



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

Allison Fore

Public and Intergovernmental Affairs Officer

312.751.6632

allison.fore@mwrdd.org

100 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611

For immediate release

August 13, 2014

Three MWRD staff honored for life-saving effort



In the photo (L-R): MWRD Director of Human Resources Denise Korcal, Administrative Specialist Bernadette Cameron and President Kathleen Meany.

Three Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) staff members facilitating a civil service examination are credited with a real-world life saving effort.

MWRD Environmental Specialist James Schaefer, Administrative Specialist Bernadette Cameron and Patrol Boat Operator Javier Salazar were giving a Patrol Boat Operator test along the Little Calumet River in Dolton on June 29 when the group heard shouting at the opposite end of the dock.

“Javier and I had just returned to the dock after testing a candidate for the Patrol Boat Operator position,” explained Schaefer. “We were tying up the pollution control boat when someone at the end of the

dock started yelling. It was unclear at first what was happening since there were a lot of kids in the area and we figured maybe one had fallen. The yelling continued so I started walking up the dock to see what was going on. Then I heard someone yell ‘she is in the water and going to drown’ so I ran the rest of the way over.”

“When I arrived, a woman was hanging on to a line and was almost fully submerged in the water,” Schaefer explained. “Bernadette (Cameron) called 911. There were two other men trying to lift her out of the dock before Javier and myself arrived but they were not able to do so. I then grabbed her right arm, another man grabbed her left arm, and we tried to pull her out but she would not let go of the rope. The rope was attached to a boat on one end and the dock on the other. As we tried to pull her out, she kept pulling the boat against her, trapping herself between the dock and boat. So we had to tell her that in order to get her out she had to let go of the rope. A third person reached in and grabbed her leg, and at that point, we were able to pull her up onto the dock.”

After the victim emerged from the water, emergency medical technicians who had arrived on site took over the victim’s care.

“Our staff never ceases to amaze me,” said MWRD President Kathleen Therese Meany. “They are always willing to step in when the public is in distress. I am very proud of Jim, Javier and Bernadette.”

###

Our Water Environment: Take it personally

Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwrdd.org) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.