The Water Hole
Nathan Fisher, age 6
Roadrunner Elementary – Ms. Carroll
Grand Prize–Art–Category 1
This book is dedicated to 2018 Living River of Words Teachers of the Year:
Valerie Selden – Ochoa Elementary School
and
Marea Jenness – Tucson High 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 2018 – 2019 Traveling Exhibit Schedule

April 7 – May 13, 2018
Wheeler Taft Abbett Sr. Branch Library • 7800 N. Schisler Dr.

May 15 – June 14, 2018
Martha Cooper Branch Library • 1377 N. Catalina Ave.

June 16 – July 23, 2018
Murphy-Wilmot Branch Library • 530 N. Wilmot Rd.

July 26 – August 22, 2018
Agua Caliente Park – Ranch House Art Gallery • 12325 E. Roger Rd.

August 25 – September 27, 2018
Dusenberry-River Branch Library • 5605 E. River Rd., #105

October 2 – October 30, 2018
Mission Branch Library • 3770 S. Mission Rd.

November 2 – December 2, 2018
Quincie Douglas Branch Library • 1585 E. 36th St.

December 4 – December 30, 2018
Joel Valdez Main Library • 101 N. Stone Ave.

January 3 – February 14, 2019
Valencia Branch Library • 202 W. Valencia Rd.
Living River of Words: Youth Arts and Science

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 water cycle, Santa Cruz river watershed, and study wetland habitats through a multidisciplinary 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. 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 Rios 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, Agua Caliente Park, and other wetland habitats in Pima County. While at the field study site, students conduct water quality tests, record wildlife sightings, study aquatic macroinvertebrates, and make vegetation observations, 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. The ever-expanding reach of LROW is promoted through a partnership with Arizona Project Wet during the annual Living River Academy where teachers are introduced to LROW and explore science education opportunities along the Santa Cruz River.

We hope you will enjoy the richness and wonder of these special places through the eyes of the Living River of Words 2018 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 Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation, Pima County Public Library, Friends of Agua Caliente Park, Arizona Project Wet, Udall Foundation: Parks in Focus, The University of Arizona Poetry Center, 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, Axhel Muñoz, Marsha Colbert, Neil Diamente, Doris Evans, Elizabeth Quinn, Cristina Cardenas, Jeanne Osgood, Mariana Caballero, Louis S. Shanley, Edie Price, Helen Wilson, Noemi Zazueta, Brenda Rentfro, Susan Knoll, Brian Powell, Bret Muter, Kerry Schwartz, Elizabeth Wilkening, Tony Luebbermann, and Tyler Meier.
The Catfish
I dreamed I was a catfish
Swimming in the river with
My shiny scales
And my spiky tail
I rise with the sun
You can see me shine

Joaquin Patricio Corella, age 8
Ochoa Elementary – Mrs. Peralta
Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 2

From a Seed to a Cactus
On a hot, dry day in the desert
A beautiful red fruit drops from a
green, spiky saguaro cactus.
It slowly opens on the dry desert floor.
Two thousand black seeds fall out.
Wind and rain comes.
Months, years, and weeks come,
and there is a beautiful cactus
waiting to be seen.

Georgina Valenzuela, age 9
Borton Magnet School – Mrs. Bennett

Rain and Animals
Rain is a flowing river
Right up in the sky
As you hear a snake slither
As you see a bird fly

Alex Palma, age 10
Mesquite Elementary – Mrs. Knox and Mrs. Mortensen
*The Reflection of the River*

The quiet light floats through the wind as if it could go through the walls of the earth.

Dreaming spirits whispers blowing together.

Friends run along a starlit path through the trees.

The sparkling stones fall calling their names.

The reflection of the river water running, seems to be making a clean long path.

The clouds still white in the peaceful desert.

If you listen closely, you can hear the wind saying, believe!

*Noemi Celani, age 7*

*Agua Caliente Elementary – Mrs. Robinson*

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*Tomorrow is Today*

Tomorrow is today
And the words floating in the river
And the leaves floating in the sky
And the fish are like rocks in the river
And the spiders walking in the sun
The sky is purple at night
Blue in the day
And butterflies are flying
And birds are sleeping in their nests
Clouds like cotton candy in the sky

*Lucas Aldeguer-Saenz, age 9*

*Independent entry*
One Life
You have a chance
To change the world.

