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# New Jersey Youth Corps Celebrates Earth Week by Building Community Garden, Encouraging Backyard Conservation

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 25, 2024

**TRENTON** – Members of the New Jersey Youth Corps of Phillipsburg in Warren County celebrated Earth Week by participating in activities designed to encourage and promote sustainability, community action, and environmentalism.

The New Jersey Youth Corps is a statewide, multiyear program funded by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOLE), with 11 sites operating in 10 counties and serving more than 500 teens/young adults each year. As one of the largest youth service and conservation corps in the United States, Youth Corps is a year-round, voluntary program that engages young adults (ages 16 to 25) without a high school diploma in full-time community service, training, and educational activities.

On April 20, Corpsmembers laid the groundwork for a new pollinator garden in Shappell Park in Phillipsburg. The garden will provide a nurturing habitat to diverse species and demonstrate how these environments can help support and sustain overburdened communities while improving the aesthetic in this small, community-centric park.

On April 21, Corpsmembers promoted the [Warren County Board of Commissioners' Conservation Challenge](#), a challenge encouraging residents to create wildlife-friendly habitats in their backyards to help Warren County become certified as a Community Wildlife Habitat with the National Wildlife Federation. Interested residents can pick up Conservation Kits, distributed by Corpsmembers, which contain a bare-root Northern Red Oak, New Jersey's state tree, as well as native wildflower seed clusters, and build-it-yourself birdhouses.

These pollinator garden and backyard habitat projects are part of a Community Day of Action and Earth Week Celebration sponsored by NORWESCAP, a nonprofit that seeks to strengthen communities by improving the lives of lower-income residents.

Youth Corps participants are engaging in academic and service project work throughout Earth Week focused on environmental issues, sustainability, environmental justice, and climate resiliency. The week culminates on Arbor Day, April 26, with a ceremonial tree planting and a workshop on wildlife photography with Warren County Park naturalist Jennifer Corraera-Klugel.

"NJDOLE is proud to fund and support New Jersey Youth Corps, which provides more than 500 participants per year with a path to a high-school diploma, work skills, and, ultimately, the opportunity for a satisfying and sustainable career in an in-demand industry such as clean energy, conservation or the environment. Through this program, we are helping guide and train teens and young adults on their work/life journey. We're excited to see these participants introduced on Earth Week to a curriculum focused on sustainability," said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo.

Guided by staff who serve as mentors and role models, Youth Corps teams carry out a wide range of service projects. In return for their efforts to restore and strengthen communities, Corps members receive assistance in obtaining a high school diploma, life skills, and job readiness instruction as well as support transitioning to job or higher education services.

NJDOLE awarded \$5.3 million in Youth Corps funding in FY24.

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