class of 1999. As the executive director of Greenpeace USA, Phil heads one of the largest and most influential environmental groups in the country. At age 33, he leads a national team of 500 highly-skilled environmental leaders and is responsible for turning Greenpeace into a grassroots organizing powerhouse.

“Without Green Corps, I wouldn’t have this behind-the-scenes insight into how you win a campaign—from media to fundraising to political strategy and everything in between,” said Phil. “Green Corps gave me the foundation that I needed to go on to lead Greenpeace.”

Since joining Greenpeace in 2003, Phil increased the group’s field presence and strengthened its volunteer networks. He built a team of 250 canvassers in 15 cities, started the online organizing team, and grew a significant student organizing network through the creation of the Greenpeace Organizing Term, a semester of advanced training for student activists seeking campaign training.

Today, Phil and his staff are focused on mobilizing their activist network to press the Obama administration on climate change.

Caitlin Higgins, Class of 2004: Preserving Alaska’s Environment

We are proud to report that the Sarah Forslund Fund for Environmental Leadership granted their annual award to Caitlin Higgins, an alumna of the Green Corps Class of 2004, and her organization, the Alaska Conservation Alliance (ACA). The Sarah Forslund Fund supports Green Corps graduates and their work to further the values by which Sarah Forslund, a Green Corps alumna, lived her life: developing effective environmental leadership, supporting strong communities and preserving our natural resources.

As a member of the Green Corps Class of 2004, Caitlin played a key role in campaigns to stop cruise ship pollution in our oceans and to prevent nuclear waste storage at Yucca Mountain. After graduating from Green Corps in 2004, Caitlin joined the Alaska Conservation Alliance as their Outreach Director, expanding the organization’s grassroots power.

Today, as the Executive Director for Alaska Conservation Alliance and its sister organization, Alaska Conservation Voters, Caitlin works to protect Alaska’s air, land and water by empowering Alaskans to participate effectively in the civic arena. In 2008, Caitlin and her staff helped bring about important environmental victories for the state of Alaska, including ensuring the passage of a Renewable Energy Fund and securing more than $300 million for state weatherization and energy efficiency programs.

Thank You from the Director

On behalf of our new organizers and all our staff, I thank you for your continued support of our work. Your support gives us the resources to equip young people with skills and knowledge to affect critical campaigns and launch their careers in the environmental field. I look forward to sharing their stories with you.

Sincerely,

Cindy Kang
Executive Director