



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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Space to Grow® partners celebrate new schoolyard and path to resilience at Black Magnet Elementary School



MWRD President Kari K. Steele, Commissioner Kimberly Du Buclet, Commissioner Mariyana Spyropoulos and former Commissioner Chakena D. Perry joined Space to Grow® project partners to cut the ribbon on the new schoolyard at Black Magnet Elementary School

Space to Grow® partners, including the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD), celebrated its fourth and final schoolyard transformation of the year, converting an older asphalt lot into a vibrant place to play, learn the importance of green infrastructure and mitigate flooding for the Pill Hill community.

Robert A. Black Magnet Elementary School, 9101 S. Euclid Ave., was transformed through the Space to

Grow partnership of the MWRD, Chicago Department of Water Management, Chicago Public Schools (CPS), Healthy Schools Campaign and Openlands. The schoolyard at Black Magnet Elementary now includes an artificial turf field, basketball courts, porous playground surfacing, several play hills and rain gardens, and an outdoor classroom. Thanks to the new and improved permeable surfaces, the school will now be able to hold an additional 94,743 gallons of stormwater each time it rains. *(continued)*

Space to Grow partners celebrate new schoolyard, *cont.*



“Say goodbye to the puddles and hello to a new place to play, learn and enjoy for the entire community,” said MWRD President Kari K. Steele. “New upgrades at Robert A. Black Magnet Elementary School will enhance the learning experience and protect the larger community from storms and improve our area water quality. Thank you to our Space to Grow partners for pursuing this exciting project.”

Black Magnet Elementary is the 34th school completed by the Space to Grow partnership since 2014. Combined, the 34 CPS schools can store more than 6.5 million gallons per rain event equal to 9.9 Olympic-size pools or 130,731 bathtubs per rain event. Space to Grow transforms the CPS schoolyards into beautiful, vibrant and functional community spaces for physical activity, outdoor learning, environmental literacy and engagement with art, while addressing neighborhood flooding issues and engaging the community.

In addition to providing community members in low-income neighborhoods with safe outdoor spaces to play

and stay active, Space to Grow schoolyards help CPS meet daily recess and physical education requirements while providing a daily connection to nature, such as rain gardens and other greenery surrounding the schoolyard. The \$1.5 million project at Black Magnet Elementary also reduces flooding, reduces basement backups, reduces the load on the combined sewer system and educates students and neighbors about green infrastructure techniques and purpose.

“This new playground at Black Magnet Elementary School brings the community of students and their families together, but it also unites us in our mission to address our water environment and protect neighbors from flooding,” said MWRD Commissioner Mariyana Spyropoulos. “Thank you to the Space to Grow partners and school leadership for accepting this new mission. Through this approach, we are preparing students and future leaders and educating them on the importance of green infrastructure and sustainable solutions to manage stormwater.”

Recovering Resources, Transforming Water