One world includes,
Love—it’s perfect in the world
Imagination—it makes you
Hopeful when you are sad.
Kindness—it lets friendship
Into your heart.

An even better world awaits,
Where magic has love in its heart.
Friendship, brings you happiness.
Love in your heart, gives you a chance.

Friendship brings life to even the driest
Desert like water, it gives us life.

Brenna Yonkman, age 10
Borton Magnet School – Mrs. Bennett
Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 3

Storm in the Desert
Water flowing
Trees blowing
Rushing waters
Rush rush rush
Lightning striking
Thunder booming
Boom boom boom
Sun comes out
The storm is done
Peaceful desert

Kyla Boxley, age 9
Mesquite Elementary – Mrs. Knox and Mrs. Mortensen
The Beauty of the Water

The sun hits the water and reflects gold light.
Wisdom of the water flows around me.
The river inspired me because the gold metallic green combined together.
A river is like millions of hummingbirds flying around the beauty of the river.
If a bird is flying they would see the beautiful sight of brightness.
When it’s nighttime the moonlight hits the river.
You can see black and white glowing.
The afternoon is when the purple mountains come alive and the river turns orange, green and red shininess.
When waves come water splashes the dark and light blue river is in the sky.
When flowers grow right next to the river the flowers would be rainbow colors.
The river is like a rainbow.
So many colors I can’t even describe it.
The weather is cold like the water because I feel like all of the water is on me.

Natalie Vega, age 8
Ochoa Elementary – Miss Selden

Water Fun

A saw a hawk fly over as I lay on a rock.
I was soaked from the stream.
I lay there looking at the green bushes around me, remembering the feel of the nice cold water as it crashes around my legs.
I see birds eating berries, and wonder how they taste.

Aiden Rooney, age 9
DeGrazia Elementary – Mrs. Mirlocca
**Rain**

Water drops to the ground  
It makes a splash  
It makes me happy  
Happy animals get a drink too  
Water gives a mountain life  
It gives life to everything  
Water is my hero

*Sloane Black, age 6*  
*Mesquite Elementary – Mrs. Knox and Mrs. Mortensen*  
*Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 1*

**Empty Trust of Endless Wild Ocean**

Moonlight belongs in the swirl of stars,  
waterfall in the sunrise,  
the ocean of crystals  
where the diamonds shine  
in the rainbow  

Wild path of sandy shadows  
in the shining desert,  
the empty trust  
of the endless breeze.  

In the pure dust between life,  
the sign in the sky  
is an answer.

*Ella Knuese, age 8*  
*Agua Caliente Elementary – Mrs. Mansour*
Almost Heaven

Snow shimmering in the sunlight
Footprints trailing in the delicate powder
As I step into the inner dome of the cave
Heaps of icicles hang
Almost like it’s heaven
It burns when the cold tickles my face
I watch little horses gallop from my breath
Their hooves beat against the withered flowers
I know winter is here
I dream of what it’s going to look like in the spring
The flowers return
A new generation of life is born
My eyes perceive crumbs of crystals
conquering the ground
I will never forget the beautiful cove
of glass sculptures
Almost like it’s heaven

Abigail Rose Wann, age 13
Agua Caliente Elementary – Mrs. Castro

Rain

Cold as snow
Old as time
Lighter than sun
Roars like thunder
Air like waves
In the desert
Water rain sun

Frank Andriopoulos, age 8
Mesquite Elementary – Mrs. Knox and Mrs. Mortensen
River Song

I walked by the stream and could see fish in the water. Birds chirped happily. Lily pads floated on the water, waiting to be dunked by a frog. The bees are buzzing, creating a humming song. The birds join in the lullaby, as the trees sway in the breeze. I can feel the humidity as I approach the water. There’s a sweet vanilla scent from the flowers that just bloomed. The hot sun burns my skin as it shines down on me. My palms are sweaty, and there is a salty taste on my lips. My mouth is dry, but my feet are wet.

