



Living River of Words
Youth Poetry and Art Contest



Agave

Mario Reynoso, age 16

Amphitheater High School • Mrs. Hollman

Grand Prize–Art–Category 4

*This book is dedicated to 2015 Living River of Words
Teacher of the Year, Carrie Hollman
from Amphitheater High School and all the teachers and parents or guardians
that promote the integration of science and the arts while creating opportunities
for children to connect with nature.*

Living River of Words 2015 – 2016 Traveling Exhibit Schedule

April 4 – April 17, 2015

Wheeler Taft Abbett Sr. Branch Library • 7800 N. Schisler Dr.

April 20 – May 29, 2015

Joel Valdez Main Library • 101 N. Stone Ave.

June 6 – July 1, 2015

Agua Caliente Park – Ranch House Art Gallery • 12325 E. Roger Rd.

July 4 – August 2, 2015

Dusenberry-River Branch Library • 5605 E. River Rd., # 105

August 5 – September 7, 2015

Murphy-Wilmot Library • 530 N. Wilmot Rd.

September 10 – September 29, 2015

Pima County Juvenile Court • 2225 E. Ajo Way

October Oct 1 – November 2, 2015

Sam Lena-South Tucson Library • 1607 S. Sixth Ave.

November 5, 2015 – January 3, 2016

Martha Cooper Branch Library • 1377 N. Catalina Ave.

January 6 – February 8, 2016

Quincie Douglas Branch Library • 1585 E. 36th St.

February 10 – March 1, 2016

Valencia Branch Library • 202 W. Valencia Rd.

Living River of Words: Youth Arts and Science

Within these pages we celebrate the award winning works of poetry and art by local youth artists. Formally known as Tucson's River of Words, *Living River of Words* introduces children to watersheds and wetland habitats through a multi-disciplinary series of science investigations and the practice of poetry and visual arts.

Living River of Words encourages young people to explore how water moves through the landscape and the connections that plants, animals, and people have to water. 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*.

The Living River Project

Since it began attracting people to the region more than 12,000 years ago, the Santa Cruz River has undergone a series of dramatic changes. Initially a flowing life force teeming with fish, frogs, and other wildlife, the river all but dried up over the last century as groundwater pumping increased along with the human population and its ever-growing demand for water.

Today, however, thanks to the release of effluent — or highly treated wastewater — into the river, certain sections of the Santa Cruz River again flow year-round. This practice is not only re-creating our flowing river heritage, but is also supporting important wildlife habitat and building a valued community amenity. As effluent helped create a thriving river ecosystem along this corridor, the community responded by building numerous river parks and The Loop recreational trail (www.pima.gov/TheLoop) to provide easier access to this river bounty.



Photo: Taelyn Johnson

Effluent in the Lower 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 its largest public works project ever, Pima County recently completed the upgrade of the two wastewater treatment plants. The upgrade significantly improved the quality of water released into the river, a key ingredient for a healthier river. The river now attracts walkers and bikers and is a popular birding destination from the Sweetwater Wetlands to the Marana Flats.

The Living River Project aims to gauge conditions of this valuable ecosystem and track the impacts of our community investment. All Living River reports and associated documents for the Lower Santa Cruz River are available for download on the Sonoran Institute website at www.tiny.cc/lscr.

In 2014, EPA grant funding for the Living River Project allowed for student field trips to the flowing portions of the lower Santa Cruz River. This partnership made possible the expansion of the environmental science, poetry, and art residencies for students to prepare entries to the *Living River of Words: Youth Poetry and Art Contest*.



Photo: Wendy Burroughs

For Tucson area students a morning spent in the shade of mature willow trees on the banks

of a flowing river is a very rare and special experience. While at the river, students conducted water quality tests and surveyed wildlife and riparian vegetation, using methods that mirrored the Living River Project indicator assessments. A visiting poet or artist spent time with the students by the river to guide their journaling and drawing in preparation for poetry writing and artwork back in the classroom.

Living River of Words Honors Youth Poets and Artists

This is the 14th year for this community celebration of water in the desert as part of the national River of Words. Many dedicated teachers brought their classes and individual students on outdoor excursions to learn about watersheds and wetlands habitats close to their schoolyards and neighborhoods. In these pages you will see the award winning youth poetry and art works that are the result of these field trips and school residencies.

Living River of Words (formally Tucson's River of Words) is a regional coordinator providing local support for River of Words. River of Words is a Project of The Center for Environmental Literacy at Saint Mary's College of California. River of Words is its own watershed: a linked network of people throughout the United States and the world who are committed to teaching the art and poetry of place to young people.

Thank You!

Many thanks to the community partners, school administrators, teachers, science, poetry and art instructors, judges, and graphic designers that worked diligently to bring Living River of Words through the 2015 cycle of activities.

Yajaira Gray, Wendy Burroughs, Jeffery Babson, Gavin Troy, Kimi Eisele, Josh Schachter, Carolyn King, Mariana Caballero, Morgana Wallace, Doris Evans, Rebecca Seiferle, David E. Dickerson, Brian Powell, Edie Price, Helen Wilson, Joy Mehulka, and NRPR interns Josue Romero, Arturo Valdenegro, Esperanza Zepeda, and David Veloz.

