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Water Environment Federation Honors the Public Education Work of Water Professionals, Organizations

ALEXANDRIA, Va.— The Water Environment Federation (WEF) proudly announces the 2020 WEF Awards recipients for education. The WEF Education Awards recognize WEF members for significant accomplishments in promoting awareness and understanding of water environment issues through the development and execution of academic research, curricula and public education programs.

“Education is key to advancing the understanding and protection of the water environment,” said Jackie Jarrell, WEF President. “The Water Environment Federation is extremely proud to honor these individuals and organizations for their work to educate and inform the general public about one of the world's most valuable resources.”

The 2020 recipients for Education are:

WEF Canham Graduate Studies Scholarship: Lydia Peri, University of Nevada--Reno

This scholarship, honoring former WEF Executive Director Robert Canham, provides \$25,000 for a post-baccalaureate student in the water environment field. Prior to beginning her doctoral studies, Lydia Peri earned a bachelor's degree in ecohydrology and master's degrees in civil and environmental engineering and hydrogeology from Nevada-Reno. She worked with the Washoe County (Nev.) Department of Water Resources and other agencies in the OneWater Nevada initiative, a collaboration between eight public agencies focused on water resource management in northern Nevada. Peri's research is being advised by Dr. Krishna Pagilla and is concerned with how subsurface characteristics influence the attenuation of organic and microbial contaminants. Peri is the recipient of other awards and scholarships including the Reno-Tahoe Young Professionals Network 20 under 40 Award; the AWWA CA/NV Dr. Pankaj Parekh Scholarship, a LIFT SEE IT Scholarship with the Hampton Roads (Va.) Sanitation District; and the University of Nevada Alumni Association Outstanding Young Alumnus of the Year.

Fair Distinguished Engineering Educator Medal: Dr. Daniel Oerther, Missouri University of Science and Technology

The Fair Medal recognizes accomplishments in the education and development of future engineers. This award honors Gordon Maskew Fair, a professor of sanitary engineering at Harvard University. Dr. Daniel Oerther has demonstrated and taught the useful intersection of

molecular biology tools and the practice of environmental engineering, he has promoted global water sanitation and hygiene principles, and consistently advanced the stewardship of water resources. His work with students has been broadly based, fundamentally sound, and professionally excellent, well mimicking the ideals of Gordon Maskew Fair and earning him the admiration of students and professionals, alike.

Public Communication and Outreach Program Awards | Individual Category: Allison Fore

Since 2011, Allison Fore has continually made great strides in improving and reshaping the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District's public outreach and image programs, by assembling and directing a team of writers, photographers, videographers, public speakers, and designers to communicate the agency's message. She immediately spearheaded a social media program strategy, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Instagram. She developed a speaker's bureau and an extensive facility tour program, all with a special emphasis placed on outreach to students to generate interest in STEM careers. Fore's work reaches audiences of all ages who are local, regional, national, and international. With her drive, creativity, and enthusiasm, Allison Fore is a great asset not only to greater Chicago, but to the entire water reclamation industry.

Public Communication and Outreach Program Awards | Other Category: Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts Science Education Program

In 2003, recognizing a gap in the number of highly skilled water quality professionals and a parallel need for jobs in the service communities, the Los Angeles County Sanitation District initiated a sewer science education and outreach program that has been continuously used throughout the county. The program continues to grow each year and has reached more than 500 educational leaders and more than 80,000 students, many of whom are currently advancing the water profession.

The program is a hands-on, informative, and engaging activity that allows students to see and experience the application of their knowledge and lab skills in a real-world job setting. With facilitators recruited from practicing and retired water environment professionals, the program provides students with mentoring opportunities as they run valid water quality tests and discuss analytical results. In this way, classrooms serve as job shadowing and training opportunities for future Sewer Science facilitators. Adapting to COVID-19 pandemic impacts, the district's online "virtual" classrooms have continued to support the program's engagement and awareness.

Public Communication and Outreach Program Awards | Other Category: City of Broken Arrow (Okla.)/Broken Arrow Public Schools Together Project

The Together Project's mission was to create an outdoor classroom and training center focused on educating the student body and the general public on environmental stewardship. The program had three goals: to protect the community's floodplains, to improve the community's source water quality, and to enhance the natural habitat within the Tiger Creek watershed. Students were heavily involved in designing and building a floating wetland in the shape of the school logo, with deep involvement of students in both design and construction; a litter prevention program with an art competition and designing and building a rain garden and nature park, and developing a master plan for the Tiger Creek watershed corridor. Students on the design team will present the plan to the school board and city council as soon as pandemic conditions allow a public meeting to be scheduled.

These awards will be presented on Wednesday, Oct. 7 at 5 p.m. at the WEF Awards ceremony during WEFTEC Connect. All WEFTEC Connect registrations include access to the WEF Awards and Presidential Ceremony and Celebration. For more information, click [here](#).

For more information about the WEF Awards, visit <https://www.wef.org/awards>.

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About WEF

The Water Environment Federation is a not-for-profit technical and educational organization of 35,000 individual members and 75 affiliated Member Associations representing water quality professionals around the world. Since 1928, WEF and its members have protected public health and the environment. As a global water sector leader, our mission is to connect water professionals, enrich the expertise of water professionals, increase the awareness of the impact and value of water, and provide a platform for water sector innovation. To learn more, visit www.wef.org.