Alana Torres, age 10
DeGrazia Elementary – Mrs. Mirlocca
Rain Drops from Sky
Alana Torres, age 10
DeGrazia Elementary – Mrs. Mirlocca

Eliza Smith, age 15
Tucson High School – Ms. Jenness
Grand Prize–Art–Category 4
The Living River
Dana Paola Gamez, age 9
Walter Douglas Elementary – Ms. Powers
Andrea Sampson, age 15
Tucson High School – Ms. Jenness
The Moonlight
Audree Jenshak, age 8
Agua Caliente Elementary – Ms. McKinney

Relaxation
Evelyn Grace Brandon, age 8
DeGrazia Elementary – Mrs. Mirlocca
Life or Desert
Annabelle Pizzi, age 8
Walter Douglas Elementary – Ms. Powers

Rocky Island
Trent Alexander, age 8
Agua Caliente Elementary – Ms. Mansour
Delilah McPherson, age 6
Sewell Elementary – Ms. Payton

Juan Cardenas, age 14
Flowing Wells High School – Ms. Pechuzal
Eyvindr Leavenworth, age 10
Hendricks Elementary – Ms. Slingerland

Desert Perspective
Isabella Milan Valdez, age 10
DeGrazia Elementary – Mrs. Mirlocca
Kestrel Weyant, age 14
Tucson High School – Ms. Jenness
Daytime
Isabel Madero, age 7
Roadrunner Elementary – Ms. Gary
Waterland
Sean Mergenthaler, age 7
Agua Caliente Elementary – Ms. Mansour
Grand Prize – Art – Category 2

The Dragonfly
Eva Fregoso, age 8
Walter Douglas Elementary – Ms. Powers
Desert Blossoms After Rain
Maryanne Allen, age 10
Mesquite Elementary – Mrs. Knox and Ms. Mortensen
Grand Prize—Art—Category 3

Desert Sunset
Regina Mei Guinanao, age 8
Agua Caliente Elementary – Ms. McKinney
**Artist**

Omar Kardouf, age 6

*Sewell Elementary – Ms. Dolan*
Vermillion Flycatcher

Riley Egan, age 12
St. Michaels School – Mr. Haves
Warm and Cold
Saul Moreno, age 11
Independent – Valencia Library

Jayden Velez, age 9
Walter Douglas Elementary – Ms. Powers
Sydney Knoll-Grass, age 15
Tucson High School – Ms. Jenness
Fox in the Desert
Taylor Dull, age 7
Roadrunner Elementary – Ms. Carroll

Wyatt Nickell, age 12
DeGrazia Elementary – Mr. Hart
Grand Prize–Photography–Category 3
Bella Ho, age 12
DeGrazia Elementary – Mr. Hart

Kamiryn Ward, age 12
DeGrazia Elementary – Ms. Bushe
Mario Gonzalez, age 11
DeGrazia Elementary – Ms. Bushe

Vincent Lujan, age 11
DeGrazia Elementary – Mr. Mayer
Dirty Water

think of a body of water
this is a strange request,
but trust me, do it
I bet you thought of the beautiful,
flowing falls of Niagara
or sailing the seven seas
mysteries, never solved of sailors down deep
but when I think of a “Body” of water,
I don’t think of something natural
I think of contaminated life that has been
stored in restoration plants
I think of the lies and secrets that are hidden within the murky streams
all the things we think we can wash away with liquid and soap
but water is clear,
it cannot keep secrets,
it will always show what you have done
the Arizona water can tell you stories
of crime and terror,
but you need it to stay alive
that is why it is your enemy and your friend

Alexandra Knope, age 11
The Gregory School – Mrs. Cain
Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 4

I Love Trees

A tree is like my grandpa
drying leaves, bent over
limbs in the winter of
his life deep thoughts
and roots.

Jocelyn R. Sepulveda-Cocio, age 9
Presidio School – Mrs. Nelson
Hear the Noise of Nature

Hear the bobcat feasting
Hear the wildcat hunting for food
Listen to the soft sounds of the river
Listen to the dragonfly zoom past you
Hear the javelina eating a cactus
Listen to the wind blowing past you
Smell the grass on the ground
Feel the sand through your fingers
Feel the grass tickle your legs
And smell the flowers blooming

Luis A. Linares Jr., age 8
Borton Magnet School – Mrs. Edelman

Water in the Desert

The sky is overcast
A sea of gray
Distorted reflections of diving ducks
Are visible on the dark pond
Turtles turn in the turbid water
Searching and scanning for food
Outside of the water
Butterflies and birds fly in a rainbow of colors
I am happily hoping
For the rare sight of desert rain
Then the dull sky clears up
To reveal the bright sun
Yellow light washes over Agua Caliente
As an artist washes paper with watercolors
Turtles drowsily climb out the water
To bask in the sun’s warm rays

Riley Egan, age 12
St. Michael’s School – Mr. Hawes
A Tree is Like
A tree is like a shelter,
It provides home for animals.
A tree is like a home,
As it is safe and firm.
It holds many animals.
Think you can name some?

