

CURRENTS

Recapping PWSA's Clean Water Act Employee Event

Employee volunteers gather in Southside for riverfront, neighborhood clean-up



"I enjoyed socializing with colleagues outside of the office and sharing in the collective enthusiasm to give back to our community."

- Rob Herring, PWSA Senior Project Manager



▶ On October 29, PWSA hosted a special employee volunteering event in Southside Riverfront Park in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act (CWA).

In partnership with local non-profit organizations Allegheny CleanWays and Friends of the Riverfront, more than 50 PWSA employees and their families

took to the park bright and early to lend their time to river- and land-based cleanups in and along the Monongahela River. Volunteers collected litter and debris along the river and Three Rivers Heritage Trail, cleared nearby stormwater grates, and even ventured out in Allegheny CleanWays' boat to help clean up the Mon.

At the end of clean-up, attendees and our volunteering partners took stock of the trash we collected, giving out awards for the "trashiest" among the lot. Whether it was a Pittsburgh Riverhounds soccer ball or a pair of rollerskates, we all played a key part that day in cleaning up our waterways.

Landmark laws like the CWA guide the work of our organization and employees in many ways. Volunteering opportunities like this special event give PWSA employees another opportunity to give back to the community in ways that align with our mission **to support our region by protecting public health and the environment through the delivery of safe and reliable water services.**

A very special thank you goes to our volunteering partners Allegheny CleanWays and Friends of the Riverfront, and all PWSA employees and their families for making this a fun and rewarding day. ♦



Pittsburgh Water & Sewer Authority

For a complete list of PWSA's board and community meetings, please visit our [Events & Meetings](#) page. Following COVID-19 restrictions, meetings are held virtually and may be tentative or postponed.

Chief Executive Officer Briefing by Will Pickering

Donations to the Hardship Grant Program will help families struggling to pay for water services



► The holiday season is often a time to take stock of what we have and to lend an extra helping hand to our friends, family members, and neighbors who are less fortunate.

In my six years here in Pittsburgh, one important thing I've learned is that this city is full

of generous people who have a profound sense of community. Pittsburghers are helpers, and we often rise to the occasion to support the less fortunate who also call this region home.

No one should have to choose between paying their water bill and other essential expenses. Unfortunately, however, there are Pittsburghers that find themselves in that position.

A donation to PWSA's [Hardship Grant Program](#) will directly help those eligible Pittsburghers, who will receive support in the form of financial aid.

Since 2018, the Hardship Grant Program has helped more than

850 Pittsburgh households maintain essential water services. It was established to provide income-eligible customers with annual cash assistance to put towards their monthly water bill. We've currently distributed more than \$200,000 through the program and award an average household grant of \$229.

Grants are dispersed to families with a gross household income that is at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level. This means that a family of four making \$41,625 would qualify. Households can apply for a grant up to \$300 every 12 months.

Help support your neighbors today by making a tax-deductible contribution to the Hardship Grant Program. To donate, visit dollarenergy.org/donations/pwsa. Please indicate that your donation is to be directed to PWSA's Hardship Grant Program. Rest assured that 100% of your donation goes directly to PWSA customers in need.

PWSA administers a variety of other Customer Assistance Programs to income-qualified residential customers, including the Bill Discount Program and Winter Shut Off Moratorium. For more information or to apply, please visit www.pgh2o.com/cap. ♦

TEAM PGH2O

Employee Spotlight: Melody Carter-Frye



► *As Workforce Development Manager, Melody is responsible for creating, advancing, and strengthening partnerships with regional leaders to provide training and career development opportunities to those in our community who are unemployed or underemployed. Through this important work, she aims to create more employment opportunities for those in our community and help PWSA strengthen its talent pipeline.*

Tell us about your professional history. For the past eight years, I've worked in workforce development and talent acquisition. I was responsible for supporting the needs of business and industry by creating training options that upskilled the workforce to support employees in their development.

Tell us about PWSA's new partnership with Landforce PGH. This recently established partnership will connect crew members in Landforce's workforce training program to job shadowing opportunities with PWSA Utility Workers in the field. This exposure will support crew members in understanding the day-to-day responsibilities of our Utility Workers while also

looking at how their obtained skills could be productively put to use in the workforce and community.

What made you decide to join PWSA? Firstly, I'm passionate about workforce development and saw this as an opportunity to put my background to work in an industry that impacts an essential sector of humanity: water. Secondly, because of the people. I was familiar with three members of the PWSA team before starting and felt confident that the workplace culture was one where I could contribute and thrive. Lastly, PWSA has a reputation for competitive benefits and pay.

What sort of impact do you hope to have at PWSA and

in our community? My goal is to create an assortment of workforce development opportunities that upskill PWSA employees while also creating PWSA career opportunities for diverse candidates and helping to build our talent pipeline. Additionally, I hope to help the organization further improve their workforce culture by tracking our diversity and inclusion metrics to ensure that PWSA is a place where everyone feels they can reach their potential.

What's an interesting fact about you? I recently became an author. My book, *SPICES: Six Essential Ingredients for Financial Prosperity*, focuses on building foundational financial literacy concepts. ♦

Important Water Main Project Contract Awarded



► At the October Board meeting, PWSA awarded its \$8.4 million **Rising Main 4 Improvements Project** to Structural Preservation Systems LLC. This project, part of our **Water Reliability Plan (WRP)**, will renew a key distribution pipe.

Rising Main 4, located in Highland Park, is a large-diameter water main that moves water from Bruecken

Pump Station to water storage systems in Highland Park. This project is phase two of our efforts, with the rehabilitation of nearby Rising Main 3 wrapping up in the winter.

