Dear Friends of CorpsTHAT,

In the quiet cool summer of 2016, we often found ourselves looking forward, asking: where am I going, what do I really want to do with my life, and at the same time looking back on our experiences and asking: how can I use the opportunities I’ve had to improve the experiences of others, how do I make sure these experiences continue and are accessible for the next generation? Often with each step we took on trail that summer, we felt as if we were questioning our life’s choices and where they were leading us.

By the end of the summer, through these discussions and our passion for working in the outdoors, we founded CorpsTHAT. Together we have over 10 years of experience working for conservation corps and in outdoor programming. We have experienced first hand the gaps in outdoor programs and employment in the Deaf Community. From these experiences we are passionate about bringing the Deaf and Outdoor communities together.

From our first ideas last summer to growing them into a organization to this summer completing our summer tour project, where we connected with the Deaf and Conservation Corps communities throughout the country, it has been a busy first year. But we are very lucky to be apart of two strong communities and very grateful to all the people within the Deaf and Conservation Corps worlds who have supported us and are continuing to support us as we grow into the new year.

We hope you enjoy reading our program highlights from this past year in CorpsTHAT’s first ever annual report. Looking forward into 2018, we are excited knowing that this is only the beginning. Here’s to many more firsts and many more adventures,

Sachiko Flores and Emma Bixler
[insert signatures]
Mission:
To provide organizational support for the inclusion of Deaf and Hard of Hearing participants in conservation corps and outdoor programs.

Highlights:

Documentary Film: ‘Breaking Wild’
After spending the summer collecting interviews and footage we spent this fall compiling it all into our documentary film titled Breaking Wild. Named after the concept of breaking barriers in the wild, we showed it to the Gallaudet community in October and will officially release it in 2018. Thanks to Gallaudet University Innovation and Entrepreneurship Initiative for sponsoring our event.

Volunteer Day with NY/NJ Trail Conference:
In June we hosted a volunteer day with NY/NJ Trail Conference on Bear Mountain. Our volunteers had a busy day of building stone steps on one of the busiest sections of the Appalachian Trail. Thanks to the guidance of the NY/NJ Trail Conference crew, our volunteers set 6 steps that day! Not even the humid cloudy skies and the rain of a summer storm could stop them!

Conferences Attended:
The Corps Network Conference- February
Presented: “Social Inclusion vs. Accessibility: Supporting Deaf and Hard of Hearing Corps Members” Thanks to Northwest Youth Corps’ for sponsoring our attendance.
National Association of Interpretation Conference- November
Presented in collaboration with the NPS and Northwest Youth Corps: “Allies for Inclusion” Thanks to Northwest Youth Corps for sponsoring our attendance.
The Deaf Entrepreneurship Network- November
Thanks to Gallaudet University Office of the President for sponsoring our attendance.
Summer Tour Report

During the months of June, July, August and September CorpsTHAT drove across country to visit and interview Deaf Professionals and ASL Inclusion Crews. We documented the diversity of professions, experiences and data of Deaf people working in the Outdoor and Conservation Industry. During our travels we hosted volunteer opportunities, hikes and backpacking trips with the local Deaf Community. At the completion of our tour we compiled the video footage into a documentary film, ‘Breaking Wild’ and a series of Vlogs (video blogs) covering outdoor education, interviews of Deaf professionals and spotlights on different outdoor professions. These will be realized early next year.

Summer Tour Stats:

13,177 Miles Driven-
64.7 Miles Hiked-
216 Volunteer Hours-
26 States Visited-
7 Conservation Corps Visited-
15 Deaf Professionals Interviewed-
14 National Parks Visited-
12 National Forests Visited-
38 Deaf Youth and Young Adults Served

4 Deaf Crew Leaders Hired

13 Presentations Given

8 ASL Inclusion Crews

3 CorpsTHAT Events Hosted

4 Conservation Corps with ASL Inclusion Crews
What people are saying:

"...I was the only deaf person in my crew and I felt there were gaps in the incidental learning on the project information, discussion on teamwork, and other things. I also had no luck finding career placement after serving the corps so [CorpsTHAT’s] aim is to create connection with the deaf community and pull them into volunteering and serving the corps the could lead to lifelong career to preserve the American’s beautiful outdoor. That is something I didn't have when I served in the corps and wish there were there for me back then." - Scott Cohen, Georgia

“Our crew loved having CorpsTHAT visit this week!!! So many good laughs! Everyone should support these awesome young business women in their quest for ASL inclusion!” - Lilly Davis, Missouri

“Thanks Emma and Sachiko for reminding me about the important things. You two are truly making an impact.” - Cara Frank, Oregon

“CorpsTHAT is important because it is worth to have accessibility to communication with Deaf and Hard of Hearing people to understand why it is important to preserve the nature and wildlife, how to address environmental issues, and how to able enjoying and learning more about outdoor recreation. I am glad to see CorpsTHAT has included deaf and hard of hearing young generation because we each have one life, so we need to use this time to enjoy and venture on our beautiful lives in the nature.” - Sonja (Mimi) Jillella, D.C.