The Tortoise

The rough brown desert tortoise
Is eating the pink and purple
Flowers before the rain.
He hears thunder...BOOM!
It's sprinkling on the tortoise's shell.
The sprinkling stops and the tortoise
Walks to a puddle.

Shaylyn Pope, age 6
Bloom Elementary • Mrs. Martin
Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 1

Rain Is

Rain is wet and lovely
Rain is cold and blue
Rain is a peaceful treat

Jillian Marsalek, age 7
Mesquite Elementary • Mrs. Collins

Rain in the Desert

Gives both energy and rest.
great tapping refreshing
rest.
As tears drop from the clouds
a voice booms across the desert sky
permitting life to replenish itself
in this aquifer in the air.
Soft, cool,
rest.
An oasis of energy and life.

Maximillian Kassel, age 10
Sam Hughes Elementary • Ms. Chuc

The River

I saw a river it was green and white.
It was cleaning cans and it was bubbling bubbles.
I heard orange footed ducks and black and gray birds.
I felt rough trees, soft sand and the cold river.
That was the coldest thing I ever touched in my whole life.

Natalia Solis, age 9
Ochoa Community Magnet School • Mrs. Selden

Snowy Desert

It is a snowy night in the desert.
The bees buzz on A Mountain
while in Sabino Canyon the coyote drinks from the waterhole
while a Gila monster hunts in the snow that is as white as paper.

The desert tortoise's shell is a rock with a pattern.
A big black bat makes his wings go flap, flap, flap
over the aloe vera that looks as if it is trying to run away.

Near the Grand Canyon a roadrunner runs as fast
as a rattlesnake slithers away from Sedona Creek.

As dawn approaches the anxious animals scurry to their dens.
All the diurnal animals jump up like jackrabbits.

The prairie dog jumps out of his hole and goes to a creek.
The prairie dog gets as wet as a raincoat.

As the snow melts scorpions sulk.
Soon it will be hot and dry again.

Joshua Linneman, age 10
Erickson Elementary • Mrs. Martin

Dark Evening Clouds

Clouds white, the river swift,
sound of walking.
When years of the valley
look clay-brown,
Dark evening clouds
make a river.

Josiah Santamour, age 7
Agua Caliente Elementary • Mrs. Robinson
Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 2

The Dry Canyon

When I went to Sabino Canyon
There were rocks, pebbles, stones and boulders everywhere!
There were many lizards crawling all over the boulders.
They scampered quickly over all sorts of plants!
Cactuses of all kinds, prickly or smooth.
There was a roaring waterfall,
but beside that the rest was very dry.
The waterfall formed a shimmering lake
with little fishes swimming about.
At the top the view was beautiful!
There was a lot of tan, with many greens,
light and dark greens with a bit of blue
that was the waterfall that flowed into the pond.
As I walked toward a cactus, I saw a bird.
The bird was a woodpecker using its beak
to tunnel its way through the saguaro.
Peck, peck, peck...

Abigail Denton, age 9
Bloom Elementary • Mrs. Martin

Bees buzz around cactus flowers,
Butterflies look for water drops,
Rain clouds start to come,
Insects wait for a shower.

Sebastian Alvarez, age 6
Hudlow Elementary • Mrs. Winter

The Perspective of the Santa Cruz River

I come from a long line of rivers from many years ago.
I did not have much of a family
I lived with my Mother the Colorado River.
I got my color from the many different types of rain
And soil I passed through.
When there is a monsoon, I turn darker,
But when it sprinkles, I am lighter.
I have been taking care of nature since
I was trickle of rain run-off.
I have a story for you that tells how I came to be.
I will stop working once I have completed my job,
Bringing water to all living things around me.
One hundred years ago,
My life was part of a different water cycle,
So I gave water for different uses to the people back then.
I love my job and will never stop doing it
Until my bed gets dried up and all sandy.
Then hopefully I will still come back here
To the desert where water is so important.
Take care of me as I take care of you,
My friends...all living beings.

Zaxarie Silva, age 9
Ochoa Community Magnet School • Mrs. Elvick-Mejia

A River's Journey

Where have you been, River?
I came from the sky...
I fell into the mountain.
I dripped down. I got trapped.
I became a watershed.
Somehow, I escaped.
I kept searching for my family – the ocean.
Then, one day it was time to evaporate.
I floated up and turned into a white, fluffy cloud.
I couldn't hold on; let go of the sky.
I fell and hit the ground HARD!
I was everywhere...
Awhile later, I found my brother.
He also went through what I had.
In an instant, he began his ascent
Up into the sky as water vapor he went.
I haven't seen him since.
I ended up here, in this river.
Still searching for my family
An endless journey.
Hopefully, I will find them...
Maybe soon!

