

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**COUNTY GREEN CORPS GRADUATES FRANKLIN COUNTY YOUNG  
ADULTS READY FOR JOBS IN GROWING HORTICULTURE INDUSTRY**

Seven new members of the Central Ohio workforce graduated yesterday from Green Corps, a vocational training program that helps prepare low-income young people for jobs in horticulture-related industries. Several of them already have jobs waiting for them in the field.

This is the 4th year for Green Corps, a partnership between the Franklin County Commissioners, Franklin Park Conservatory, and COWIC, the Central Ohio Workforce Investment Corporation. The program is 32 weeks long, and includes in-class instruction as well as practical experience and grounds work, field trips, guest speakers, and internships. Participants are low-income young adults with high interest in horticulture and a passion to learn. They are paid \$10 per hour during the program, which then also helps them secure full-time employment upon graduation.

“I couldn’t be more proud of the Green Corps or our new graduates,” said Board of Commissioners President, Marilyn Brown. “Green Corps is a true collaboration between the commissioners, the conservatory, and COWIC, and an innovative way to help our local youth to prepare for jobs that they’re passionate about. I know that they will all be successful, and will all be working to help keep Franklin County green.”

Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens personnel administer the program and provide instruction and practical experience. The students also participate in internships with private companies in the field, learn from guest speakers, and go on field trips to explore the variety of gardening, landscaping, farming, and urban green spaces in Franklin County.

“Careers in agriculture and sustainable horticulture provide good living wages in Ohio,” said Commissioner Paula Brooks. “Since we began this collaborative program with the Franklin Park Conservatory, I have heard from participants that Green Corps not only changed their lives, but even saved them when they were floundering. Our young people need gentle guidance to meet their potential and flourish. Green Corps makes me proud that Franklin County, Ohio provides such options to ‘learn and earn’”.

Green Corps class and practical work topics include plant propagation, botany basics, organic gardening practices and design, food cultivation, and landscaping. The students also learn personal development and financial literacy skills in classes on job readiness,

conflict resolution, and starting a small business. Field trips this session included a trip to the grounds of the Ohio Governor's Mansion, Greenscapes, Mill Creek Gardens, Folsom & Pine Farm, and the Central Ohio Minority Business Association.

"A smart, educated workforce is important for Franklin County to continue to grow and thrive," said Commissioner John O'Grady. "These Green Corps graduates are dedicated to improving their job prospects for the future, and their hard work is going to benefit all of us. I'm really proud of them and of their instructors and mentors at Green Corps, and I'm proud that we commissioners are able to support this great program."

April is National County Government Month. Throughout the month, Franklin County will be sharing innovative ways in which local government works to improve the lives of residents and businesses and move our County forward. A list of Franklin County community events is available [here](#). More information on National County Government Month can be accessed online [here](#) and on Twitter @FranklinCoOhio #NCGM.

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