As part of this project, crews will line 50- and 48-inch diameter steel pipe and 48-inch diameter concrete pipe with a carbon fiber reinforced polymer (CFRP). This trenchless method of restoration was selected after the design process. Some sections that cannot be lined will be replaced by digging.

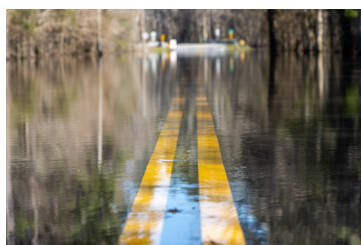
Crews will also complete additional condition assessment using electromagnetic technology on a portion of pipe that was not previously surveyed during the design

process. Conducting this survey involves lowering a team of skilled technicians into the pipe where they visually inspect its interior condition and perform a robotic inspection using electromagnetic waves to detect deficiencies in the pipe.

The Rising Main Improvements Project will be funded by a mix of PENNVEST and federal loans, saving our ratepayers money over time. PWSA will pursue this type of funding for as many projects across its Capital Improvement Program as possible. Construction is anticipated to begin in March 2023 and finish by the end of year. Read more about this project and other WRP upgrades on our **Water Reliability Plan** webpage. ♦

PGH2O IN THE COMMUNITY

Four Mile Run Stormwater Project Update



► On November 14, PWSA hosted a community meeting to provide residents within the Run neighborhood and the larger Four Mile Run Watershed with an update on the Four Mile Run Stormwater Project.

In August 2021, PWSA submitted a joint permit application to the PA Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Following an extensive review,

this meeting provided an opportunity for residents and stakeholders to hear how the project has evolved, ask questions, and share feedback.

The project now will focus on alleviating flooding in the Run neighborhood. With the installation of a storm sewer pipe within the low-lying areas of this neighborhood, we can better separate stormwater flow from wastewater flow and take the first steps to reduce basement backups for area residents. PWSA is preparing to start the design process, which we anticipate will take approximately one year, depending on PWSA's ability to work out review comments with the regulatory agencies.

The use of green infrastructure within Four Mile Run and in other stormwater projects throughout Pittsburgh remains a priority for PWSA. We anticipate that future green solutions will be phased in over time for this project area and we look forward to continuing those conversations with residents at future project meetings and in other discussions pertaining to the watershed.

Several community members joined in person at the Local 95 Union Hall on Saline Street and took advantage of the hybrid option to join virtually. We appreciate everyone's participation and will continue to keep the community informed as this project moves through its next steps. ♦

PGH₂O

WATER
WISE

Defend Your Drains from Fats, Oils, and Grease

Preparing a holiday meal can be a huge undertaking, but don't skip the proper clean up! If the messy fats, oils, and grease (FOGs) produced by cooking a turkey and other foods are poured down your kitchen sink, they can create serious problems in your household plumbing and our sewers.

In fact, FOGs found in meats, cooking oils, dairy products, salad dressings, peanut butter, and other food scraps are a leading cause of sewer backups. When these items are poured down drains, they build up inside sewer pipes and eventually restrict wastewater flow. These blockages cause untreated wastewater to back up into buildings, resulting in high costs for cleanup and repairs.

Keep FOGs out of your sink and our sewers:

- Never pour FOGs down sink drains or in-sink garbage disposals.
- Scrape food scraps from dishes into the trash or compost as appropriate.
- Wipe up FOGs on dishes with paper towels and discard them in the trash.
- Pour cooled grease into a sealable container and dispose of it once it's filled.

Learn more at www.pgh2o.com/defend-your-drains.

Customer Assistance Programs

Our Customer Assistance Programs are designed to provide financial relief for income-qualified residential customers who are having difficulty paying their PGH2O bill. These programs are managed by our **PGH2O Cares team**, a group of education and outreach professionals dedicated to working directly with our most vulnerable customers to bolster enrollment in our Customer Assistance Programs and identify ways to reduce water usage.



For more information about our programs, including the **Winter Shut Off Moratorium, Bill Discount, Flexible Payment Plans, Hardship Grant, and Lead Line Reimbursements**, please visit our [Customer Assistance Program](#) page or contact the PGH2O Cares team at 412-255-2457 or cares@pgh2o.com.

Additional Assistance Programs

Additional assistance programs are offered separately from PWSA's Customer Assistance Programs.

The **Pennsylvania Housing Assistance Fund (PAHAF)** provides financial assistance to eligible homeowners to help cover water and wastewater charges. Please visit their [website](#) or call 888-987-2423 for more information and to apply.

The **Allegheny County Sanitary Authority (ALCOSAN) Clean Water Assistance Fund** is available to eligible residential customers. It is administered by Dollar Energy Fund. To learn more and apply for assistance, visit the [Clean Water Assistance Fund](#) page.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

If you can, consider donating to our [Hardship Grant Program \(www.pgh2o.com/give\)](#).

Enroll in eBilling

Convenient and easy to use, our [online billing and payment portal \(www.pgh2o.com/ebilling\)](#) ensures timely delivery of bills and payments.

Track Water Use

Visit our [Customer Usage Portal](#) to track water use in real time and receive alerts when there's a spike in water use.

Do We Have Your Number?

Did you know that we call customers during water emergencies and outages?

It is important to verify that we have the best number to reach you. You can even add multiple numbers for your account, so your entire household is informed about our work.

TO UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFO:

Call PWSA Customer Service:
412.255.2423 (Press 5)

Visit our [Update Contact Information portal](#).

Stay in the know with PGH2O!

Join our email list to make sure you're getting the latest news and updates. Signing up is simple on our [News & Events](#) page.

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[nextdoor.com](https://www.nextdoor.com)

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