Jose Licea, age 10
Ochoa Community Magnet School • Mrs. Elvick-Mejia
Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 3

Giving

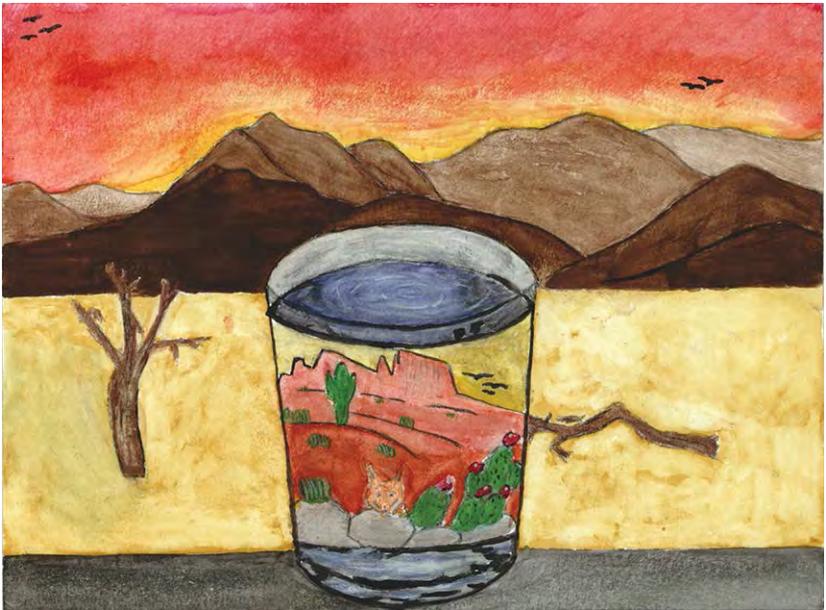
The lake
gives a cool drink
to an owl
on a moonlit night in the
canyon.

Kyla Boxley, age 6
Mesquite Elementary • Mrs. Collins



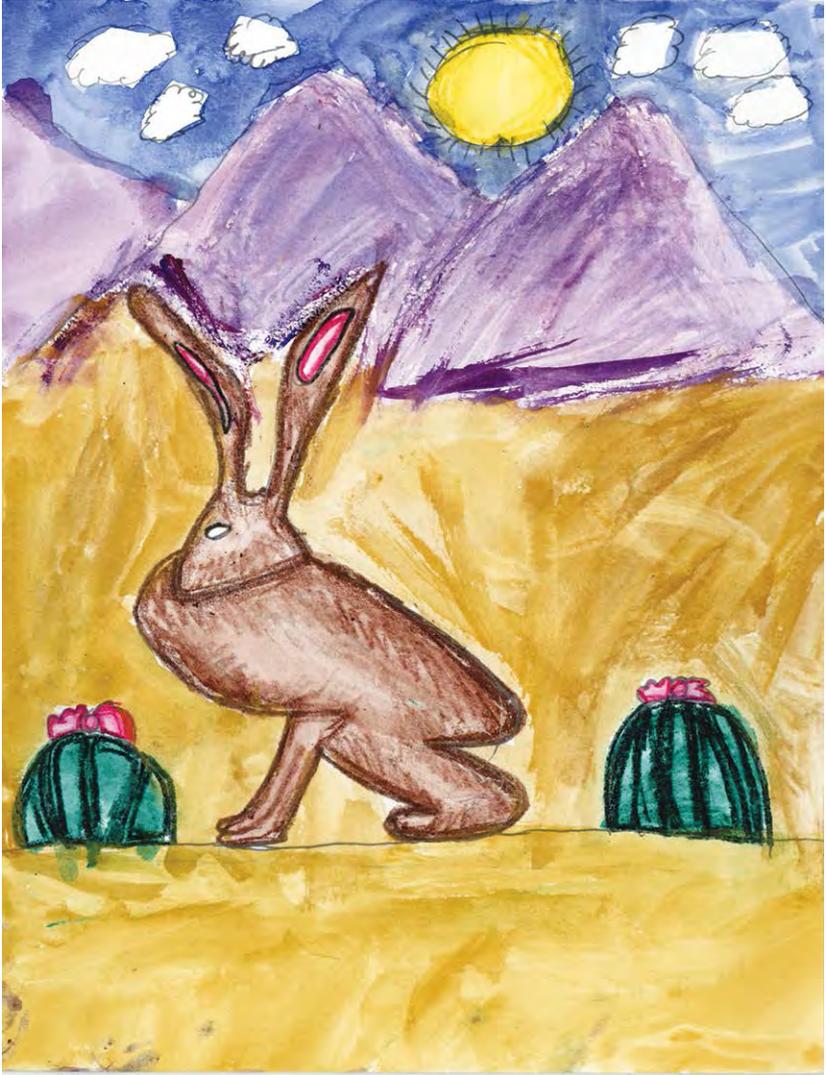
Desert Rain

Marina Vujassinović, age 7
Sam Hughes Elementary • Ms. Chuc
Grand Prize–Art–Category 1



