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News Release**

PVSC Recognizes Local Student's Leadership **Kearny High student athlete recipient of 2010** **NJ Governor's Environmental Excellence Award**

Kearny, NJ – The Passaic Valley Sewerage Commissioners' (PVSC) Executive Director Wayne J. Forrest announced today that PVSC presented Kearny High School senior Fernanda Lois with a certificate recognizing her efforts in helping to clean up the Passaic River. Ms. Lois was the recipient of the 2010 NJ Governor's Environmental Excellence Award for organizing a cleanup of the Passaic River in partnership with PVSC.

Ms. Lois, who is also a rower on Kearny High School's crew team, approached her coach back in spring 2009 with the idea of organizing her teammates to help clean up debris that littered the Passaic River and its banks. Not only was she concerned about the potential hazards this debris presented to the rowers, but she was also concerned with the potential impact this debris could have on the river's ecosystem. By partnering with PVSC and with the help of other local rowing teams, Ms. Lois was able to organize a cleanup with over 90 volunteers who removed over 20 cubic yards of debris, including shopping carts, tires, air conditioners and propane tanks. PVSC provided the 20-yard container, along with the bags, gloves, rubber boots and manpower for the cleanup. By encouraging her teammates to recycle their empty water bottles and by providing them with trash bags, Ms. Lois was able to turn the cleanup from an annual event to a daily routine.

"I applaud Ms. Lois on her extraordinary efforts in not only helping to provide a cleaner environment, but also for setting an example for other local students to follow," explained Director Forrest. "It is critical to teach our children the importance of engaging in the stewardship of our environment as they are the future leaders within our communities," said Forrest.

Ms. Lois joined PVSC's Educational Outreach Program this morning at Lincoln School to share her story with the 3-6 grade students. Before the start of this morning's presentation, in which PVSC introduced students to ways they can help improve the quality of area rivers and streams, Forrest presented Ms. Lois a certificate on behalf of PVSC recognizing her leadership within the community. The annual Governor's Environmental Excellence Award honors individuals, organizations, institutions, communities and businesses that have made significant contributions in protecting New Jersey's environment. A panel of judges evaluates applications from nominees that perform unique or valuable environmental activities they believe worthy of commendation. Ms. Lois received one of only thirteen awards presented in 2010.

"Sometimes you just need to take a look around you," Lois said. "If something bothers you, do something about it. It just takes one person's effort to make something a reality."

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In order to protect and preserve local streams and rivers from water pollution, the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commissioners operates one of the country's largest treatment plants for the wastewaters of northern New Jersey. With many expansions, and recent upgrading to secondary treatment, the facility has been striving, since its initial operation in 1924, to improve local water quality in accordance with federal and state water quality standards. Since the creation of PVSC's River Restoration Program in 1998, which is charged with preserving and protecting over 100 miles of area waterways, PVSC has removed over 8,000 tons of debris from the Newark Bay, the Passaic River and its tributaries, and sponsored over 650 individual clean ups along shorelines and in communities, along with educating over 150,000 students on how they can help protect the Passaic River and our environment.

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