



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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Uplift, Outreach and Engage: MWRD celebrates national Women's History Month with women telling their stories



Presenters at the MWRD's Women's History Month event included (front, from L to R): MWRD Director of Procurement and Materials Management Darlene LoCascio, J'Arnay R.B. Harris, Nicole "Nikki" Hayes, the Rev. Dr. Robbie Craig, the Rev. Dr. Angela L. Swain and MWRD Acting Diversity Administrator Richard L. Martinez, Jr.; and (back, from L to R): MWRD Chairman of Finance Marcelino Garcia, Commissioner Patricia Theresa Flynn, President Kari K. Steele, Vice President Kim Du Buclet and Commissioner Eira L. Corral Sepúlveda.

Commissioners, staff and partners with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) capped off a series of Women's History Month events with an evening of uplifting conversation, networking, lessons learned, and women telling their stories to engage and empower others.

The event, "Uplift, Outreach and Engage" brought together business owners, financial planners, marketing strategist, theologians and psychologists with MWRD experts on procurement and diversity working together to demonstrate how women can best participate in the MWRD's work to protect the region's water environment. The evening reception, held at the MWRD McGowan Office Building Board room, captured this year's na-

tional Women's History Month theme entitled "Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories."

"It's important for Women's History Month and throughout the year, while the progress and strengths of women continue to be recognized, that we also make time for accessing work-life balance and wellness, both mental and physical," said MWRD President Kari K. Steele. "We hope that we achieved our goal to Uplift, Outreach and Engage women, during our month-long celebration. We not only celebrated women but we shared our stories as encouragement to one another and as a reminder to continue to uplift one another along the journey." *(continued)*

MWRD celebrates national Women's History Month, *cont.*



The keynote address for the evening was given by Pier 31 owner and former President of Laborers' Local 1001 Union Nicole "Nikki" Hayes. Presenters included the Rev. Dr. Robbie Craig, a trustee for the village of Matteson and banking expert, J'Arnay R.B. Harris, co-founder and chief strategy officer for the Chicago-based marketing firm Legacy Strategies, MWRD Procurement and Materials Management Director Darlene LoCascio, MWRD Acting Diversity Administrator Richard L. Martinez, Jr., and the Rev. Dr. Angela L. Swain, a business psychologist, pastoral theologian, author and director of the Office of Human Dignity and Solidarity with the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Each presenter told their individual story or the story of women who had influenced them, and then reflected on their careers and provided tips in their respected fields for the audience. Following the remarks there was a table networking event in which visitors could interact with speakers.

"We are proud to welcome so many talented women together to work at the MWRD and we celebrate their stories each and every day in the work they contribute to improving and protecting our water environment," said MWRD Vice President Kim Du Buclet. "We hope our Women's History Month events inspire

our staff and partners in their respective careers and enlighten them to find that perfect work-life balance that supports success, wellness and happiness."

The MWRD employs more than 440 women from its nearly 1,800 employees serving to protect the region's water environment. This valuable workforce is comprised of managers and professionals (45 percent), technicians (13 percent), protective services (3 percent), administrative support (17 percent), skilled crafts (8 percent) and service and maintenance (15 percent). On top of that, among leadership, six of the nine members of the MWRD Board of Commissioners are women and the majority of department heads are women.

Throughout the month, MWRD President Steele joined largely female staff to make candles and body scrubs at various MWRD facilities. The after-work gatherings provided an opportunity to promote mental health, wellness and office morale. At these settings, President Steele shared her story at the MWRD and listened as staff told how working at the MWRD has provided them an appropriate work-life balance while positively impacting their careers, lives and the environment around them.

Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

Established in 1889, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois. Learn more at mwrdd.org.