The View with Water

Jesus Landy, age 19
Amphitheater High School • Mrs. Hollman



Bunny in the Desert
Celeste V. Padilla, age 9
Presidio School • Mrs. Cohn



Hummingbird

Clara Compton, age 10

Mesquite Elementary • Mrs. Collins



Rain in the Desert

Ayanna Ponder, age 9

Sam Hughes Elementary • Ms. Chuc



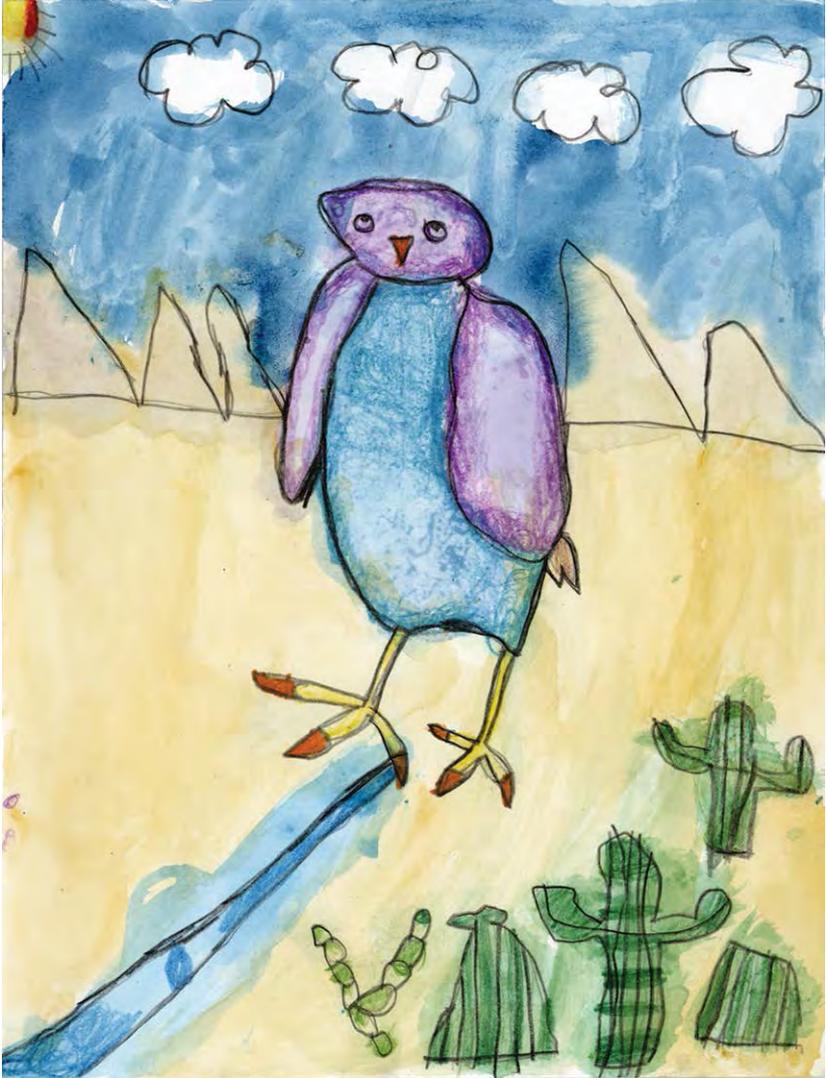
Rain from My Backyard

Abigail Trouard, age 9
Sam Hughes Elementary • Ms. Chuc
Grand Prize–Art–Category 3



The Desert

Andrew Schalk, age 8
Agua Caliente Elementary • Mrs. Robinson



Owl Wonderland
Tatiana Berley, age 8
Presidio School • Mrs. Powers



Ringtail on a Cactus
Aubriella Sherman, age 5
Sewell Elementary • Ms. Aho



Sophia Galaz, age 11
Miles ELC. • Mrs. Chapman



Stop Littering
Jacob Molina, age 10
Basis Tucson • Ms. Vonier



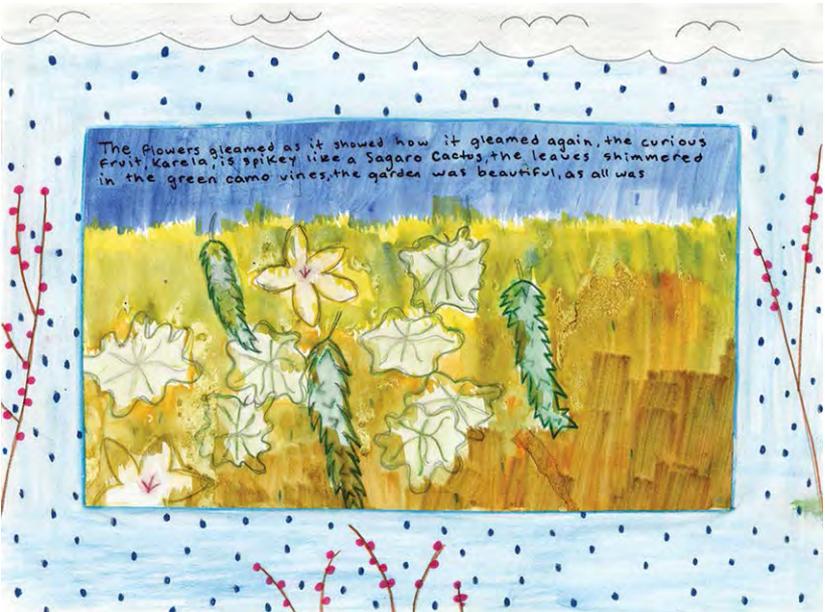
Stop Littering
Kai Rendon, age 8
Miles ELC. • Ms. Chapman



