Sluggish Bugs
Bianey Franco, age 15
Tucson High Magnet School • Ms. Jenness
Grand Prize—Art—Category 4
This book is dedicated to 2017 Living River of Words Teachers of the Year:
Elizabeth Gary – Roadrunner Elementary
and
Kevan Kiser-Chuc – Morgan Maxwell K-8 School
And all the teachers and parents/guardians that promote and support the integration of science and the arts while creating opportunities for children to connect with nature.

Living River of Words 2017 – 2018 Traveling Exhibit Schedule

April 8 – May 30, 2017
Wheeler Taft Abbett Sr. Branch Library • 7800 N. Schisler Dr.

June 2 – July 5, 2017
Martha Cooper Branch Library • 1377 N. Catalina Ave.

July 8 – August 16, 2017
Agua Caliente Park – Ranch House Art Gallery • 12325 E. Roger Rd.

August 18 – September 29, 2017
Murphy-Wilmot Branch Library • 530 N. Wilmot Rd.

October 1 – October 30, 2017
Dusenberry-River Branch Library • 5605 E. River Rd., # 105

November 2 – November 30, 2017
Joel Valdez Main Library • 101 N. Stone Ave.

December 2, 2017 – January 8, 2018
Mission Branch Library • 3770 S. Mission Rd.

January 10 – February 28, 2018
Valencia Branch Library • 202 W. Valencia Rd.
Living River of Words (LROW) sets the stage for learning, inspires science inquiry, and excites creativity. The cycle begins with teachers who invite LROW arts and science instructors to their classrooms. Students are introduced to the concept of watersheds and study wetland habitats through a multi-disciplinary series of science investigations and the practice of poetry and visual arts. After exploring these topics, children ages 5–19 have the opportunity to share their impressions with entries of poetry and/or visual art to Living River of Words: Youth Poetry and Art Contest. In these pages you see the award winning youth poetry and art works that are the result of the field trips, school residencies, and independent study.

The Santa Cruz River has long been the lifeblood of the region, attracting the first humans over 12,000 years ago. In fact, the Santa Cruz River Valley has the longest continuous record of agriculture in the United States. Early inhabitants settled along the valley because the river supplied water year-round. Today, due to a variety of factors including groundwater pumping, many stretches flow only when it rains. Thanks to the release of highly treated wastewater into the riverbed the Santa Cruz River in northwest Tucson and Marana, the river is alive with perennial flows, lush trees lining the riverbanks, and diverse wildlife. Effluent in this reach of the Santa Cruz River is not new; two wastewater treatment plants have been operating on this section of the river since the 1970s. What has changed is the quality of the effluent being released. In December 2013, Pima County completed upgrades to Agua Nueva and Tres Ríos wastewater treatment plants. The upgrades significantly improved the quality of water released into the river. The river now attracts walkers, bikers, and is a popular birding destination from the Sweetwater Wetlands to the Marana Flats.

The Living River Project, conducted by Pima County and the Sonoran Institute, measures conditions of this valuable ecosystem and track the impacts of our community investment.
Living River of Words plays a role in the broader Living River Project by introducing students, teachers and parents to the lower Santa Cruz River and to wetland habitats of Agua Caliente Park and Sweetwater Wetlands. While at the field study site, students conduct water quality tests, record wildlife sightings, and survey riparian vegetation, using methods that reflect the Living River Project indicator assessments. A visiting poet or artist spends time with the students by the river to guide their journaling, photographing, and drawing in preparation for poetry writing and artwork back in the classroom.

Several dedicated teachers in Pima County, Arizona brought their classes on outdoor excursions to the Santa Cruz River or spent a day by the pond at Agua Caliente Park to learn about watersheds and wetlands habitats.

We hope you will enjoy the richness and wonder of these special places through the eyes of the Living River of Words 2017 award winning youth poets and artists.

**Thank You!**

**Living River of Words** succeeds with in-kind services and financial support from Pima County Regional Flood Control District, Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department, Pima County Office of Sustainability and Conservation, Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation, Pima County Public Library, Friends of Agua Caliente Park, Arizona Project Wet, Udall Foundation: Parks in Focus, and Sonoran Institute.

Many thanks to the community partners, school administrators, teachers, science, poetry, photography, and art instructors, judges, volunteers, and graphic designers that worked diligently to bring Living River of Words through the annual cycle of activities: Yajaira Gray, Wendy Burroughs, Jeffrey Babson, Sandy Reith, Eryn Kirkpatrick, Neil Diamente, Doris Evans, Carolyn King, Gavin Troy, Elizabeth Quinn, Edie Price, Helen Wilson, Noemi Zazueta, Carol Brown, Brenda Rentfro, Susan Knoll, Brian Powell, Steve Dell, Parks in Focus – Bret Muter, Arizona Project Wet – Kerry Schwartz, Elizabeth Wilkening, Maximiliano Campos, Faith Schwenning, Berenice Castro, U of A Poetry Center – Tony Luebbermann, Brianna Sheaffer, Jeannette Osgood, and Katie Sharar.
Sunshine shines  
on the stream’s stones

A rattlesnake’s smooth  
soft secret leaves  
whisper sounds all around.

