



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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WEF service project to construct new learning garden at Pershing East Magnet School, Chicago

Ribbon cutting: Sat., Sept. 26, 2 p.m. at Pershing East Magnet School, 3200 S. Calumet Ave., Chicago



Students, staff and volunteers stand in a newly built rain garden on the playground at Haines Elementary School in Chicago in 2013. The construction was part of the Water Environment Federation's (WEF's) 86th Annual Technical Exhibition and Conference. A 1,000 sq. ft. section of pavement was replaced with native plantings to help relieve stormwater runoff. Stormwater will now drain into the garden instead of pooling on the pavement, which previously rendered playtime nearly impossible in the hours following a storm. Each year, dozens of WEFTEC® participants arrive to their destinations early to participate in a service project. More than 100 helped, the most since the first rain garden was constructed in 2008.

The Pershing Cultivation Project is the 8th annual WEFTEC community service event

The Water Environment Federation (WEF) will help cultivate community engagement and educate Chicago youth about the value of water through the “The Pershing Cultivation Project: Growing Green Gardens and Young Minds.” Organized as a part of the Water Environment Federation’s Annual Technical Exhibition (WEFTEC) 2015 by the Students and Young Professionals Committee, the event is scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 26 at Pershing East

Magnet School in Chicago’s Bronzeville neighborhood, 3200 S. Calumet Ave., Chicago.

Conference and community volunteers will help transform a portion of the school grounds into a learning garden that will serve as an interactive tool for the school’s K–8 students to learn about water, the environment, and green infrastructure. Features will include an outdoor classroom and corresponding lesson plans; a permeable path and rain

garden to capture and store stormwater runoff; and a large traditional garden filled with native prairie grasses and flowers.

To help kick off the project, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago will join WEF in hosting the third annual WaterPalooza educational fair on Friday, Sept. 25. Students, teachers, and parents will be invited to enjoy a fun-filled day of engaging, hands-on environmental activities provided by nearly 20 water companies, Chicago 4th Ward Alderman William Burns, the MWRD and other governmental agencies, and non-profit organizations from across the country.

“The District is very excited to be involved in this educational endeavor for the students of Pershing School,” said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. “These boys and girls will learn a great deal about the environment and flood management by studying, working and playing within this planned stormwater garden.”

The activities provide an invaluable way for WEF to give back to the WEFTEC host city through grassroots solutions that promote environmental stewardship and help raise awareness about the value and importance of water, which is one of the Federation’s strategic objectives. Local and WEF leadership are expected to attend the opening ceremony to share their vision for environmental protection and community involvement and service.

Sponsors include AECOM, ARCADIS U.S. Inc., Bentley Systems, Black & Veatch, Brown and Caldwell, Carollo Engineers, CDM Smith, CH2M HILL, Greeley and Hansen LLC, Hazen & Sawyer, HDR, and Vaughan Company, Inc. The service project donors include Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services,

Apex Engineering Group, Christy Webber Landscapes, Chemtrol, Engineering America, Entex Technologies, Environmental Operating Solutions, Inc., FKC Screwpress, Lubrizol Advanced Materials, Inc., Northwind Perennial Farms, Parsons Corporation, Trinity Landscaping, and Wigen Companies.

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Make THE water quality event, YOUR water quality event.

Scheduled for Sept. 26–30, 2015 at McCormick Place in Chicago, WEFTEC 2015 will feature 135 technical sessions, 29 workshops, 17 mobile sessions, numerous events, and nearly 1,000 exhibiting companies displaying the latest in water quality research technology and services.

No matter where you live or what part of the water sector you represent, water unites us all. **Register today** and be a part of **One World. One Water. One Event.**

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About WEF

The Water Environment Federation (WEF) is a not-for-profit technical and educational organization of 36,000 individual members and 75 affiliated Member Associations representing water quality professionals around the world. Since 1928, WEF and its members have protected public health and the environment. As a global water sector leader, our mission is to connect water professionals; enrich the expertise of water professionals; increase the awareness of the impact and value of water; and provide a platform for water sector innovation. To learn more, visit www.wef.org.

Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

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