Violet Silverleaf Flower

Olivia Palomino, age 9

Ochoa Community Magnet School • Mrs. Selden



The flowers gleamed as it showed how it gleamed again, the curious fruit, Karela, is spiky like a Sagaro Cactus, the leaves shimmered in the green camo vines, the garden was beautiful, as all was

The Sounds of the Rainfall

Alexia Arzate, age 10

Basis Tucson • Ms. Vonier



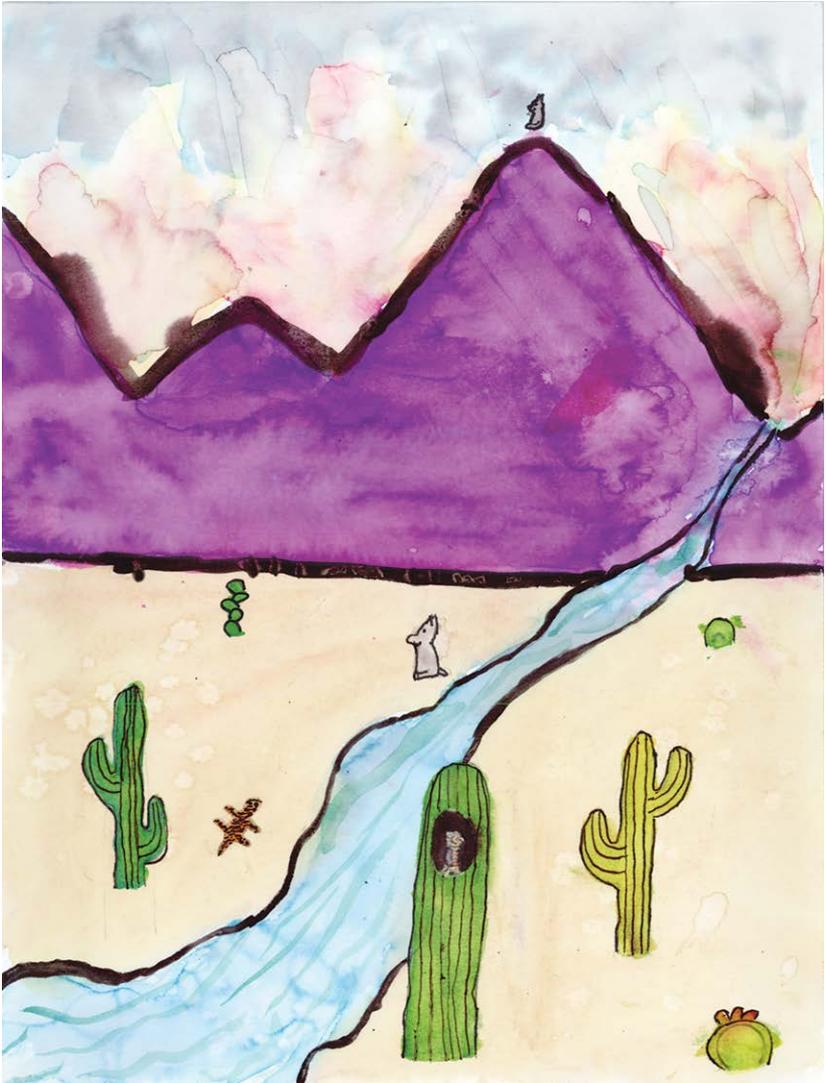
The Grandest of Canyon's Beauty

*Kristin Jung, age 10
Basis Tucson • Ms. Vonier*



Javalina

*Xochitl Villanueva, age 9
Ochoa Community Magnet School • Mrs. Selden*



Purple Mountain Galore!