Mother Earth dreams half open stars.

Between footsteps,  
sparkle soft blue hills.

Mountains though grasslands.

Pathway of birds’ wings  
over the water.

Anelise Moreno, age 8  
Agua Caliente Elementary • Ms. Johnson  
Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 2

**A Walk Down the River**

As I walked down the river,  
I saw tree swaying in the wind  
and the water rushing by.

Then as I went farther down the river,  
I heard birds singing, water flowing,  
and the wind whispering in my ear.

As I reached the end of the river,  
I felt the sand between my toes, water on my skin,  
and the wind in my face!

Dennis Leo, age 12  
DeGrazia Elementary • Ms. Mirlocca
The River
The river is a panther
Racing through and catching its prey

The river is a dragonfly
Leaping up and taking off

The river is a treasure box
Holding shiny, sparkly treasures

The river is a stomach
Hungry and gurgling
Rumbling, bubbling and cracking

The river is a mirror
Reflecting on everything around it

The river is a life
For everyone it saves

The river is a hero
Saving everything it feeds

Amaya Preciado, age 9
Ochoa Elementary School • Ms. Selden

River Bank
The birds chirping up in a tree

The green leaves rustling with the wind

The feel of the cool mud below my shoes

The smell of the moisture along the river

 Tells me I am home.

Quim Al-Fayed Musa, age 12
DeGrazia Elementary • Ms. Mirlocca
The Song of the River

The song of the river played endlessly through the night,

As the small insects were chirping away,

and the river was flowing,

the owls hooting,

the fish swimming through the water.

These are the things that make up the song of the river,

one of the most beautiful sounds in the world.

Alexander S. Frazier, age 11
DeGrazia Elementary • Ms. Mirlocca
Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 3

Who Are You?

The river is a pencil
Writing its story
Until it is done
Working day and night
Write and write
Every day write and write
No one knows
How its story will end

Finally it settles
And as it settles
It enjoys family and friends

Sariyah Parham, age 8
Ochoa Elementary • Ms. Selden
I Don’t Know Where I’ll Go

I don’t know where I’ll go,
I don’t know when I’ll stop, all I can do is hope.
Hope that I can help.

I know that I am… Sort of.

I also know that the bacteria flowing with me is killing slowly as others drink from my water.

Oh, the sins I have upon me!

All I feel is the damp sand that was once dry that summer.

Gliding through the desert, underestimated

I don’t know where I’m going, I don’t know when I’ll stop, but when does anyone?

I don’t know if I’ll freeze, I don’t know if I’ll dry, but now I am flowing.
I hope I’ll never stop.

I hope I will hear the bobcat’s song.

The willows whistling, and the children laughing, I hope I’ll never stop.

Ella Morrison, age 11
DeGrazia Elementary • Ms. Mirlocca
**The River is a Loose Tooth**

The river is a loose tooth  
It wiggles like a loose branch  

It wiggles in the wind  
Back and forth  

Smooth like a new tooth  
Or a new leaf on a branch  

Sparkly like a clean tooth  
Like the sun on the water  

*Dominic Ornelas, age 8  
Summit View Elementary • Ms. Carr*

**The River**

The river is like a snake  
Smooth and cold  

The river is like a shining star  
Twinkling in the sky  

The river is like a camera  
Where the turtle comes  
To look at its reflection  

The river is like a warm bath  
That cleans the animals  

In the river there are bugs,  
Worms, spiders and leeches  

The river is like a wolf running…  

*Damaris Gallego, age 9  
Ochoa Elementary • Ms. Selden*
Desert River
Rylee Dankert, age 7
Roadrunner Elementary • Ms. Carroll
Grand Prize–Art–Category 1
Snake Mountain
Ximena Ojeda, age 8
Borton Magnet School • Ms. Cavazos

Cosmic Lotus
Josephine Tisdell, age 12
DeGrazia Elementary • Ms. Mirlocca
Elara Wallenmeyer, age 14
Tucson High Magnet School • Ms. Jenness

My House
Estevan Moreno, age 5
Sewell Elementary • Ms. Dolan
Cactus
Amira Dolan, age 8
Borton Magnet School • Ms. Cavazos
Mottled Coyote in Water
Marta Wrzeszcz, age 11
Basis Tucson North • Ms. Vonier
Grand Prize–Art–Category 3

Chris Santos, age 15
Tucson High Magnet School • Ms. Jenness
Mystical Colorful Bug
Ghazaul Dickson, age 8
Borton Magnet School • Ms. Bennett
Boy Observing
Justin Bemis, age 11
DeGrazia Elementary • Ms. Mirlocca
Duck Oiled a Pink Turtle Today
Annabelle Vasquez, age 6
Sewell Elementary • Ms. Payton

Emmani Middleton, age 7
Wheeler Elementary • Ms. Kiser-Chuc
Soaring Over the River
Jaime Moreno, age 11
DeGrazia Elementary • Ms. Mirlocca

