

# Pupils soak up water wisdom

**Winners announced in contest that aimed to encourage youth to learn more about water in Okanagan**

By Okanagan Sunday Staff

Three students in the South, Central and North Okanagan have each won a pool and pizza party, thanks to the Okanagan WaterWise Challenge.

However, organizers from the Okanagan Basin Water Board were especially impressed by "very strong participation" in Penticton.

For the past six weeks, the Okanagan WaterWise Challenge encouraged Okanagan youth to learn more about water in the Valley while entering a draw to win the party for themselves and nine friends. It involved an online scavenger hunt for five- to 15-year-olds between World Water Week

in late March and Drinking Water Week (May 1-7).

"The purpose of the contest was to encourage kids to recognize that we are all part of 'One Valley. One Water' and to inspire them to conserve and protect it," said Corinne Jackson, communications co-ordinator for the Okanagan Basin Water Board and the WaterWise program's champion. "We're thrilled with the results of this contest."

Hundreds of young people completed the WaterWise Challenge, and nearly 100 more took the online survey without entering to win a prize. The winners are: Victoria, 9, from Armstrong; Avery, 10, from Peachland; and Caitlyn, 11, from Penticton.

Participation in the contest came from nearly every community in the Valley, said Jackson.

"As it turns out, KVR Middle School celebrated Earth Month in April and had students (including the South Okanagan winner,

Caitlyn) take the WaterWise Challenge as one of their activities," said Jackson.

"It's phenomenal how much water we use," said Caitlyn, who discovered Okanagan residents use an average of 675 litres of water per person per day. The majority of this is used in the summer and goes on lawns. The Canadian average is 329 litres.

As a result of taking the WaterWise Challenge, Caitlyn said she is trying to cut her showers to five minutes, and she is encouraging her siblings and parents to reduce their water use as well.

"I also learned that it's better to take your car to a car wash that recycles water or wash it on your lawn. I learned a lot," she added.

"Most kids spent an average of 15 minutes on the survey. That's impressive," said Jackson, adding those students are now even more WaterWise and will hopefully help spread the word on how to care for Okanagan water.