



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

VENICE WONG A YOUNG ENVIRONMENTALIST

YMCA Earth Service Corps
METROCENTER YMCA

SERVING HER COMMUNITY

When Venice Wong first started attending YMCA Earth Service Corps meetings at Hazen High School, she described herself as “extremely timid and not much of a talker, but passionate about the environment nonetheless.” In YESC, she found a place that encouraged her passion, accepted her for who she was and pushed her to become a stronger leader.

Over the course of four years, Venice became more and more involved with YESC. Active in her club at school, Venice began to attend regional service projects with YESC, where she worked alongside students from all over the Puget Sound. Then she began attending leadership retreats, where she learned about the different techniques and qualities of effective leadership, and learned to put them into use in her club.

During the summers, she was a regular on YESC’s service trips, building trails near Mt. St. Helens and the on the Olympic Peninsula, and participating in YESC’s first National Park Service Caravan to Glacier National Park. She even went to the wilds of Utah after a nomination from YESC for an Outward Bound Pinnacle scholarship. These longer YESC events, she says, were her favorites, and helped to build the confidence with herself and her abilities that now defines her. YESC staff work hard to create a safe and supportive environment to provide students with a chance to collaborate with and grow alongside teens who share their interest in the



Venice restoring trails in the Mt. St. Helens wilderness area on the “Give Back in the Backcountry” service trip, 2009

environment.

When Venice stops by the YESC office these days on her way to class, she shows only traces of that original shyness. She just finished her Associate’s Degree at Bellevue College, and is currently working with the Student Conservation Association in New Hampshire. YESC has taught her to “serve yourself by serving your community and your world,” and her continuing commitment to service and conservation is impressive

What’s next for this adventurous, confident and committed young environmentalist? She’s got her sights set on continuing her education at WSU or another school with an Organic Agriculture program, and sticking with conservation work.

METROCENTER YMCA

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Everyone is welcome. Financial assistance is available. The **YMCA of Greater Seattle** strengthens communities in King and south Snohomish counties through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.