



## **VYCC Receives Accreditation for Excellence and VYCC Corps Member Bex Love Honored As Corps Member of the Year**

**VYCC gains national accreditation from the Corps Center of Excellence.**

**VYCC Corps Member Bex Love Gives Rousing Speech to hundreds at the Corps Network after receiving coveted Corps Member of the Year Award.**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**RICHMOND, VT, Monday, February 24, 2020 –**

The Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC) received top honors at the national Corps Network conference in February as a newly accredited Corps and for having a Corps Member of the year in Bex Love.



VYCC is proud to become accredited by the Corps Network. This certification is only given to organizations who undergo an in-depth evaluation of internal operations, financial management practices, risk management practices, governance standards and youth programming operations, VYCC received [accreditation from the Corps Center of Excellence](#), the national accrediting body for Service and Conservation Corps.

“Becoming an Accredited Corps helps Vermont just as much as it helps VYCC. We’ll attract more young talent to Vermont and see new and increased funding opportunities,” said Breck Knaft, VYCC Executive Director. “To be honored this year, alongside Bex as a Corps Member of the Year, cements VYCC’s position as a top Corps in the U.S. We are proud of the hard work, grit, and pursuit of excellence that has gotten us to this point.”

A small delegation of VYCC staff and alum Bex Love attended the Corps Network conference in Washington D.C. As one of six Corps Member of the year, out of 25,000 Corps Members nationally, Love was asked to share reflections about their experience at VYCC.

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In their speech Bex Love shared, "My connection to the ecosystem grounds me and fills me with a sense of purpose. It has been essential to driving my growth as a person." They went on to say, "We so often forget our connection to the natural world. We tend to think of human beings and nature as two separate entities. The way we act within it has giant consequences. I have discovered that we can design spaces, through conservation, where human beings can rebuild our lost relationship with [nature]." Love looks to build on their conservation work and learning by returning to VYCC to lead a crew in 2020!

Watch Love's full speech here:



<https://www.facebook.com/TheCorpsNetwork/videos/2951037441593759/>

Learn more about Love's time at VYCC here:

<https://www.vycc.org/press-release-bex-love-selected-by-the-corps-network-as-2019-corps-member-of-the-year/>

After the conference, VYCC staff and Love visited Vermont's **Congressional delegation on Capitol Hill, updating Senator Leahy and Sanders' staff on the substantial impact VYCC is having in Vermont and influence nationally.**

"Our commitment to deepening the Corps Member experience beyond hands-on work is being noticed across the country," said Daniel Schmidt, VYCC Officer of Programs. "The time we spend building resilience, grit, and interpersonal connection on our crews makes stronger teams and healthier, happier, more successful Corps



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**Members. Now with accreditation, we can leverage that recognition to bring in more resources and expand our impact in the lives of young people."**

**As an accredited Corps, VYCC has proven its ability to provide safe, appropriate, meaningful experiences to the young people they engage in service projects. They have also proven their ability to provide high-quality project outcomes to their partners – including [the U.S. Forest Service, Vermont State Parks, and numerous municipalities and local partners across Vermont.] – with whom they collaborate to develop service opportunities for Corps Members.**

**"Demonstrating that you meet [industry standards](#) is an important marketing tool for Corps that let's potential partners and stakeholders understand that your program produces high-quality outcomes," said Mary Ellen Sprenkel, President & CEO of The Corps Network. "It shows that Corps programs are an excellent investment that benefits both the young people they serve and their communities."**

**The Corps Center of Excellence is administered by an advisory committee made up of retired and former Conservation Corps leaders, retired and former federal land management agency staff, and other experts. During the accreditation process, an accreditation team comprised of persons with expertise in Youth and Conservation Corps operations review a Corps' service project and Corps Member outcomes, internal documents and financials. This team also conducts a multiple-day site visit at each Corps undergoing the accreditation process. Results of these reviews are presented to the Advisory Committee for discussion and approval.**

**Accreditation lasts for five years with each Corps required to provide an annual update.**

#### **MORE ABOUT VYCC:**

**Vermont Youth Conservation Corps is a 501c3 nonprofit youth development organization that believes young people change the world. VYCC achieves this by teaching young people personal responsibility through meaningful work that connects us to the land, community, and one another. For 35 years, VYCC has held the belief that when provided the right tools, young people can change the world. VYCC pays young people, ages 15-26, to work and learn side by side with conservation and farming experts to tackle climate change, food insecurity, and preserve public lands. [VYCC.org](http://VYCC.org)**

#### **ABOUT THE CORPS NETWORK**

**The Corps Network, the national association of Service and Conservation Corps, provides leadership and support to over 130**

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Corps across the United States. Through advocacy, and providing Corps access to funding opportunities and expert guidance, The Corps Network annually enables more than 25,000 Corps Members to strengthen communities, improve the environment and transform their lives through service.

To learn more about The Corps Network, visit [www.corpsnetwork.org](http://www.corpsnetwork.org).

For more information about Corps accreditation, [please visit The Corps Network's website](#).

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