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1,800 New York City and Watershed Students Honored at 30th Annual Water Resources Art & Poetry Celebration



Students Submitted More than 1,600 Pieces of Artwork and Poetry, Breaking an all-time Record

Works of Art and Photos From the Event Can be Viewed on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on Thursday hosted a celebration event for participants in the 30th Annual Water Resources Art and Poetry Contest. About 1,800 students (grades 2-12) from New York City and Watershed communities were honored for creating more than 1,600 original pieces of artwork and poetry that reflect an appreciation for New York's water resources, the drinking water supply, harbor water, wastewater treatment, and the importance of water conservation. This year's competition marks another all-time record for student participation. In addition, through the art and poetry submitted, students raised awareness about the importance of maintaining New York City's water supply and wastewater infrastructure. The ceremony included remarks from Patrick Dougher, Program Director of Groundswell, an organization of community artists and activists that create murals to beautify neighborhoods. Also speaking were Mahogany L. Browne, a slam poet and writer, and Tem Blessed, a musician and poet. Additionally featured were dance and rap performances by two student groups.

"The *Water Resources Art and Poetry Contest* allows students to exhibit their wonderful talents by creating original art that demonstrates their knowledge of New York City's essential drinking water and wastewater systems," said **DEP Acting Commissioner Steven Lawitts**. "Once again this contest had record-breaking participation, which demonstrates that our creative young people are genuinely curious and concerned about the environment around them and are well-poised to become future stewards of our waterways."

Students from 100 public, independent, charter and parochial schools participated in this year's *Water Resources Art and Poetry Contest*. Participants were honored as DEP Water Ambassadors and received certificates recognizing their contribution. Additionally, from the more than 1,600 submissions, a group of judges selected 66 entries representing 184 student group projects as this year's Water Champions.

More Information

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DEP's *Water Resources Art and Poetry* program raises awareness about the importance of clean, high-quality drinking water, and what it takes to maintain New York City's water supply and wastewater treatment systems. The ceremony recognized the students' creative expression of five central themes:

- *Water—A Precious Resource*: To highlight the importance of the quality of our tap and harbor water.
- *The New York City Water Supply System*: To look at the history of the city's drinking water system.
- *The New York City Wastewater Treatment System*: To examine how the City treats more than 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater every day.
- *Harbor Water Quality and Healthy Marine Ecosystems*: To emphasize the need for Bluebelts, explore the relationship between aquatic plants and animals, and understand the impact of pollution in our waterways.
- *Water Stewardship and Climate Change*: To bring attention to the value of water and how we can help to protect our environment.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned \$14 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. This capital program is responsible for critical projects like City Water Tunnel No. 3; the Staten Island Bluebelt program, an ecologically sound and cost-effective stormwater management system; the city's Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the city's reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality; and the installation of more than 820,000 Automated Meter Reading devices, which will allow customers to track their daily water use, more easily manage their accounts and be alerted to potential leaks on their properties. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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