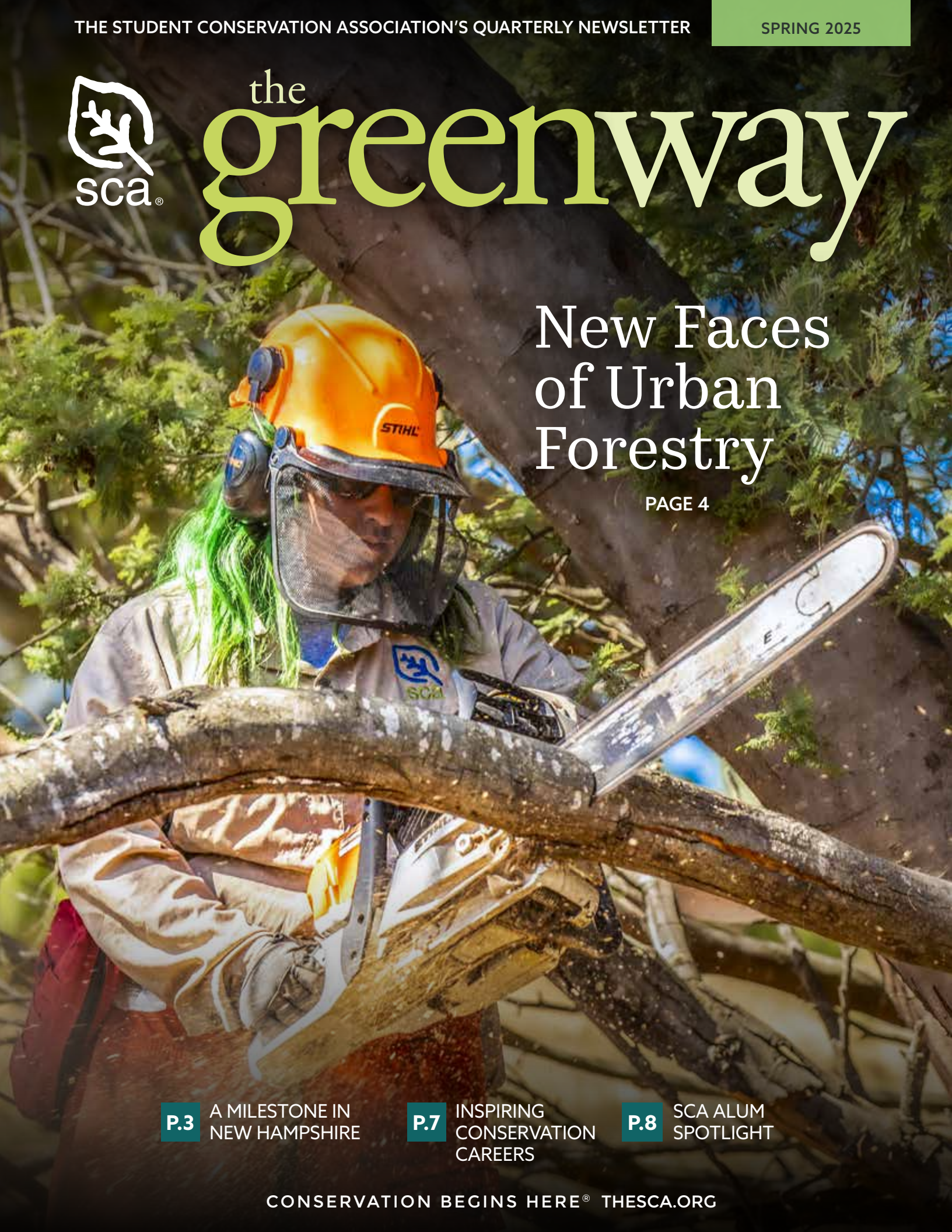




the greenway

New Faces of Urban Forestry

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NEW HAMPSHIRE

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CONSERVATION
CAREERS

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SPOTLIGHT

Message from the President

LIDIA SOTO-HARMON, PRESIDENT AND CEO



IN THE WAKE OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION, our partnerships with federal agencies continue to evolve. As a result, several of our critical conservation efforts across the nation are at severe risk of shutting down. We are working hard to sustain these vital programs that provide jobs, training and environmental education protection for young conservationists — programs that will grind to a halt due to the recent federal funding freezes.

Wildfire Prevention And Tree Plantings At Risk

At stake are the SCA's Wildland Fire Academy and the Urban Forestry Program featured in this issue. Now more than ever, we need you by our side. Your support today can ensure that this essential work continues uninterrupted.

