

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 6, 2012

No. 37

DEP Joins the New York Mets at Citi Field to Host 26th Annual Water Resources Art & Poetry Contest Awards Ceremony

More than 700 NYC and Watershed Students Submitted Artwork and Poems About NYC Water

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg Issued Proclamation to Honor All Participating Students

New York City Environmental Protection Commissioner Carter Strickland today joined the New York Mets to host an awards ceremony for the 26th Annual *Water Resources Art and Poetry Contest* at Citi Field. More than 700 students (Grades 2-12) from New York City and Watershed communities were honored for creating original artwork and composing poetry that reflects an appreciation for New York's water resources, wastewater treatment system, and the importance of water conservation. The ceremony was held at Citi Field, and the artwork and poems were displayed on the stadium's large outfield screens as well as on monitors throughout the stadium. In addition, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg today issued a proclamation honoring all of the students who participated. Commissioner Strickland was joined by Eric Saretsky, Vice President of Queens Ballpark Company, the managing organization for Citi Field ballpark.

"For 26 consecutive years, students who participate in the *Water Resource Art and Poetry Contest* have used their creative energy to show their appreciation for one of New York City's most precious resources: its renowned supply of drinking water," said Commissioner Strickland. "This contest provides students with a great opportunity to learn about the amazing systems that supply more than nine million people with world class water, and helps us raise awareness about the importance of maintaining our water supply and wastewater treatment systems so that future generations will continue to enjoy NYC Water."

Today's award ceremony included a speech by Eric Saretsky, Vice President of Queens Ballpark Company, the agency that developed and manages Citi Field. Saretsky spoke to students about the importance of green infrastructure in managing stormwater and water consumption at the stadium. Artist Nung-Hsin Hu also spoke about poetic and artistic expressions to highlight water conservation. In addition, many students were selected to read their poetry and discussed their artwork.

Students from more than 50 schools participated in this year's *Water Resource Art and Poetry Contest*. From the more than 700 submissions, a group of judges selected 37 winners to be this year's Water Champions. Commissioner Strickland presented the 37 Water Champions with certificates of recognition during today's ceremony, and each student who participated in the contest also received a certificate recognizing their contribution.



DEP's *Water Resources Art and Poetry* program helps raise 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 student's creative work expression of four 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 NYC 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.
- *Water Stewardship: What Can I do to Help to Conserve Water?* To bring attention to the value of water and ways to conserve, and the NYC Green Infrastructure Plan as a way to manage stormwater for cleaner NYC harbor water.

This year's Water Champions for art and poetry are:

Grades 2-3: Art

1. Yahaira Tejada, PS 50 in Queens
2. Sajjad Khan, PS 153 in the Bronx
3. Kate Romero, St. Camillus, in Queens

Grades 2-3: Poetry

4. Nia Hill, PS 153 in the Bronx
5. Fatoumatu Cisse, PS 75 in the Bronx
6. Nayeli Gomez, PS50, in Queens

Grades 4-5: Art

7. Melissa Rafaniello, Holy Rosary School in Staten Island
8. Spencer Elliot, PS 188, in Queens
9. Farzana Alam, PS 131 in Queens
10. Moitrayee DasGupta, PS 131, in Queens

11. Jonica McCartney, PS 21, in the Bronx
12. Alexander Castillo, Our Lady Queen of Martyrs
13. Elizabeth Santiago, PS 31, in Brooklyn

Grades 4-5: Poetry

14. Sithi-Rukaiyaa Arssath, PS 69, in Queens
15. Gurleen Kaur, PS 133, in Queens
16. Cruz Garcia, Margaretville Central School, in West of Hudson
17. Tori Merious, Hellenic Classical Charter School, in Brooklyn
18. Victoria Vittorioso, Hellenic Classical Charter School, in Brooklyn
19. Tiana Colon, Hellenic Classical Charter School, in Brooklyn
20. Justus Bianchini, Hellenic Classical Charter School, in Brooklyn

Grades 6-7: Art

21. Catherine Bibbi, Berkeley Carroll School, in Brooklyn
22. Gabriel Mompalao, MS 141, in Queens

Grades 6-7: Poetry

23. Camille Shapiro, Manhattan East, in Manhattan
24. Shafqat Shadaab, MS 141, in Queens
25. Frank Nieroda, Holy Rosay School, in Staten Island
26. Ti'Yanna Wilkins-Kelley, St. Athanasius School, in the Bronx

Grades 8-9: Art

27. Gina Siaw, MS 74, in Queens
28. Sean Dong, MS 74, in Queens

Grades 8-9: Poetry

29. Shamila Faria, Townsend Harris High School, in Queens
30. Annalise Puntorno, Tottenville High School, in Staten Island

Grades 10-12: Art

31. Anita Suvasia, Townsend Harris High School, in Queens
32. Evona Gaines, High School of Art and Design, in Manhattan
33. Juna Ortiz, High School of Art and Design, in Brooklyn

Grades 10-12: Poetry

34. Hammie Park, Hunter College High School, in Manhattan
35. David Weiner, Horace Mann School, in the Bronx
36. Daniel Dominguez, Townsend Harris High School, in Queens
37. Zhenquiang Wang, Flushing International High School, in Queens

DEP manages the 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 7,400 miles of sewer lines and 95 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP employs nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned \$13.2 billion in investments over the next 10 years that creates

up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/dep, like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/nycwater.

-30-

Contact: Chris Gilbride / Mercedes Padilla (718) 595-6600