

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE:

PIPE PROTECTORS IN ACTION

Small groups of 4th- and 5th-grade students huddle around a magnetic stirring machine. On top is a beaker filled halfway with water plus either sugar, salt, or baking soda. The students gaze intently at the beaker as they turn on the machine. A tiny whirlwind of water forms inside the glass as the contents spin around. “We spun it for a long time. Is the stuff supposed to disappear?”

These are the sights and sounds at Gregory Gardens Elementary in Pleasant Hill. For a week in January, we set up shop to teach every class at the school about our sewer system and how it functions. Central San has been offering programs to schools in our service area for over 20 years. The Gregory Gardens students participated in our newest program, called Pipe Protectors.

“The activity was perfect for first graders. Hands-on activities are fantastic and keep their attention all while learning.”

– Teacher, Gregory Gardens Elementary, Pleasant Hill

Just like Central San chemists do every day, the 4th- and 5th-grade students at Gregory Gardens explored the hands-on chemistry of wastewater. Students rotated around the classroom, engaged in different activity stations designed to help them consider evidence that the stuff we put in our water does not disappear.

Meanwhile, 1st and 2nd graders made their own kitchen wastewater to foster a closer examination of how solids behave when submerged. The youngest students explored our classroom-ready toilets. These small toilets have clear pipes, enabling students to see what happens after they flush.

By exploring what happens to their dirty water after it goes down the drain, students in every grade come away with a greater appreciation for the system they—and all of us—use every day.

Central San is focused on the future. Every person in our service area is our customer, regardless of age. Our youngest students of today will be the stewards of tomorrow. By reaching them early and often throughout their educational career, we are helping them learn that the stuff we put in our water (and down our drains) does not disappear. Knowing this, they can help us protect the reliability of our system and the health of our local waterways for generations to come.

“You should NOT put butter down the drain. Look at it. It will definitely get stuck!” – 2nd Grade Student



“Watching students engage with peers around science and experiments was a true highlight for me. Science can often be intimidating for children and adults but our amazing Central San teachers made it fun and easy for everyone. I especially loved the critical thinking, deep conversations, and giggles that happened in every session.”

– Katie Koontz, Principal of Gregory Gardens Elementary, Pleasant Hill



If you would like to bring our education programs to your elementary school, please contact Ben Lavender: (925) 335-7723 or blavender@centralsan.org, or visit: centralsan.org/learn

