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News Release**

## **PVSC Kicks-off 2010 Educational Outreach Program Staff unveils new internet chat technology**

**Bayonne, NJ** – The Passaic Valley Sewerage Commissioners' (PVSC) Chairman Tony Luna announced today that the PVSC Educational Outreach Program kicked-off their 2010 school year at Horace Mann Elementary School while unveiling new internet chat technology.

Over 200 students filled Horace Mann's multi-purpose room this morning to learn about steps they can take to help protect their local waterways. The multimedia, interactive presentation is part of the PVSC Educational Outreach Program, which maintains a full-time outreach staff visiting schools within the PVSC service area whose goal is to relay the importance of protecting our environment. PVSC staff also unveiled new technology which allowed the children in the school to communicate live via the internet to the Captain of PVSC's skimmer vessel as it patrolled the Passaic River. Students had the opportunity to ask the Captain questions and learn how the vessel skims debris from the river. PVSC staff plans to expand this technology in the schools that schedule presentations through the remainder of the school year.

"The PVSC is honored to not only come and talk to students about ways they can help us keep our waterways clean, but also to listen to the innovative ideas they can teach us", explained PVSC Executive Director Wayne J. 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."

To supplement the work done in the classroom the PVSC Educational Outreach Program also provides opportunities for students to organize their own stream bank cleanups, which enables the students to apply what they learned in the class to their own communities. Building on this service learning model, the PVSC partnered with the Bayonne School District in expanding their existing Cleaner and Greener Program to include cleanups along the shoreline surrounding the entire city, which includes participation from every school in the District.

"Engaging children in hands-on service projects helps reinforce the important lessons they learn in the classroom," said PVSC Chairman Tony Luna. "The PVSC has developed a program that complements the classroom curriculum while presenting it in a way that is engaging to the students, and we are thrilled to now include live internet chat so the students can interact with our staff working in the field."

The PVSC Educational Outreach Program maintains a full schedule every school year. Each program is age-specific and is available for grades K-12. The program has also expanded into the summer season, allowing staff to include camps.

"The City of Bayonne is pleased to continue to partner with the PVSC on both their river restoration efforts and their educational outreach programming," said Bayonne Mayor Mark Smith. "I applaud all of our students in making the Cleaner and Greener Program the enormous success it has grown to become."

In order to protect and preserve local streams and rivers from water pollution, the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commissioners operate 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 legislation. Since its inception in 1998, PVSC's River Restoration Program has removed over 8,000 tons of debris from the Passaic River and Newark Bay and sponsored over 650 individual clean ups, along with educating over 150,000 students on how they can help protect the Passaic River and our environment.

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