



# Press Release

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## MWRD shares seeds of solidarity in honor of Asian American women elected officials in Cook County



John C. Haines School

To celebrate Asian and Pacific Islander American Heritage Month this year, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) Commissioners Josina Wing Morita and Mariyana Spyropoulos visited schools in Chicago’s Asian American community, and the MWRD honored Asian American women elected officials.

U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth, State Representatives Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz, Theresa Mah and Denyse Wang Stoneback, and Commissioner Morita are this year’s honorees.

“It has been a difficult year for Asian Americans. As we organize against anti-Asian hate and racial and gender violence, it’s more important than ever to center the voices of Asian American women leaders in our community,” said Commissioner Morita, who is also chair of the Asian American Caucus in Illinois. “These seeds represent the solidarity and unity MWRD is building with Asian American communities, as well as our commitment to improving water quality and enhancing open space through green infrastructure.”

“We stand in support of communities across Cook County and are honored to recognize our elected of-

Asian and Pacific Islander American Heritage Month

**PLANTING SEEDS OF SOLIDARITY**

Honoring Asian American Women Elected Officials in Cook County

This year we honor Asian and Pacific Islander American Heritage Month by showing support and solidarity to the Asian American community and Asian American women. We stand together against anti-Asian hate and racial and gender violence in all its forms.

Tammy Duckworth U.S. Senator  
Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz State Representative  
Theresa Mah State Representative  
Josina Wing Morita MWRD Commissioner  
Denyse Wang Stoneback State Representative

ficials working to make life better for all of us,” said Commissioner Kim Du Buclet.

“Women aren’t strangers to adversity, so as I watch more Asian American women enter the halls of government, I know we’re bringing the perspective and experiences needed to tackle the most pressing issues facing our communities,” said State Representative Mah. “From ensuring that Asian American history is reflected in curriculum to passing anti-Asian hate legislation, we are leading the charge in impactful ways and it’s important that our contributions are recognized and supported.”

“From navigating the pandemic to organizing against anti-Asian hate, it’s been a challenging year for the Asian American community,” said State Representative Wang Stoneback. “Despite these challenges, we’ve watched our communities organize, mobilize, and build coalitions that echo the strength and resilience that has helped us overcome setbacks for generations. I’m proud to be a voice for the Asian American community in Springfield.” *(continued)*

## MWRD shares seeds in honor of Asian American women elected officials, *cont.*



*James Ward Elementary School*



*Pui Tak Christian School*

Commissioners Morita and Spyropoulos distributed specially-designed seeded bookmarks. Once planted and blooming, the flowers will serve as a reminder that there is no room for hate and that we must all stand together to support our diverse community. They also distributed “Where Does IT Go?” storybooks in Chinese. Written and published by the MWRD, the book introduces students to the Water Science Explorers, a cast of fictional characters, who are curious and wonder what happens when they flush the toilet. The book teaches students about the wastewater treatment process and careers in water while offering enriching

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) activities. The book, which targets students in fourth grade and higher, is also available in English, Polish and Spanish in addition to Chinese. A new animated version is also available on the MWRD’s YouTube channel and on [mwrld.org](http://mwrld.org).

Teachers [within the MWRD service area](#) can request a supply of printed books in multiple languages for their classrooms by emailing: [communityeducation@mwrld.org](mailto:communityeducation@mwrld.org).

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### ***Recovering Resources, Transforming Water***

*Established in 1889, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois. Learn more at [mwrld.org](http://mwrld.org).*