

You, Me, and the River Makes Three

By Matthew Millington

so clean at the State Park grounds. The level of excitement that transpired when the mayor made a declaration of the importance of the day was awesome. Everyone—chaperones and students alike—appeared to truly care about the quality of life and knowledge that was being presented to them, and that in itself was inspiring.

For me, it is incredible to know that this will be an event with longevity, to know that the countless hours of preparation, development, and cooperation with local agencies will be carried on in an annual tradition, all outlining the vitality and importance of the water that fuels our lives. The Lakota tribe of the American West have a saying “mníwčhóni,” meaning “water is life.” It is meant to inspire care and consideration for what makes up 80% of the cells in our bodies and the surface of the planet. Truly, we cannot thrive without protecting and prioritizing the health of our water ways, so being able to embody that so non-surreptitiously means quite a bit to me.



On April 7, 2022, we stood in the sun and wind, launching the pilot of Kids on the Colorado to a small group of eager 7th graders. Full of giddy nervousness, we felt a sense of success that half a year later we would be able launch the full-scale event in the attempt to reach out and educate as many as 400 young minds. Hours of development, research, and coordination led us to what we felt was a message worth sharing—that water brings life to our community.

Fast forward to November 8th and 9th, standing on Windsor Beach. The weather is miraculously in favor of the event, and everything is going according to plan. With every new group that cycled through our booths, we saw a new set of bright minds with bright questions and commentary on the importance of the massive body of water that was running behind us. It was interesting to see all the different levels of insight that the 7th graders from Thunderbolt Middle School had already developed regarding life around the lake and the river.

From my perspective, I saw a great level of care. Many of the groups of young individuals were picking up their trash they found around the booths of their own accord, and even after the event, it was



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