The Shrimp
Kaycee Molina, age 12
Anza Trail Elementary • Ms. Tanner
Mathilda Hand, age 9
Borton Magnet School • Ms. Bennett
Grand Prize—Art—Category 2
Water Makes it Green
Lorelei Pierce, age 6
Roadrunner Elementary • Ms. Gary
Water Life
Mia Rubio, age 11
DeGrazia Elementary • Ms. Mirlocca

Sunrise in the Desert
Emma Gerber, age 11
Anza Trail Elementary • Ms. Tanner
Arizona Colors
Evelyn Vazquez, age 12
DeGrazia Elementary • Ms. Mirlocca

Cecilia Trinh, age 9
Presidio School • Ms. Mahony
Mayfly Nymph in Flower Pond
Hannah Arocha, age 15
Palo Verde Magnet School • Ms. Knochel
Willa Barron-Gafford, age 9
Borton Magnet School • Ms. Bennett
Picacho Peak
Tyler Drummond, age 8
Agua Caliente Elementary • Ms. Johnson

Flowing Together
Gillian Hamnett, age 12
DeGrazia Elementary • Ms. Mirlocca
It Could Be Beautiful
McKenna Whisenant, age 11
DeGrazia Elementary • Ms. Mirlocca
Present vs. Past

Mindy Dinh, age 10

Basis Tucson North • Mr. McDonald
Desert
Maya De La Torre, age 12
DeGrazia Elementary • Ms. Mirlocca
Brandon Gonzalez, age 16
Flowing Wells High School • Ms. Pechuzal
Grand Prize–Photography–Category 4

Amerie Gaytan, age 14
Maxwell K-8 • Ms. Kiser-Chuc
The Calm After the Storm
Katherine Daily, age 17
Flowing Wells High School • Ms. Pechuzal
Scorpion Shadows
Scorpion shadows have leaves on them
with the far, far stars
that start with dust.

Branches are on trees
and days go by
and we discover mountains
with voices.

Deep twilight streams
spill away into the pond.

Blue tears are here
on a trail of ironwood trees.

Jonas Casad, age 7
Agua Caliente Elementary • Ms. Johnson

Why must we
I wonder why we do
what we do? We destroy, conquer,
but never defend what helps
us live. The one thing that
never forgets, yet we abuse it
and never repay our gratitude.
But there is one group of people
who has to care
Who do payback thanks
They thank the water
Will it be you? ..... 

Monique Cota, age 11
DeGrazia Elementary • Ms. Mirlocca
**The River**

As the river deeply flows  
The deer hesitantly approaches the river.  
The deer then says, “Hello river may I drink from you?”  
The snake then attempts to jump into the river  
But the river flows, quickly flows  
It begins running as the scorpion attempts to jump  
Onto the river bank and drink  
As it notices it, it shakes it off and  
Does not approach the wolf that yells  
“I will drink you!”  
It creeps slowly from the wolf as  
He drinks a part of the river,  
Then faster and flows safely away from the wolf.  
The river boasts, “Indeed no one may drink from me!  
I am life eternally and no one deserves my secret.”  
And the river, as old as time, continues to flow away.

*Anthony Bates, age 12*  
*DeGrazia Elementary • Ms. Mirlocca*

---

**Dream of the Glistening Stream**

The silent, great horned owl,  
windblown across the trees.  

Mountain lions running  
through the sunset.  

The relaxing sound  
of the clear river.  

The coyotes howling  
in the valley.  

The starlight rains  
on the trees.  

The dream of the glistening stream.

*Alex Provenzano, age 8*  
*Agua Caliente Elementary • Ms. Robinson*
The River
The water bubbles while the cricket splashes with joy.

The plant flows with sadness
While the rock rushes with anger.
Then comes a snake skin
Crumbling with fear.
The cricket hops while the
Birds chirp.
The rocks come splashing down
While the snake starts to
Crumble up when he is shedding.
The plants flow while the
Fish bubbles.
Do you think nature is
Nice and quiet?

Tristen Potter, age 11
DeGrazia Elementary • Ms. Mirlocca
**As I Walked By the River**
As I got closer and closer to the river,
I started to notice a sparkle.
A flicker of light so bright.
My eyes falling in love with the water.
I hear the birds chirping a song
when I walk towards the big green trees.
The water running sounds like
 tiptoeing softly on the tip of my ears.
A golden fish splashing out of the waves.
I smell the clean, blue water and trees.
It’s the scent of beautiful, colorful nature.
I fell the bright sun eating down on my golden brown skin.
And I touch the rough texture of the hard, yet smooth rocks.

_Elle Somogyi, age 12_
_DeGrazia Elementary • Ms. Mirlocca_

**In the River the Sunset Happens**
Listen to the hawk in the saguaro.
Underground is the water.
The sound of thunder awakes the wildlife.
The branches of bones are alone,
waiting for it to widen.
In the river the sunset happens.

_Rene Cruz, age 8_
_Agua Caliente Elementary • Ms. Mansour_