



Photo/submitted
Tim Blagsvedt (left), ribbon cutting for Spray Ground at Clayton-LaSalle Park.

United Water delivers more than clean water for Indianapolis

United Water's partnership with Indianapolis began in 1994 when the company won the contract to provide wastewater treatment for the city. Over the years that partnership has delivered far more than clean water.

"Our role is to ensure that the water we put back into the White River is as clean and generally cleaner than when it was taken out by the water company," explains United Water Project Manager Tim Blagsvedt. "Our responsibility is to make sure public health and safety are protected and that we return the cleanest water possible so those downstream can use it just like we did."



Blagsvedt

"That's our day job," he adds, noting that United Water also provides significant support for educational and environmental initiatives.

One of the most enduring programs is its commitment to Arlington High School through its Adopt-A-



School Program. The year-round initiative provides students mentoring, job shadowing and summer internships. After graduating, interns who successfully complete the program receive a scholarship to their school of choice. Some are offered permanent employment at United Water.

"It's more than an internship program," Blagsvedt says. "It's a mentoring program where we partner employees with high school students in a one-on-one relationship. They work for eight weeks during the summer with one of our employees, sharing not only work responsibilities but also life experiences and general mentoring relationships. We are in the school throughout the year, checking on kids' grades, on how they're doing, on college and career plans. Our goal

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is to be not only a springboard for those students to continue on to college and in life, but also as leaders to demonstrate to the rest of the student population what opportunities are out there if you work hard and do the right thing.

To support environmentally friendly infrastructure projects, United Water, in partnership with the Mayor's Office of Sustainability, has established the Green Infrastructure Matching Grant Program. These grants support non-profit organizations committed to developing or redeveloping environmental infrastructure projects, including the installation of green roofs, porous pavement, pocket wetlands and rain barrels.

Indianapolis Parks Department programs include a grant to create

a Water Education Trailer (WET), and \$875,000 to the Spray Grounds initiative. The WET depicts the natural habitats of Indiana to educate the public about the importance of protecting water resources. It targets pre-K through 5th grade and has reached more than 40,000 people annually.

Under the Spray Grounds initiative, United Water is helping fund five Spray Grounds throughout the city, a low-cost, low-maintenance safer form of entertainment.

United Water will continue its role after the anticipated transfer of the city's water and wastewater systems to Citizens Energy Group. "Our contract remains whole and transitions from the city of Indianapolis to Citizens Energy Group," says Blagsvedt. "In effect, we will no longer be working for the city of Indianapolis, but for Citizens Energy in the same capacity."

"United Water is an environmental company," he concludes. "It's important for us to give back to the communities we live and work in, especially from an educational and environmental perspective."