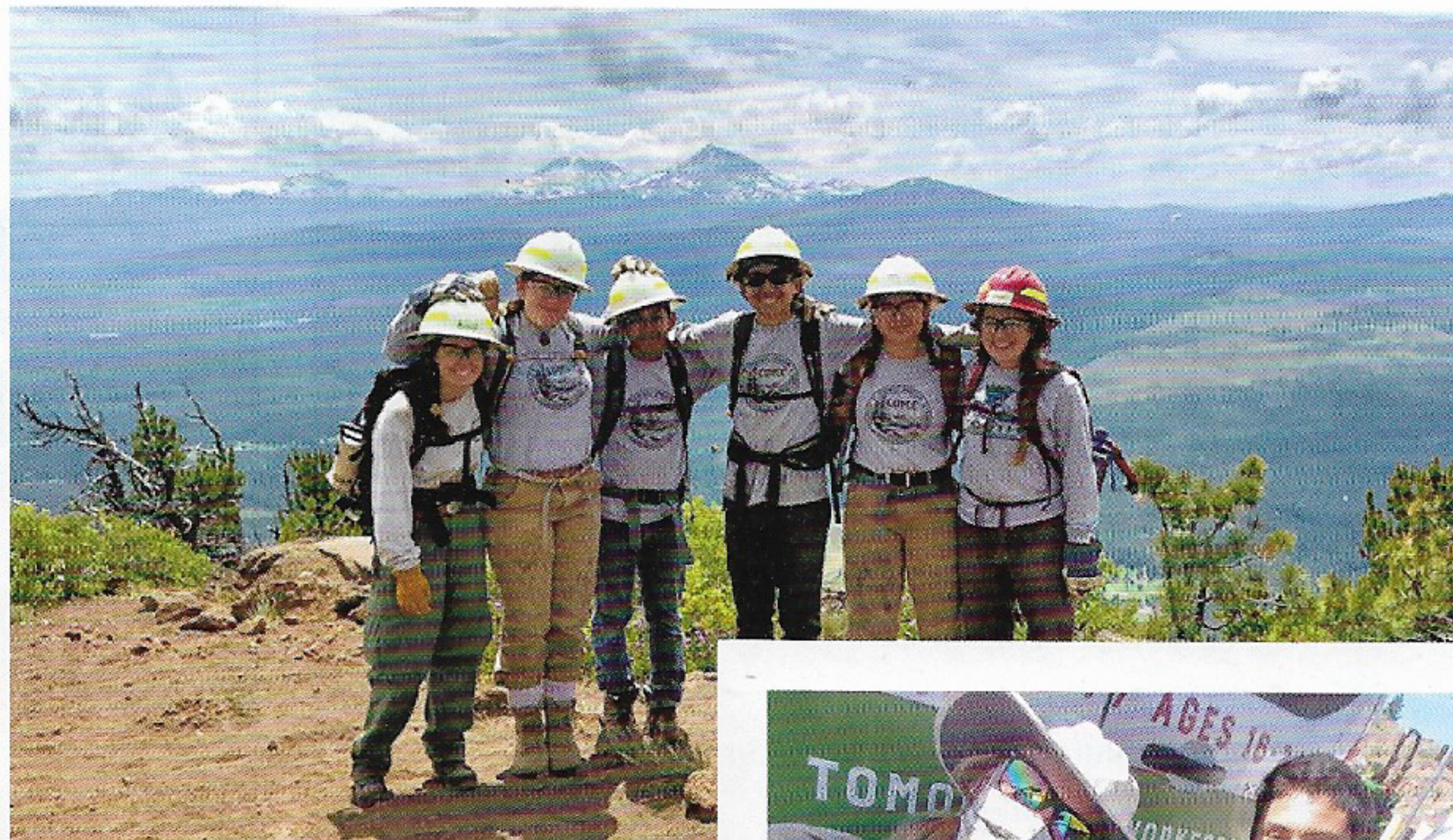
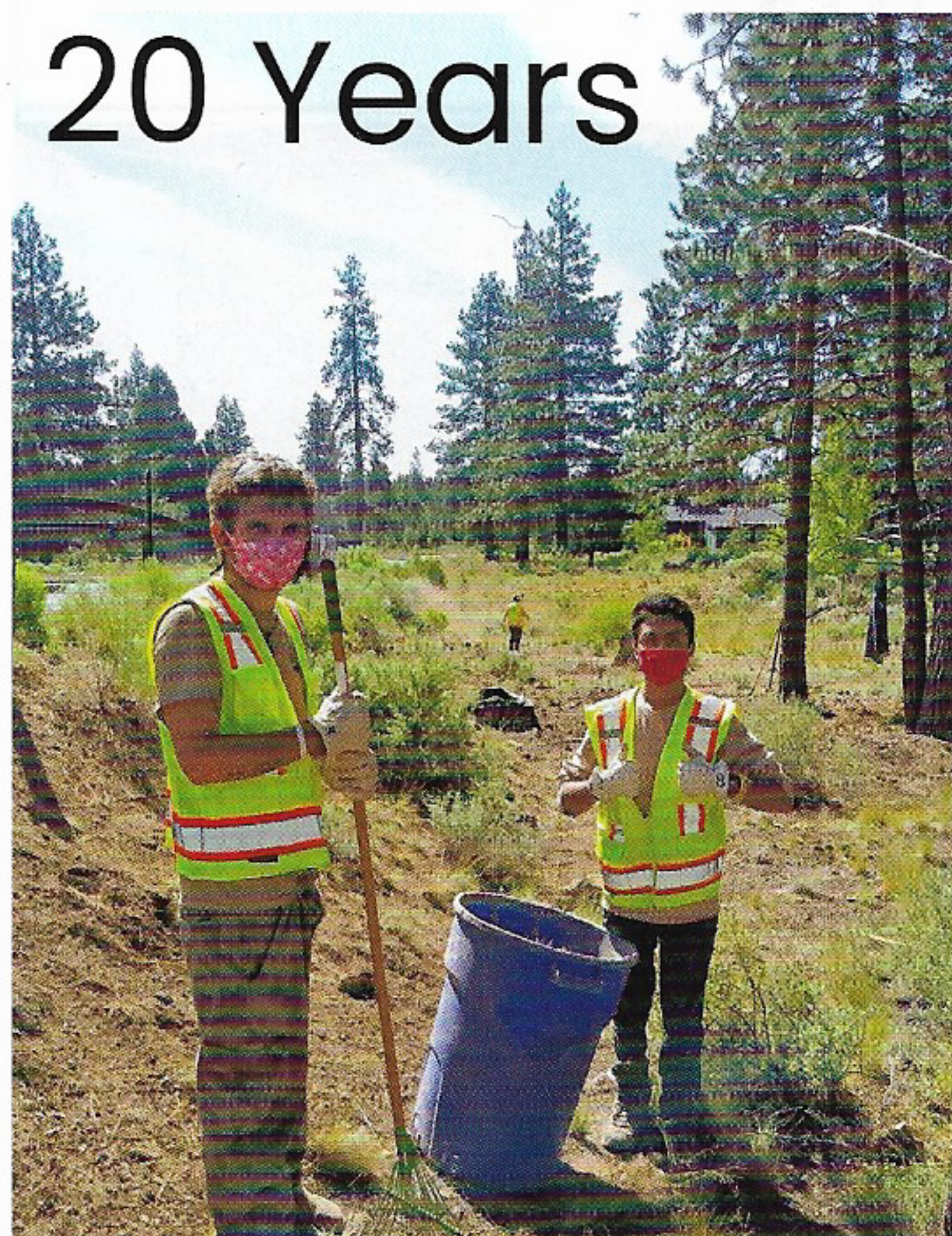


