



CITY OF COMPTON

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PRESS RELEASE

President Obama Highlights Compton and Alaska Youth at Event in Yosemite National Park

Fresh Tracks Leadership Expedition Supports White House's Priority on Youth and Outdoors

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, CA – With Yosemite National Park as his backdrop, President Barack Obama spoke on Saturday about his commitment to connecting more young Americans with the outdoors by highlighting [Fresh Tracks Leadership Expeditions](#). Compton Mayor Aja Brown and six prospective Fresh Tracks participants from Compton and two prospective participants from Alaska Native communities sat in the front row at the event in Yosemite Park as the President talked about the importance of expanding access to the outdoors for young Americans.

“You can’t view this on your iPad or a flat screen. You have to breathe this in yourself,” **The President** said to a crowd of several hundred invited guests as he stood near Sentinel Bridge. “It’s a park that captures the wonders of the world. It changes you by being here.”

Fresh Tracks is a new partnership between [IslandWood](#), the [Sierra Club](#), [Children & Nature Network's Natural Leaders](#), REI, the Campion Foundation, action sports retailer Zumiez, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Inspired by the Obama Administration’s commitment to connecting more young Americans to the outdoors and in support of the goals of the **My Brother’s Keeper Initiative**, Fresh Tracks will bring together youth leaders from rural, indigenous, and urban communities for life-changing experiences that combine cultural awareness, service learning, outdoor exploration, and workforce education.

“This is a wonderful opportunity for young people from Compton to expand their cultural understanding and make a real connection to the outdoors beyond the borders of Compton,” said **Mayor Aja Brown**. “The City of Compton and our My Brother’s Keeper team is proud to partner with Fresh Tracks on developing, cultivating, and displaying the leadership potential of Compton’s young adults. I’m proud to support President Barack Obama’s commitment to making sure that more young Americans have the opportunity to build critical leadership and workforce development skills that they need to succeed. Young people are our future. Every investment in our youth is an investment in a better tomorrow.”

The students chosen to participate in Fresh Tracks from Compton and Long Beach are being selected through the My Brother’s Keeper Community Challenge initiative.

“As a participant in Fresh Tracks, I would hope to learn more about how I can put others before myself and serve my community,” says **Cristian Reynaga**, 21, of Compton. “I am excited to take in everything nature has to offer, to get out of my comfort zone, and to explore other cultures.”

“He made me want to explore, learn and imagine our national parks,” said 20-year-old **Cameron Williamson-Martin** also from Compton. “It made me want to stand up and do something for our environment. I’ve never been surrounded by this many mountains before, I don’t want to leave.”

Fresh Tracks member **Jared Savage**, 17, of Compton said it was “amazing” to meet the president. “He’s done so much for our community and the people in our community,” he said. “Just to see him in person, that close to me, was amazing. His presence and his speech was just so influential on me.”

Savage was equally awed by Yosemite: “When I drove in, I saw all of the trees and said, ‘This is amazing.’ And then I saw my first waterfall and I literally jumped out of my seat ... I’m so blessed to be here today.”

The participants from Alaska are young adults from communities with a rich cultural heritage and ties to the land. **Esau Sinnok**, 18, from Shishmaref, Alaska shared what he is looking forward to.

“I want to connect people to nature because I want them to feel the same way I have felt for the past 18 years when I was outside and being active, hunting, fishing, camping,” said Sinnok.

Additional participants from Compton included **Austin Huffman**, **Stephanie Carrasco** and **Fred Sammons**. **Dr. Sharoni Little** is the Executive Adviser to the City of Compton’s My Brother’s Keeper Initiative.

Fresh Tracks will take place in August 2016, beginning with an immersion experience at IslandWood, a leading outdoor learning organization based near Seattle. Both groups will then explore the ecological and cultural landscapes of southern California. Fresh Tracks will

culminate in Arctic Alaska, where participants will engage in traditional community activities, subsistence culture, and discussions about local climate change implications. The August experience is being looked at as a model for national expansion of Fresh Tracks Leadership Expeditions.

The City of Compton is one of nearly 250 cities, towns, counties, or tribal nations that has accepted President Obama's My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge and is executing a cradle-to-college-and-career strategy for improving the life outcomes of all young people. The students chosen to participate in Fresh Tracks from Compton are being selected through Compton's MBK Community Challenge initiative.

Additional Resources

Below are links to videos that you can embed or link to online.

Video – [Mayor Aja Brown at Yosemite waiting on the President.](#)

Video - [The President's remarks at Yosemite \(fast forward to minute 51\)](#)

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