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NEWS

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PVSC Salutes Oliver Street School

Award-Winning School Honored for its ‘Sewer Guard’ Invention and Care of the Passaic River



NEWARK, NJ – Last month, a group of local enterprising students from the Oliver Street School in Newark, visited the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission (PVSC) where they were honored for their “Guarding the Water Supply” submission that won them national honors in 'Samsung’s Solve for Tomorrow' contest. The students - 6th through 8th graders – had the chance to show off their project, which they demonstrated to PVSC senior staff on June 18.

“Let me congratulate the students and their advisor, Mr. James Intrabartolo on this outstanding accomplishment and for their good stewardship of the Passaic River and our waterways,” said PVSC’s Executive Director Michael DeFrancisci. “The students created a sewer guard that will prevent garbage from entering their local sewer system and waterways. They researched, developed and created a number of models, finally settling on one that captures garbage usually swept into the river following rain events. This is especially critical in Newark where many of the combined storm and sewer pipes lead directly to the Passaic River.”

The students were named statewide finalists back in March, and were chosen from 2,300 schools around the nation; they were one of only 5 National Grand Prize Winners in ‘Samsung’s Solve for Tomorrow Contest’. One of the goals of the contest is dedicated to helping raise student interest in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) subjects nationwide through innovative programs that will help us all build a better tomorrow.

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"Every day I pass the Passaic River on my way to school and I always see how polluted it is," says seventh-grader Gabriel Margaca. Gabriel and his classmates at the Oliver Street School in Newark didn't like what they saw, and did something about it.

Oliver Street students won \$140,000 in technological equipment for their project designed to clean up the polluted Passaic River. The project was created by designing a system of sewer grates to reduce the amount of street garbage flowing into the river.

After the presentation, the students were given congratulatory certificates from PVSC, then joined their STEM instructor James Intrabartolo—who was also recently named ‘Teacher of the Year’ - and Samsung officials to learn more about PVSC’s operations and commitment to the Passaic River. The students spent the remainder of the day touring the plant, visiting the lab and interacting with staff.

“To go this far, it makes us proud of what we did and makes the school proud too," said Margaca.

As Samsung notes, tomorrow's economies will be forged by students who are proficient in STEM subjects. To excite students about STEM education, Samsung started the Solve for Tomorrow education contest, giving schools across the U.S. the opportunity to raise interest in STEM subjects and by awarding their schools with a share of over \$2 million in technology products.

“On behalf of PVSC, it is our honor to welcome these outstanding students to PVSC, congratulate them on this latest award, and share what we do here at the plant. Perhaps one day, one of these talented young men or women will join the ranks of our PVSC employees,” said PVSC Commissioner Kenneth J. Lucianin.

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In order to protect and preserve local streams and rivers from water pollution, the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission operates one of the country's oldest and largest treatment plants for the wastewaters of northern New Jersey, serving over 1.4 million people in five counties.