Chelsea Bolding, age 8
Presidio School – Mrs. Aliperti

Senses of Beauty
I see
Stripes playing tag around me
I feel
As if I should kneel to its majesty
I smell
The ripeness of the city of creosote after the bestow of the clouds
I taste
The juiciest of the prickly fruit
I hear
The clouds talking with each other o so near
I think
I am with the wildest things at the end of who gave as life
I love
The powerful wings of the Inca dove
I am aware
Of the hare that comes to my knees

Bryce Drummond, age 11
Agua Caliente Elementary – Mrs. Anderson
I Enjoy the River

I can almost taste the sweet smell
of the flowers in the air,
and the sour juice from
the berry on my tongue.

A small fish darts
as if playing in
the water as it swims by.

I hear the frog croak
and the birds chirp.

I see a purple flower blossom
drift by in the wind,
and I feel soft leaves blowing
against my face as
I walk through the tangle of trees.

There is soft sand under my feet
as I enjoy the river.

Paisley Gardner, age 8
DeGrazia Elementary – Mrs. Mirlocca

The Stars Powder

I dreamt I was an elf owl
Under the night sky
Breathing in the dust
That the stars gave me
A white powder dancing away
Carried out of my lungs
Through the air
Fallen on warm sand underneath
Broken by the steps of my tiny friends
Taken in and breathed again

Kaitlyn Garber, age 14
Flowing Wells High School – Ms. Pechuzal
**Crystal Rivers**

Crystal rivers in the desert,  
the diamonds are rainbow.  
The rain flows in the streams.  
I walk on the sandy path by the stream,  
moonlight shadows through the trees,  
tiny waterfall.  
I can see stars in my dreams,  
in the water find open leaves,  
imagine a bright ending.  

*Emma Miller, age 8  
Agua Caliente Elementary – Mrs. McKinney*

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**The River of Words**

Take heed as you stand among the reeds  
Your mind may get lost in the Waters of Thought  
The water lays still, until an idea sparks  
Sending a ripple  
Feel the wind hugging your cheek  
Embracing it in the cloak of nature’s welcome  
Sit down by the River of Words  
Sit down and think  
Then write some poetry  

*Alyssa Thompson, age 11  
Agua Caliente Elementary – Mrs. Johnson*
**Sonoran Song**

Scared saguaros stand like statues of the honored
Monstrous mountains above all
with beauty like towers
Peregrines dashing in the sky like runners racing
Delicate doves fly like graceful floating flowers

Gila monster crawl on the floor with poison in their saliva
But beauty in their presence
Rattling snakes slithering on the desert floor
Flowers blooming on ocotillos glowing from the harsh sun’s beat
Red-tail hawks spread their wings and they soar

Arizona’s arid climate
Leaves little to change
But when different
There’s something so beautiful
and gloriously strange

Rain like dewdrops of sugar and water
The petrichor, sweet and like no other
The smell wraps you in love and joy
As if being held by your mother

*Chloe Pesqueira, age 13*
*St. Michael’s School – Mr. Hawes*

**Mt. Lemmon**

As I walked by the lake on Mt. Lemmon,
I saw fish leaping – creating an arch of water.
There was a small waterfall making noise
along with the croaking frog.
The air smelled sweet like marshmallows
from the campfire nearby.

*Abbey Engebretson, age 9*
*DeGrazia Elementary – Mrs. Mirlocca*
For more information about Living River of Words: Youth Arts and Science contact:
Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation
Environmental Education
Phone: (520) 724-5375
Email: eeducation@pima.gov
Website: www.pima.gov/nrpr

Photo: Allie Lopez, DeGrazia Elementary

Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation
Regional Flood Control District
Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department
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