



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## Breast Cancer Awareness Month inspires survivor *Fashion designer honored at MWRD Board meeting*



*MWRD Board of Commissioners recognized the Barbara Bates Foundation for its commitment to breast cancer awareness. Bates (front, fourth from left), a fashion designer and breast cancer survivor, was accompanied by several breast cancer survivors who modeled her clothes for a brief fashion show.*

In commemoration of breast cancer awareness month, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) Board of Commissioners (BOC) paused to recognize the fashion inspired by a local breast cancer survivor and demonstrate the power of healing.

Chicago-based fashion designer Barbara Bates started a foundation in 1999 to give back to her hometown by donating prom dresses and formal wear to inner-city high school students who excel despite difficult circumstances. After Bates survived a breast cancer diagnosis a decade later, the Barbara Bates Foundation expanded its mission by focusing on breast cancer awareness and education. Since then, the foundation has held fashion show fundraisers, 5K walks and runs, and raised more than a half million dollars to help launch the construction of the Barbara Bates Foundation Breast Wellness Center at Sinai Health System.

“Barbara Bates is the fashion mind behind so many beautifully dressed models, but she is also a model in showing us the determination to beat breast cancer and promote awareness while making a difference in the lives of so many women,” said MWRD Vice President Barbara McGowan.

One in eight women will develop breast cancer, according to the National Breast Cancer Foundation. Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in women and the second leading cause of cancer death among women. Each year it is estimated that more than 240,000 women in the United States will be diagnosed with breast



*MWRD Vice President Barbara McGowan (right) presented a resolution to Barbara Bates, recognizing her invaluable commitment to breast cancer awareness. Bates said she was confronted with many adversities in her life that inspired her to use her talents to give back to others.*

cancer and more than 40,000 will die. The good news is that awareness and early detection have led to an increasing amount of survivors, with more than 2.8 million breast cancer survivors alive in the United States today.

In addition to her philanthropic endeavors, Bates is also known for dressing some of the world’s most fabulous fashionistas, entertainers, celebrity clients, community leaders and influential figures. Her success inspired Bates to use her talents and give back to the community, and it was her experience with breast cancer that motivated her to reach out to other breast cancer patients and survivors. During the BOC’s meeting on Oct. 20, the commissioners took a break from business to convert the boardroom into a fashion runway for a few breast cancer survivors who modeled Bates’ clothes.

“Barbara Bates’ vigilance and her foundation’s dedication to breast cancer awareness have reminded us of the importance of education and early dedication and will result in so many lives saved,” said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. “Just as her charitable work in the community has benefited so many deserving youth in need, she is also inspiring other women to seek out the proper medical attention to beat breast cancer, and we hope today’s fashion show promoted that awareness.”

The Barbara Bates Foundation hosted its annual “Knocking Out Breast Cancer” fundraiser on Oct. 16 at the Bridgeport Art Center. The event also commemorated the 30th anniversary of Barbara Bates Designs and raised funds for the Barbara Bates Foundation. To learn more, visit [www.barbarabatesfoundation.org](http://www.barbarabatesfoundation.org).

### Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

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