The Wildland Fire Academy has 45 young adults training for wildfire prevention and response across 20,000 acres of forested land in California, Oregon, Washington, Utah, Idaho, South Dakota, Colorado and Montana — with more supposed to join in the summer.

Meanwhile, the Urban Forestry Program is set to hire 130 participants to train in tree care while increasing the tree canopy in multiple cities across the country. Without funding, these program participants cannot plant the more than 4,305 trees ready to go in the ground or maintain the additional 6,030 trees needed to transform urban spaces into vibrant, healthier, safer and more resilient communities. That means young conservationists in Chicago, Stamford, Pittsburgh, Washington D.C., the Bay Area and beyond will lose valuable workforce development opportunities and vital professional certifications.

Moving Forward - Together

Amidst the uncertainty, the Student Conservation Association is unwavering in our mission to build the next generation of conservation leaders while protecting our lands. But we cannot do this alone.

Without immediate funding, the SCA's ability to provide job opportunities, workforce training, and environmental stewardship this summer will be significantly compromised.

We invite you to be part of this urgent solution. Your generosity can help keep our young conservation leaders working, learning, and protecting our nation's public lands, urban green spaces and the communities we serve. Your support makes a difference every day, and I am incredibly grateful for all you do for the SCA. We are stronger together.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lidia Soto-Harmon".

On the cover

2024 San Francisco Bay Area -
Urban Forestry Young Adult
Crew Member Erin Gamboa

PHOTO: JAMES MARTIN



New Hampshire Conservation Corps Celebrates 30 Years Of Service

PHOTOS: COREY GARLAND PHOTOGRAPHY

THIS FALL, THE SCA'S NEW HAMPSHIRE CONSERVATION CORPS (NHCC) CELEBRATED ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY with a reunion for program alums, former staff members and their families at Bear Brook State Park. Nearly 160 attendees joined the crew, having traveled from almost every corner of the United States, including Alaska, Montana, California, Florida and everywhere in between.

It was an incredible mix of faces, old and new, all united by the unique and transformative experience of being part of the NHCC since its start in 1994. Since then, more than 800 program participants have provided 1.4 million hours of service on public lands and to the people of New Hampshire through a partnership with the New Hampshire Department of Natural and Cultural Resources and AmeriCorps.

The weekend featured a video message from SCA founder Liz Putnam, heartfelt speeches, powerful reflections from alums and former staff, and a formal commendation from New Hampshire Gov. Kelly Ayotte recognizing the NHCC's three decades of impactful service. Activities also included hiking, camping, a welcome reception and volunteer projects.

"The fact that 160 alumni, SCA staff, family, friends and programmatic partners showed up is a testament to the power of the NHCC residential experience," said Davis Brush, SCA New England Senior Program Manager. "The energy in the room was electric!"

Urban Forestry Program Takes Root



PHOTOS: JAMES MARTIN

FOR NEARLY 50 YEARS, MEMBERS OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA URBAN GREEN PROGRAM have preserved and protected local habitat, particularly in vulnerable communities most susceptible to pollution and extreme weather.

To continue the program's legacy, the SCA launched its 2024 Bay Area Urban Forestry Crew, which spent its recent season working alongside local park and city staff on various urban forestry projects to increase and diversify the number and types of trees throughout the region.

The crew worked with the Hayward Area Recreation and Parks District and the City of San Leandro's Urban Forestry Division. In addition to planting trees, they provided trail work and structural pruning, removed invasive species and completed a highly detailed tree inventory.

"It may seem daunting at first, but it is incredibly rewarding professionally and personally. Some of the days were really tough and hard to get through, but you learn so much about yourself and about nature. This is work that really needs to be done," said crew member Kelsey Marshall, 23, of Santa Maria. "I'm thankful for the experience. Having a team that is very knowledgeable with different people knowing different things you can learn from has been very helpful. There are thousands of things in nature that people need to take care of, and that could be you."

While working toward becoming a certified arborist, the crew's leader, Alex Senauke, 30, of Berkeley, joined the SCA to increase his skillset and gain experience leading teams.

"It's been really great so far. I've really appreciated having the opportunity to instruct and guide young adults as they are coming up in the industry and teaching them some of the skills they're going to need to continue this work in their careers," Senauke said. "While working with the SCA, we worked on several street tree pruning projects. Having the experience of getting those newly planted trees trained for long, healthy lives always makes me feel that the work we're doing is meaningful."