*Anna Carr, age 11
Miles ELC. • Mrs. Isaacson*



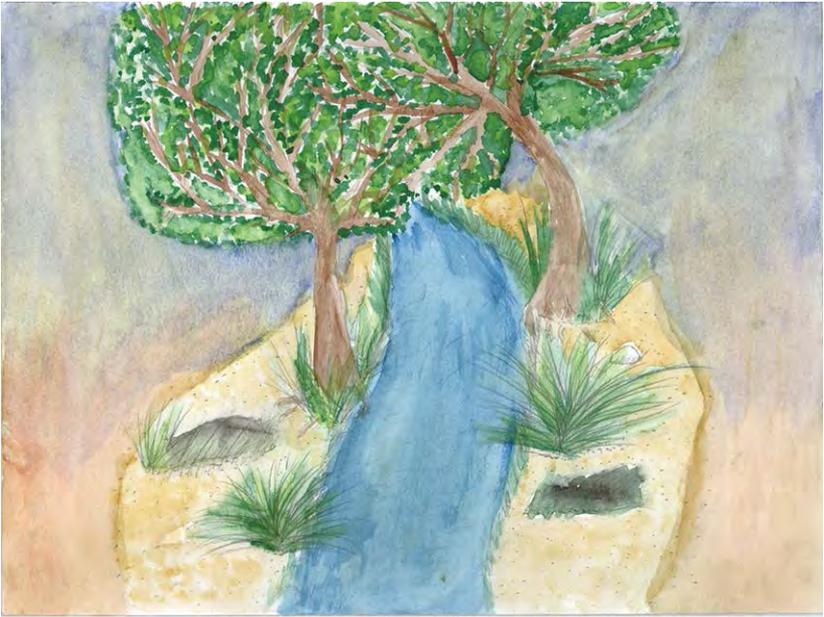
Green Tree

*Simone Gomez, age 11
Basis Tucson • Ms. Vonier*



Lizard by the Water

*Anisa Maximo-Glauner, age 8
Presidio School • Mrs. Cohn*



Summer Land

Carmen Reyes, age 16

Amphitheater High School • Mrs. Hollman



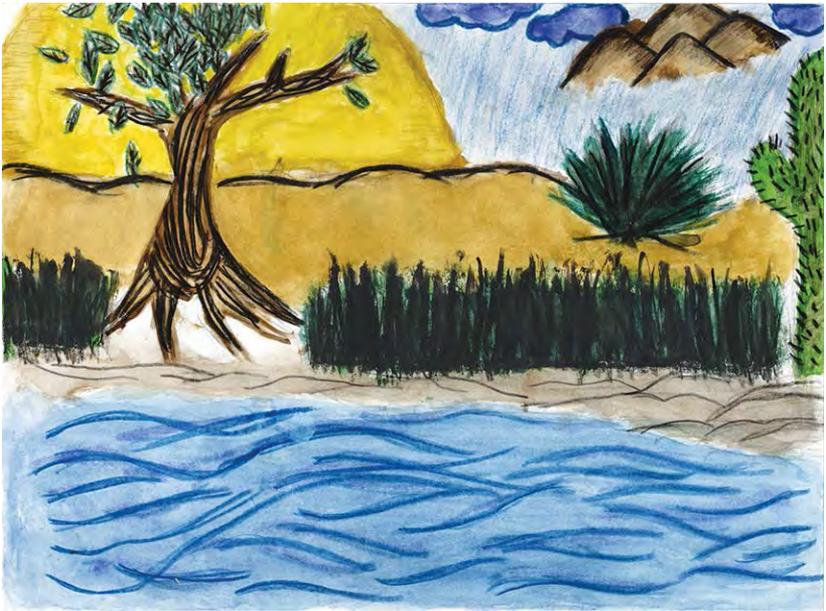
Rain in the Desert

Eizel Oliva, age 7

Grijalva Elementary • Ms. Chuc



Ava Hudson, age 10
Satori Charter School • Mrs. Dudas



Earth

Carolyn Germen, age 17
Amphitheater High School • Mrs. Hollman



Rainbow

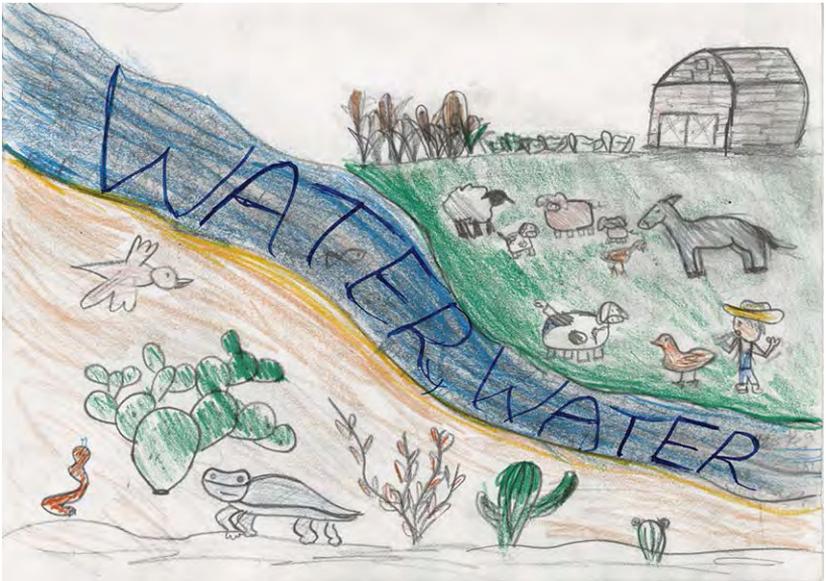
Marina LaFoley, age 8
Agua Caliente Elementary • Mrs. Johnson



