



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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MWRD gives flood prevention tips through Space to Grow partnership

An award-winning program in which the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is a partner will offer Austin neighborhood residents assistance on how to prevent flooding and improve their gardens.

Space to Grow, a project managed by the Healthy Schools Campaign and Openlands organizations and made possible through the financial support of Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Department of Water Management and the MWRD, will host a workshop at Leland Elementary School, 512 S. Lavergne Ave., on Sat., May 23, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. A free breakfast will be served at 9:15 a.m.

This free event will allow residents a chance to learn how a few small changes can go a long way to eliminate flooding impacts. Participants can sign up for a free rain barrel or plants to start their own gardens.

“With summer ahead of us and the increasing chance of heavy rainstorms, we urge residents from the community to join us and learn about flood prevention,” said MWRD Vice President Barbara McGowan. “Space to Grow is a wonderful program that is a community-wide initiative that is not only improving schools but educating neighbors as well.”

Space to Grow is a unique public-private partnership that transforms Chicago schoolyards into vibrant outdoor spaces that encourage physical activity, outdoor learning and community engagement, while addressing broader environmental issues, including stormwater management and water conservation. In addition to providing community members in low-income neighborhoods with safe outdoor spaces to play and be active, Space to Grow schoolyards help Chicago Public Schools meet its daily recess and physical education requirements for elementary schools.



Dr. Loretta Brown-Lawrence (left), principal of Leland Elementary School, and Barbara McGowan, Vice President of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, help plant a garden at the Austin neighborhood school as part of the Space to Grow program.

Earlier this month, Space to Grow received an Emerald Award from the U.S. Green Building Council for its achievement in sustainability. Space to Grow is no stranger to adulation. The partnership has also received a New Champions award from the National Physical Activity Plan Alliance; the Sustainability award from the Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management (IAFSM); and a Silver Ribbon Award from Friends of the Chicago River for its creative approach to river sensitive design and implementation.

Residents are urged to sign up for the workshop by calling (312) 863-6154 or by visiting www.space2grow.org/leland-stormwater. Early registration is preferred, but same-day registration will also be available.

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

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