



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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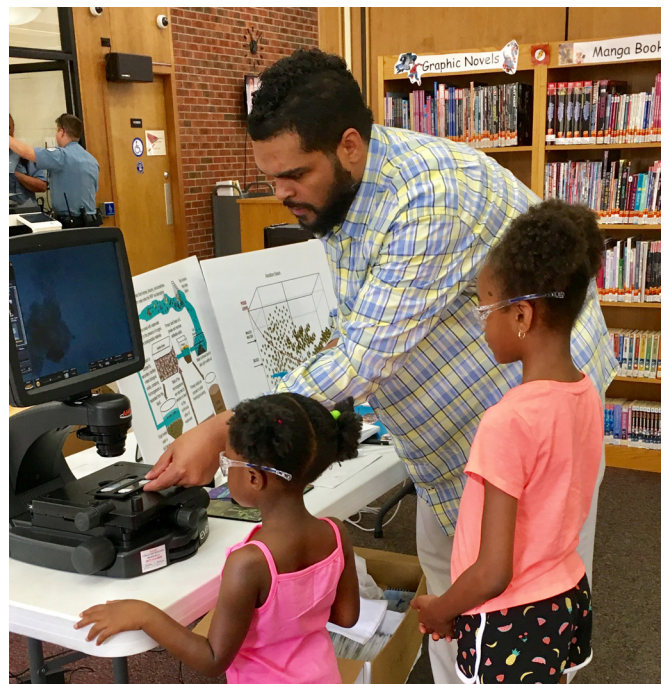
MWRD makes a splash educating the community in 2018; More than 90,000 learn about agency's work to recover resources, transform water



MWRD Environmental Chemist Lydenia Hickerson guides students from Thomas J. Kellar Middle School of Robbins through water sampling testing during a tour of the Calumet Water Reclamation Plant in June 2018. Students learned about the value of their water environment and MWRD career opportunities.

A ripple effect of education and appreciation for the local water environment permeated throughout Chicagoland during the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's (MWRD's) widely successful 2018 outreach campaign.

The agency made a splash in 2018 with its community outreach activities, reaching more than 90,000 people. Outreach activities took place throughout the MWRD's service area across Cook County and included guided tours at seven water reclamation plants (WRPs) and the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP) pumping station; participation in science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEM/STEAM) fairs and environmental events, senior seminars, career day celebrations, and other special events to show how the MWRD protects the environment and public health. We also gave educational

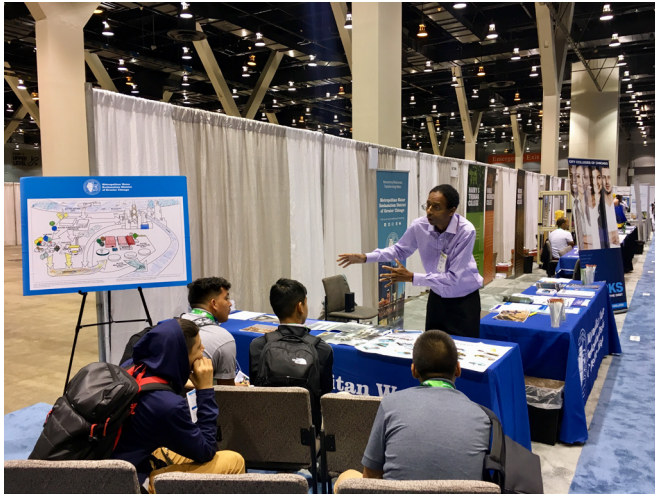


In June 2018, the MWRD led a special children's presentation, "Do you wonder where it goes when you flush the toilet?" at Lyons Public Library. Brandon Reynolds, laboratory technician II, also tested water samples with Junior Scientists.

presentations at schools, corporate lunch and learn sessions and other requested speaking engagements.

Through these community outreach projects, the public learned about the MWRD's work of protecting the water environment, the agency's practices and initiatives to recover resources and transform water that flows to the MWRD for treatment, the long and rich history of the MWRD, and the many ways that everyone can be involved in protecting the waterways. Our knowledgeable and friendly community outreach and education team often distributed brochures, booklets, and coloring *(continued)*

MWRD makes a splash educating the community in 2018 *(continued)*



Andre Haynes, senior civil engineer, shares STEAM career wisdom with students.



Students from around the nation learned about STEAM careers and the mission of the MWRD, at the Chicago City Colleges STEAM Expo (IMTS Smartforce Student Summit) in September. Saeed Farooqui, laboratory technician II, discusses the wastewater treatment process.

books, gave away free oak saplings as part of our “Restore the Canopy” initiative and integrated fun STEAM-related activities into the experience.