Desert Breakfast

Sienna Cortez, age 8

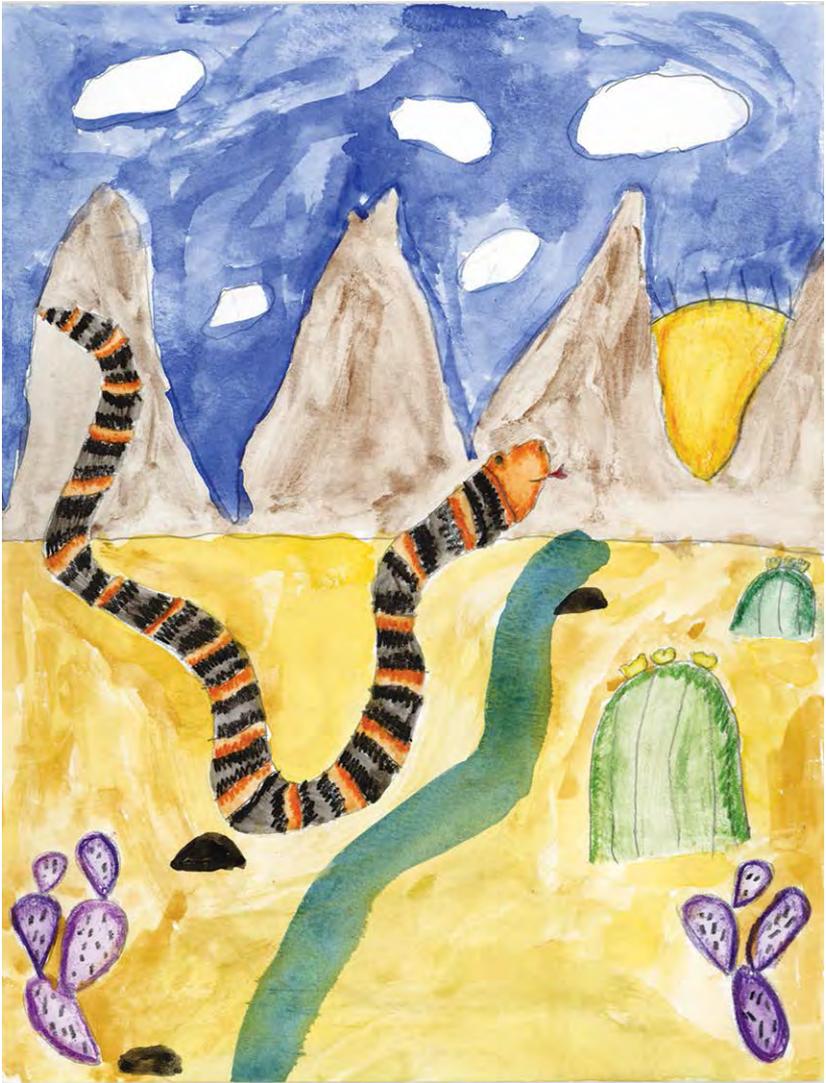
Pima County Ellie Towne Flowing Wells Community Center • Mr. Troy



Water, Water

Sonora Cumberworth, age 10

Basis Tucson • Ms. Vonier



A Snake in the Sun
Clara Rocha, age 8
Presidio School • Mrs. Cohn
Grand Prize–Art–Category 2



Desert Night

Jack Miles, age 10

Satori Charter School • Mrs. Dudas



Taelyn Johnson, age 11
DeGrazia Elementary • Mrs. Minninger
Grand Prize–Photography–Category 3



MacKenzie Powers, age 11
DeGrazia Elementary • Mr. Mayer



Brandon Paredes, age 11
DeGrazia Elementary • Mrs. Minninger



Nature
Israel Garcia, age 12
DeGrazia Elementary • Mrs. Powers



*Hayden Parson, age 12
DeGrazia Elementary • Mrs. Minninger*

Rain in the Desert

Rain in the desert,
Bringing redolence of sage green creosote,
Bringing grace and beauty, rain will enhance the desert,
Pronghorns drink from the puddles of sweet desert rain,
Majestic desert rain is the core of life,
Rain, clear and blue brings showers of beauty,
It will shroud the desert with green colors of life,
Cloud burst will bring joy and happiness,
Calm emotions will come with drizzling rain,
As the world is being painted green,
Rain brings life to the desert.

*George Parra, age 11
Sam Hughes Elementary • Ms. Chuc*

The Hawk

So much depends upon the river.
The hawk swoops to get a drink.
The river splashes when the hawk lands.
Then he flies to a tree to look for food.
He went to get it.
He eats it.

Jesus Camacho, age 9
Ochoa Community Magnet School • Mrs. Selden

Desert Rain

Noiseless drizzles, stomping showers
Cooling, refreshing, skidding rain
In the fresh and foggy air
The peaceful birds take cover
And the playful coyotes entertain
The cactus flower blooms
With nothing in its way,
It's delicate pleasant
Rain

Madeline G. Riccitello, age 11
Sam Hughes Elementary • Ms. Chuc

Dark Universe

Lonely pool in the slow night, surfaces.
Dark universe is in the night sky.
Rain gives the desert
swift oceans of rain.