Cities thrive when trees are part of their story. Trees transform urban spaces into vibrant, healthier, safer and more resilient communities. They cool our neighborhoods, clean the air, nurture biodiversity, and create spaces where people and wildlife can flourish together. A future with more trees uplifts everyone because every community deserves the protection, beauty and benefits they bring.

Crew member Erin Gamboa, 19, of Hayward, heard about the SCA while the president of their high school's environmental club, where they worked in a nursery and taught others about California's native species. Back with the SCA for a second season, they brought a depth of experience in chainsaw maintenance and a broad curiosity for native plants.

... BY THE NUMBERS ...
2024 BAY AREA URBAN FORESTRY CREW



118,000+
SQ. FEET OF
INVASIVE SPECIES
REMOVED



150+
TREES/SHRUBS/
NATIVE PLANTS
PLANTED

“There are thousands of things in nature that people need to take care of, and that could be you.”

SCA CREW MEMBER KELSEY MARSHALL





also having fun. The SCA is a great organization to work for. I love it here and appreciate the opportunity.”

Each year, the Student Conservation Association fields more than 100 young people to plant and maintain trees, making communities healthier and more beautiful while increasing access to green spaces and careers. Through hands-on activities, program participants cultivate a love for nature and discover innovative ways to shape their local environment.

These workforce development opportunities build self-reliance, teamwork and practical urban forestry skills, including tree maintenance, chainsaw use, tree climbing, invasive species removal and education. Urban Forestry crews work closely with the SCA’s local partners to meet community needs, rebuilding tree canopies where they are wanted and needed most. Along the way, program participants receive training and certifications to accelerate their conservation careers.

One notable, long-term project for the Bay Area Urban Forestry Crew included managing acacia trees at a grove in Valley View Park in Castro Valley, California. Acacia trees are highly flammable, and their work helped reinforce the park and the surrounding area against wildfire risk. The site featured many downed and fallen trees, which the crew brushed and bucked using chainsaws, providing members with extensive practice exercising chainsaw safety skills.

“I’m incredibly proud of our inaugural Urban Forestry Team, whose efforts in southern Alameda County made a significant impact in their first year. By planting over 150 trees in San Leandro, addressing invasive vegetation, and gaining hands-on training, they’ve already shown incredible dedication,” said Kate Casale, the SCA’s Bay Area Urban Green City Director. “This work is so critical — not only for restoring our green spaces but for empowering youth to become environmental leaders who are shaping the future of our communities. Two team members are even planning to return as leaders in 2025, and I couldn’t be more excited to see where they go next.”

“My future goals have definitely changed. When I first joined the SCA, I had no idea what I wanted to do or how my future was going to go. I was so sure I was just going to be unemployed for a long time,” Gamboa said. “I joined the SCA and realized this is something I really enjoy doing. This is a future I want to have. I would love to be a park ranger, an arborist, or anything that has me working outside doing hard labor. I love doing it, and I am very proud of the work that I do.”

The crew also had the opportunity to travel to Joshua Tree National Park to assist National Parks Service staff with a revegetation project for ongoing wildfire recovery efforts. Despite unseasonably cold temperatures coupled with high winds, they pushed through to help plant Joshua Tree seeds in the desert, cultivating the next generation of the iconic California endemic species.

“Through the SCA, I’ve taken a pruning class, sharpened my chainsaw skills and learned about the Geographic Information System (GIS) and a lot of other things that I would not have known about before the SCA that will take me far with this career,” said returning crew member Jerahmiah Wills, 28, of Oakland. “My advice to someone interested in this program is to be ready to learn, be outside and do some great things. While you’re doing it, you’ll be helping out the planet and

We Need Your Support Now More Than Ever.

Young people are ready to protect our public lands, but their efforts are at risk of being canceled. You can make a difference today.

Donate Now!

thesca.org/tgwspring25



From The SCA To Success

The SCA's **2025 Virtual Career Fair** in February drew 280 attendees. The event featured several panel discussions about sustainable futures, career exploration and leadership. Hear from several distinguished panelists on how the SCA impacted their lives.



NATALIE MEBANE

Chief Program Officer, Zero Hour & Director of Campaigns and Advocacy, Generation Green

Devils Postpile National Monument '07 (California)

"The SCA has taught me that there is a place for someone like me. If you ever just wanted to live in the woods surrounded by mountains, not only is that attainable, but there are others like you who are inspired by the natural world. The SCA continues to remind me of what I am fighting for."