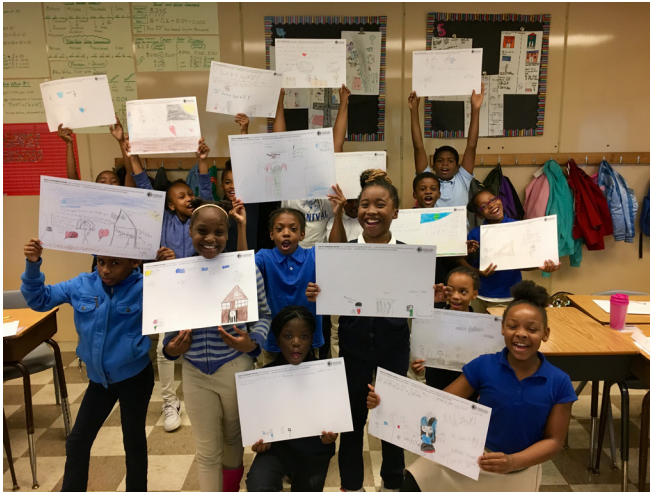
Key year in review highlights include:

- **91,482 people were reached through MWRD community outreach opportunities.** This audience number reflects tours, speaking engagements, events, fairs, and parades. Of particular interest, the MWRD celebrated Earth Day and Arbor Day at 17 community fairs and outdoor nature events
- **172 MWRD Tours at WRPs and TARP Pumping Station:** Students, community groups, tourists from the U.S. and abroad, local residents, and elected officials scheduled and participated in these facility tours. The total participants were 3,086.
- **65 Speaking Presentations:** MWRD staff led presentations, which reached approximately 4,000 people.
 - Of these speaking presentations, the MWRD hosted the first Imagine a Day Without Water Tour and prepared a special resolution to observe this national day of awareness. The tour included 12 STEAM workshops at five Chicago Public Schools (also Space to Grow participants), where 315 students learned about the value of water.
- **6 new Space to Grow sustainable schoolyard transformations at Chicago Public Schools:** The MWRD partnered with the Chicago Department of Water Management, Chicago Public Schools, the Healthy Schools Campaign and Openlands to transform six schoolyards that will capture a combined 1.28 million gallons of water per storm event.
- **50 public and non-public science fair participants in grades 7 - 12 awarded for their environmental-related projects.** Winners were honored during a ceremony with the MWRD Board of Commissioners, followed by a boat trip with their families on the Chicago River, where they also learned about the history of the MWRD.
- **7 open house events at the MWRD WRPs:** The events, which took place in May for Infrastructure Week and in October for the Chicago Architecture Center’s Open House Chicago, reached nearly 1,400 people.

The MWRD recognizes that water is essential to the quality of life and our community outreach efforts highlight the importance of educating the public on our mission while encouraging environmental stewardship.

“The MWRD serves an area of 882 square miles which includes the city of Chicago and *(continued)*”

MWRD makes a splash educating the community in 2018 *(continued)*



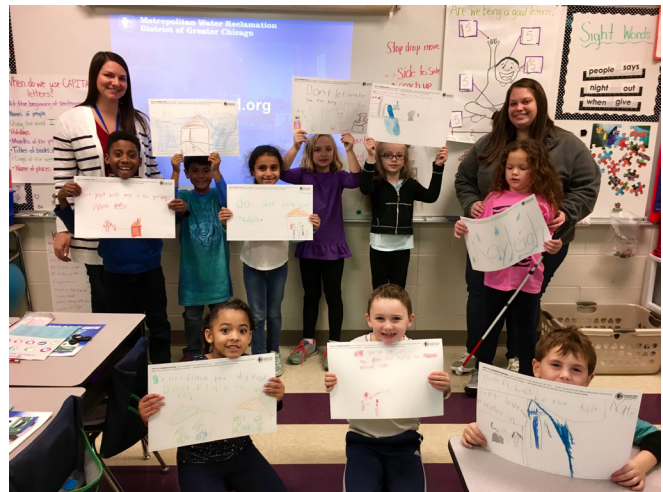
In October, the MWRD brought the Imagine a Day Without Water school tour to the fourth and fifth grade classes at Schmid Elementary School in the Cottage Grove Heights neighborhood. The students participated in a STEAM workshop and creatively expressed a day without water through art.

128 suburban communities. While each neighborhood is unique, all residents benefit from the MWRD wastewater treatment process,” said President Mariyana Spyropoulos. “I am excited that the MWRD has been able to connect with so many people through our community outreach and education efforts in 2018. Having the ability to share our message with the public and inspire them to protect the environment is an extraordinary opportunity. With each presentation or event, we are able to educate and empower our service community to learn about the vital role the MWRD plays in keeping our water environment clean and safe.”

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A future MWRD professional celebrates a moment in history with a photo at the O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant in Skokie during Open House Chicago.



The Earth Angels after-school club at Bert H. Fulton School invited the MWRD community education team to their November meeting. These Tinley Park second graders learn about the environment, recycling, and nature. The group displayed their artistic thoughts on the importance of water.

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.