Cade Young, age 7
Agua Caliente Elementary • Mrs. Robinson

The River Flows

The wind blows at the river.
The plants dance in the wind
The clean water gives them life,
As they drink they get refreshed,
The sand on the shore soaks up the water,
Some wet some dry.
Rocks in the river are smooth,
From the water's flow
The rocks fall into the water
Clickity-clack goes the river.
All the animals depend on the
drinkable water,
The birds find shelter on the banks
of the peaceful water
While they twitter a beautiful harmony.
The river gives strength to all the animals
and plants,
We all depend on the river for hydration,
shelter and harmony.

Steven Duarte, age 10
Ochoa Community Magnet School • Mrs. Elvick-Mejia

The Soft Long Rivers

Wide streams forever spread at night.
Monsoon river dark at night.
Soft long grass wide as stream
Dark forever streams spread at night.
Years spread long rivers wide at night.
Soft long streams spread at night.

Richard Knott, age 7
Agua Caliente Elementary • Mrs. Baker

Smooth River

Look faraway between dust.
Universe time,
the wind sounds new.
Smooth river speaks
when the rain stops.

Dylan Lewis, age 8
Agua Caliente Elementary • Mrs. Baker

I Am The River

I am the river wise and old,
I have heard stories that are rarely told,
I am the river young and new,
I see even now as I talk to you,
I am the river not a water sprite,
I write and write very long into the night,
I am the river massaged by leaves and rocks,
I do not care about watches or clocks,
I am the river flowing to the ocean,
Where animals live and play in me as waves keep me in motion,
I am the river home of the animals around me,
One is a little fish who could not survive without me,
I am the river I do feel pain and sadness,
When animals hunt from me I don't feel gladness,
I am the river replenished with re-used water,
Still I am clean enough to house an otter.

Aidan Frye, age 10
Satori Charter School • Mrs. Dudas

Rain in the Desert

The rain pours down, spanning far and wide.
This is rain in the desert, feels like a miracle,
a booming voice of nature erupts,
through the sky like ripples in the water,
the rhythmic pitter-patter of raindrops
like music for a dance,
wishing this would never end,
but then
a crackle of white hot roots of light stakes its claim,
rain comes down to a drizzle and stops as if the
lightning scared the rain away,
my eyes well up as if to beckon the rain to come back,
to reality I return,
breaking my heart.

Maxwell Smith, age 11
Sam Hughes Elementary • Ms. Chuc

The Elf Owl

The speckled elf owl
gathers its food.
Then searches for
the saguaro cactus
it has made its nest in
before the rain.

Zachary Denton, age 7
Bloom Elementary • Mrs. Martin

Life in the Desert

I see red-tailed hawks, hummingbirds too,
with ducks swimming in that beautiful river.
I see that whirlpool spinning and that bamboo bending.

Aiden Gipson, age 8
Miles, ELC • Mrs. Isaacson

A New Life...

During a rainstorm at Sabino Canyon,
the clouds are dark and puffy.
The rain shoots down from the musty sky,
making the world look wet and muddy.
The barrel cactus eagerly soaks up all that it deserves.
The Gila monster slithers around trying to find
some place that will be his protection from the rain.
He tries to slide under a piece of saguaro rib,
But it drops water on his bumpy skin.
Finally, he finds a nice, big rock just the right size
for him to have a nice cozy nap.
He is better under his rock than outside.
The downpour starts flooding the canyon,
the mud is very thick.
Many creeks and streams are above the usual level.
But this is good for Arizona, and when the rain finally stops,
The world will be fresh and new,
with lots of new life that it brings.

Haeleigh Chipman, age 10
Bloom Elementary • Mrs. Martin

Rain in the Desert

Desert drizzle
Flashing rainstorm
Dripping drops
Flood
Muddy
Rain

Leo E. Ravia, age 8
Sam Hughes Elementary • Ms. Chuc

Desert Rain

Drizzles pour
Falling, soaking, freezing
cool graceful
Rain

Marina Vujasinović, age 7
Sam Hughes Elementary • Ms. Chuc

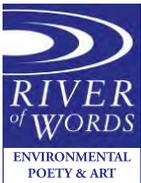
The Storm in the Desert

It was a pleasant morning
for the happy jackrabbits
who were resting joyfully
under the palo verde tree.
Out came the giant spider
in the Sonoran Desert
trying to find some food
before the terrible flood.
As the sky grew darker
above the wildflowers
splish, splash, splish, splash
the water washed away the ringtail cat.
The angry mountain lion
roared after the storm
'cause it was hungry
for a nice juicy coyote.
All the desert animals
love the sparkling drizzle
now Mount Lemmon
was covered with rain drops...

Wenli Xu, age 10
Sewell Elementary • Mrs. Martin



**For more information contact: Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation
Environmental Education
Phone: (520) 615-7855 • Email: eeducation@pima.gov • Website: www.pima.gov/nrpr**



Shaping the Future of the West
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