



Water Quality Staff Meet Adopt-A-School Pen Pals at Special JFB Luncheon

By Albert Rodriguez

LADWP Water Quality staff helped kick-start summer 2019 back in June for their Adopt-A-School pen pals from 75th Street Elementary School with an end-of-the-school-year celebration and luncheon. The event at the John Ferraro Building, finally allowed the pen pals to meet in person following a year of exchanging hand-written letters about their hobbies, family and friends, school work, and career goals. The program helps students develop [reading](#), writing, and social skills and also provides them with an opportunity to learn from our own in-house S.T.E.M. professionals by developing friendships and learning about careers in the water system.

LADWP employees and their student pen pals were able to get to know each other face-to-face, enjoy a meal and listen to informative presentations by Utility Services Specialist Lead, Sandra Yeh on how the Pen Pal program benefited and motivated her as a young student and another on water conservation by Anthony Tew, Civil Engineering Associate. After the meal students took part in an interactive science experiment developed by LADWP Microbiologist and Adopt-a-School program coordinator Manely Rashedan. Students learned about culturing microbes and their presence on various surfaces/objects.

“We planned all the presentation and activities in a way that would inspire our little pen pals to think about a future career in S.T.E.M. fields,” said Rashedan “Students had a wonderful time meeting their employee pen pals and loved participating in the science activity. It was quite special to them.”

75th Street Elementary School is one of 22 schools adopted by LADWP during the 2018-2019 school year. The two main components of LADWP’s Adopt-A-School initiative include the Pen Pal Program and Reading Buddies Program. Although this is the 8th year the Water Quality Division has partnered with 75th Street Elementary School, employees Department-wide have written to and inspired students at various local elementary schools since the Adopt-A-School program began back in 1984.