JOCELYN BRIDSON

Director of Environment & Community Impact, Tillamook County Creamery Association

Yosemite National Park '03

"The most impactful aspect of my SCA experience was connecting teens from diverse backgrounds with parks that they would normally not get the chance to experience. I continue to enjoy engaging with and learning from people with different environmental perspectives with the aim of finding common ground and creating solutions."



GABRIEL CUMMINGS

Trails Technical Manager, Natural Areas Conservancy

Multi-year alum serving at several New York sites and Denali National Park (Alaska) '12 – '24

"I was an Environmental Policy major and the SCA provided me with my first green job opportunity immediately after graduating college back in 2012. Since then, I've been fortunate to have worked in some amazing places with the SCA, made lifetime friends and gained valuable hands-on conservation experience, which I've applied to my current position with the Natural Areas Conservancy."



CHRISTINE CHUNG

Erasmus Mundus master's student in Tropical Biodiversity and Ecosystems at Université Libre de Bruxelles & former federal wildland firefighter

Native Revegetation Project, SCA

Alumni Trail Crew '19, Conservation Internship Program '09, '10, Alternative Spring Break Grand Canyon '09, Bear Management Intern '08

"The SCA has profoundly enriched my life, providing opportunities to gain invaluable skills and diverse work experiences, easing the burden of my student loans, and expanding my professional network. I am grateful for the chance to give back and help shape the next generation of conservation stewards."



Please Update Your Address Book!

We have a new postal address to provide faster response to your mail. Please send letters, donations and other SCA mail to:

Student Conservation Association
P.O. Box 830603, Dept. 510
Philadelphia, PA 19182-0603

Questions?

Contact us at donorrelations@thesca.org



JAD DALEY

President & Chief Executive Officer, American Forests

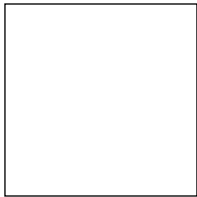
Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Complex '92

"When I graduated from college, I had discovered a passion for the environment but no idea how to create a career in this field or where to start. My incredible SCA experience at the Sacramento River NWR gave me a window into the wide range of possibilities and how I could pursue them professionally. This propelled me first into environmental education — a key part of my time with the SCA — and later into the kind of land conservation and restoration work being done at the refuge. I will be forever grateful!"



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The Student Conservation Association (SCA) is the largest provider of hands-on environmental conservation programs for youth and young adults whose lives are transformed while they protect and restore natural and cultural resources across the country. Founded in 1957, the SCA is committed to building the next generation of conservation leaders dedicated to the lifelong protection of the environment and the communities we serve.

BOARD CHAIR: Gail Carmody
 PRESIDENT/CEO: Lidia Soto-Harmon
 EDITOR: Sarah Hoyer
 GRAPHIC DESIGN: Julia Eva Bacon



FIND US ON:



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: ERIC LUCAS

IN 2017, SCA ALUM ERIC LUCAS'S LIFE WAS AT A STANDSTILL. Then a recent high school graduate with limited resources, Lucas attended career fairs to find his path, but nothing resonated.



“I didn’t want to be a firefighter or a police officer or a jail correctional officer,” Lucas said.

Then, one day, he heard an ad on the radio for the Mobile Bay Resiliency Corp, a pilot program offered in partnership with the SCA Gulf Corps that was set to begin in two months. He decided to apply.

Lucas’s first position with the SCA was oyster mapping the marsh in his hometown of Africatown, an area of Mobile, alongside a crew of peers who were similarly out of their element.

“They took us to places I didn’t even know existed. Some of the environments were beautiful, some were treacherous and a lot of them were very uncomfortable,” Lucas said. “We saw different creatures. People were falling in the mud. It was hilarious, but people got into it!”

Season after season, Lucas kept coming back to work with the SCA Gulf Corps. In 2021, he was approached to take on a Fire Corps position that required him to travel away from home for the first time.

After his time with the SCA, Lucas leveraged the skills he gained in chainsaw use, carpentry, project management and networking to establish a professional career in parks management. He currently works full-time in the Parks and Recreation Department for the city of Spanish Fort, Alabama, where he manages a growing roster of city parks.

“Joining the SCA can push you in different directions you would never think possible,” Lucas said. “Having an open mind in this field can get you everywhere you want to go.”

Make your gift today at thesca.org