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STETSON UNIVERSITY

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Stetson University Makes Educational Splash at Water Festival

Institute for Water and Environmental Resilience raises awareness about water conservation during family-friendly festival

DELAND, Florida, April 18, 2019 – Water is becoming an endangered global resource. Aquifers, lakes, rivers and springs are drying up or contaminated by agricultural runoff, industrial waste or other pollutants.

Also affecting freshwater resources are floods, sea level rise, wetland destruction, water shortages and droughts due to altering weather patterns.

Ever the watchful defender of Florida's precious water resources, the [Institute for Water and Environmental Resilience \(IWER\)](#) at [Stetson University](#) and other [Volusia Water Alliance](#) members and area organizations are joining forces to educate the community about the significance of water, one of the most important natural resources, during [The Water Festival](#) on Saturday, April 27, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., on West Indiana Avenue in downtown DeLand. The family-friendly event is free and open to the public.

IWER and the Volusia Water Alliance are committed to spreading the word about water conservation. IWER focuses on water and environmental research and uses innovative approaches for tackling complex challenges and offering policy options for protecting natural resources throughout Florida.

The Volusia Water Alliance is dedicated to the future of the Florida Aquifer, natural springs and rivers to expand its sustainable mission and vision for protecting the county's water sources.

Water is essential for life.

"Water is connected to everybody and everything, and we especially need to reach young people," said Shelley Gentile, the institute's program manager. "It's our duty to ensure there's a world for them after we're gone."

The festival, now in its third year, had an estimated 2,500 attendees last year. This year's water fete will include the Zephyrhills WaterVentures Lab, a mobile museum with interactive exhibits inside and an outdoor activity center, blessing of the water, water educational displays and information booths, mermaids, sidewalk chalk artists, entertainment, kids' activities, face painting and vendors.

The Water Festival is informing its attendees about water preservation and how to make a difference in the future.

“The Water Festival touches as many people as possible in a very accessible, fun way in order to spark people’s interests in water issues,” said Gentile. “Education is a powerful tool for providing the public with an opportunity to see all of the ways that water is connected to the community.”

About Stetson University

Founded in 1883, [Stetson University](#) is the oldest private university in Central Florida. Stetson focuses on intense learning experiences in a supportive community that allows students to develop their voice in a connected, inclusive environment. Stetson University ranks No. 5 on U.S. News & World Report’s 2019 list of Best Regional Universities (South), and has been recognized as one of The Princeton Review’s 384 Best Colleges, 2019 edition. [Stay connected](#) with Stetson on social media.

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