

## Field Trip!



Last week, DEP sponsored more than 100 public school students who participated in the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) a "Day in the Life: Hudson River Snapshot" educational event. The students, twelfth graders from Baruch College Campus High School in Manhattan and seventh graders from Hunter's Point Community Middle School in Long Island City, Queens, took water samples and made environmental observations along the East River, at Gantry Plaza State Park. Thanks to staff from DEP's Education Office for coordinating the event. See more photos [here](#).

## Spotlight on Safety

### Ebola Facts and Precautionary Measures

A recently confirmed case of Ebola in New York City has raised many questions about how the disease can be spread and what New Yorkers can do to protect themselves. Ebola is spread by direct contact with an infected person's blood or bodily fluids. It is not spread through the air or through simply being near someone who is infected. People infected with Ebola only become contagious after they begin to have symptoms, such as a fever. Still, it is good to be aware of the recommended precautions and practice proper hygiene. If you have recently traveled to the affected areas of West Africa and develop a fever within 21 days, or you have had contact with a person who is sick with Ebola:

- call 911 and mention your travel history to the operator
- do not come to work
- isolate yourself from contact with others until medical staff arrives

If a staff member or a contract employee **is at a DEP location** and meets the criteria (fever, travel history and/or contact with a person sick with Ebola) the employee or contractor should be isolated in a separate room and 911 should be called immediately. Visit the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's website for answers to [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

## Special Guest Commissioner's Corner



**Diana Jones-Ritter**, DEP's Deputy Commissioner for Organizational Development, is a guest commentator this week.

Two of DEP's core values are innovation and continuous improvement. Every DEP employee is encouraged to seek improved, more efficient and safer ways of performing the work they do to support DEP's mission. The Employee Suggestion Program provides each of you with an opportunity to submit recommendations and be recognized for innovative and creative ideas that improve the efficiency, effectiveness and the safety of our operations. It has been a year since this program launched and approximately 170 suggestions have been submitted. I would like to thank **April Kelly** for being a champion of this initiative and the lead in implementing this program agency-wide.

Some of the great ideas from DEP employees so far include:

- the use of new protective clothing for upstate employees to prevent field staff from contracting tick-borne diseases
- extending the hours of the office supplies closet in Kingston for the convenience of our employees
- the installation of an air compressor on the third floor parking deck at Lefrak for employee convenience and improved vehicle safety
- updating the Keeping Workspaces Clean and Safe policy to ensure new employees will have professionally cleaned workspaces upon arrival at DEP
- the creation of a Community Supported Agriculture program at LeFrak and Ward's Island
- the introduction of yoga classes at upstate facilities

Suggestions come in all shapes and sizes and each recommendation is reviewed and carefully researched before a decision is made to implement an idea or not. The Employee Suggestion Program provides the opportunity for idea sharing and fosters innovation across the agency.

Where possible, DEP honors employees who submit suggestions that are implemented during our Employee of the Month celebration. Employees who submit health and safety suggestions that are implemented are awarded up to \$100. Suggestions that result in cost-effective, tangible savings are eligible for cash awards of up to \$1000 after one year of evaluation. For example, currently at the Mahopac Wastewater Treatment Plant, DEP uses the town of Carmel's potable water in vacuum pumps for sealing and cooling. A BWS employee recognized that 788,400 gallons of water are used each year through the current process and proposed using recycled water instead. The bureau agreed that by collecting the process water in a tank and recycling it, a significant savings can be achieved with only a small investment. This suggestion is on track to be implemented in the spring and the savings will be reviewed in the coming year.



We welcome your ideas to improve our operations and to keep our workforce as safe as possible. Have an idea? Forms may be submitted online under "DEP Resources" on [The Source](#), by email to [suggestions@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:suggestions@dep.nyc.gov), or by mailing the Submission Form via inter-office envelope to: The Employees' Suggestion Program, Commissioners Office, 59-17 Junction Blvd., 19th Floor.

At DEP, everyone is responsible for safety. If you or anyone on your team is concerned about your working conditions, it's okay to ask your supervisor or your bureau's EHS liaison how they can help. If you've still got questions, you can call the EHS Employee Concerns Hotline. It's DEP's responsibility to acknowledge and fix unsafe situations, procedures, and practices. With your help, we'll not only get the job done, we'll make it safer for ourselves, our coworkers, our families, and our city. CALL (800) 897-9677 OR SEND A MESSAGE THROUGH [PIPELINE](#). HELP IS ON THE WAY.



## Hurricane Sandy Anniversary



Two years ago tomorrow, Hurricane Sandy, the worst natural disaster in New York City history, made landfall and caused a record 14-foot storm surge. DEP employees heroically worked through the storm clearing flooded roadways, treating wastewater, securing our infrastructure, and preparing for the daunting recovery effort. More than 1,100 DEP employees lived in the flood zones and were directly affected by the storm but, nonetheless, worked tirelessly through many long days and nights to secure the city. In the days following Sandy, DEP crews cleared downed trees and other debris, pumped flood waters (see photos of the Battery Underpass), provided drinking water to residents in Breezy Point, monitored air quality, and helped other utilities restore power and water to millions of New Yorkers.

## Don't be 'Tricked' on Halloween

October is National Cyber Security Awareness Month and DEP's Office of Information Technology recommends that employees follow these tips to help protect against identity theft, computer viruses, and hackers:

- install and keep your antivirus software up to date
- use complex passwords to keep your information secure
- do not open e-mails or click on links from unknown senders
- always install security updates for all software
- be careful when sharing personal information on social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

[Click here](#) for an expanded list of cyber security tips.

## Welcome Aboard!



Yesterday, 24 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from First Deputy Commissioner **Steve Lawitts** and Deputy Commissioner for Organizational Development **Diana Jones Ritter**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

**Desean Carroll, Robert Crowder, Delio Naar, Azhar Patankar, David Philip, LaSheba Tarver and James Weihe** with BWSO; **Taye A. Adeyemo, Rodney Downes, Theodore Gassman** (not pictured), **John L. Sherwood and Jermaine Smith** with BWT; **DeShauna M. Green, Cherelle Mayfield-Hamilton and Sol B. Posada** with BEDC; **Erik Mendez and Jeffy Thomas** with BWS; **Darren G. Pauling and Thomas F. Shine** with OIT; **Ibrahim S. Abdul-Matin** with BPA; **Marc Hanke** with BEPA; **Natalie Shimshi** with BCS; **Sivaranee Thambiah** with BEC and **Ronald S. Hansen** with ACCO.

## Art, Music and Poetry



Last week, DEP celebrated its second annual Diversity Day with art, music and poetry. Events were held at Lefrak Headquarters as well as offices in Kingston, Sutton Park, Downsville, Grahamsville, Ashokan and at the Kensico Laboratory. [Click here](#) to see more photos.

**We welcome your feedback! To submit an announcement or suggestion, please email us at: [newsletter@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:newsletter@dep.nyc.gov).**