



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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For immediate release
October 23, 2015

Pershing East Magnet School is home to new learning garden; MWRD, CPS, city of Chicago and Water Environment Fed. team up on project

More than 100 volunteers from around the world showed up early Sept. 26 at Pershing East Magnet School, 3200 S. Calumet Ave., prepared to build a rain garden. The Water Environment Federation (WEF) spearheaded this community engagement project to educate Chicago youth about the value of water through the “The Pershing Cultivation Project: Growing Green Gardens and Young Minds.”



Students, staff and volunteers stand in a newly built rain garden on the playground at Pershing East Elementary School. The construction was part of the Water Environment Federation's (WEF's) 88th Annual Technical Exhibition and Conference. A 1,000 sq. ft. section of the property was replaced with native plantings to help relieve stormwater runoff. Each year, dozens of WEFTEC® participants arrive to their destinations early to participate in a service project.

Organized as a part of WEF's Annual Technical Exhibition (WEFTEC) 2015, a portion of the school grounds were transformed 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 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, the city of Chicago, the Chicago Public Schools hosted the third annual WaterPalooza educational fair on Friday, Sept. 25. Students, teachers, and parents enjoyed 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 was 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 *(continued)*



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Volunteers work on the Water Environment Federation garden at Pershing East Elementary School. The construction was part of the Water Environment Federation's (WEF's) 88th Annual Technical Exhibition and Conference.

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.

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 pro-



Water Environment Federation President Ed McCormick and MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos hold the big scissors to cut the ceremonial ribbon on the newly built rain garden on the playground at Pershing East Elementary School in September. The construction was part of the Water Environment Federation's (WEF's) 88th Annual Technical Exhibition and Conference.

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.

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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.