# 20 Years



**HEART OF  
OREGON  
CORPS**  
2000 - 2020



## of Inspiring and Empowering Central Oregon's Young People

Submitted by Rebekah Altman for Heart of Oregon Corps

**D**o you remember the moment you decided to take a leap in a new direction? Did someone take a chance on you and it forever changed your personal or professional path? These are the opportunities Heart of Oregon Corps (HOC) has created for more than 4,000 Central Oregon young people since its founding in 2000.

Heart of Oregon operates six programs throughout Central Oregon and The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs—AmeriCorps, YouthBuild, Stewardship, the Thrift Store, Central Oregon Youth Conservation Corps, and Camp LEAD. All HOC programs focus on job skills training while boosting our regional workforce and teaching youth essential soft skills that most other employers expect youth to have already mastered. With a mission to inspire and empowers positive change in the lives of young people through jobs, education, and stewardship, we believe that all young people deserve the chance to earn their success and prove what they can accomplish.

All HOC programs operate with a WORK-EARN-LEARN model: Youth WORK on projects like public lands conservation that protects critical habitats, building affordable housing, recycling, and wildfire fuels reduction. Youth are employed, often for the first time, as they EARN wages, stipends, and scholarships that increase economic self-sufficiency. Our young people LEARN 21st century workforce soft skills and leadership skills, gain vocational certifications, and earn high school credits, GED/diploma, or take a college course.

Many of the youth we hire and train are “opportunity youth,” young people ages 16-24 who have not been employed or in school for at least six months. They are motivated to re-engage but face barriers like generational poverty, substance abuse, homelessness, foster care, disabilities, previous court

involvement, and/or lack of parental support. Although our young people are challenged by their circumstances, they thrive under the leadership of HOC staff, form strong bonds with their fellow corpsmembers, and learn skills that prepare them for a successful future.

Heart of Oregon programs were put on pause in March due to COVID-19 restrictions. Still, program and administrative staff created tailored solutions and program adaptations, offering youth remote case management and support to access resources. After a few short weeks of curriculum redesign, the YouthBuild program opened in an entirely online format in April to keep participants on target with their educational goals.

A newly developed Heart of Oregon COVID-19 Protocol informs in-person reopening, which has taken place on a program-by-program basis. With measures that include COVID-19-specific Personal Protective Equipment, daily health screens, physical distancing, transportation guidelines, and reduced crew sizes, the protocol enables HOC to carry out much-needed projects in our community while mitigating health risks for our youth, staff, and the community.

This fall, instead of hosting the fifth annual Farm to Fork Dinner and Fundraiser, which was cancelled in light of state restrictions on group gatherings, a 20th anniversary fundraising campaign celebrates two decades of serving Central Oregon young people, improving public lands, and contributing to the local economy. Heart of Oregon Corps empowers generations of young people to powerfully change their lives, starting today.

Heart of Oregon is currently accepting youth applications. To find out which program is the right fit, visit [heartoforegon.org](http://heartoforegon.org) or call 541-633-7834. If you are interested in serving as a volunteer mentor in our Sisters-based YouthBuild program, please call 541-526-1380 or visit our website.