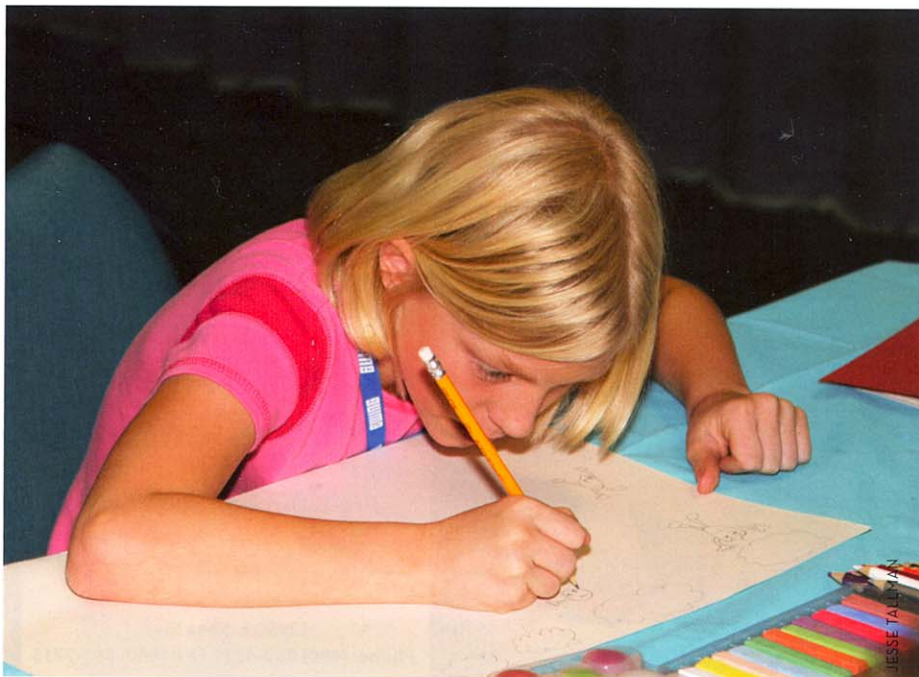


ELEMENTARY

## Raising water-conscious kids

by Brittney Walker



Maggie Gould of Phoenix (shown in 2005 at age 9) helped to create the book *All Dried Out*.

EACH DAY, AN ESTIMATED 100 GALLONS of fresh water run down the drain for each person in Arizona. Most of us are aware of things we could be doing to reduce our fresh water consumption. A hefty water bill is motivation to step up the effort. But we're even more likely to turn off the tap when pint-sized water police spout reminders in our direction. Kids who learn to use water wisely and encourage their families to follow suit may make the most profound difference in conserving our precious water resources.

That's why Phoenix-based Ewing Irrigation Products teamed up with the Irrigation Association's education foundation and WeWrite Kids to put together a children's book addressing water conservation. The project was unique because of its focus on outdoor water use and also because the book was written by 16 authors ages 8 to 13.

*All Dried Out* trails 10-year-old twins Brian and Jackie through their neighborhood as they solve the mystery of why the water in their home has mysteriously dried up. With the help of a grumpy chicken leg, a heroic stalk of broccoli and a thirsty strawberry, the twins learn why and how we should conserve fresh water.

"This information has been processed by children—they came up with their own characters, situations and ways of thinking about things," says Lacy Ravencraft, public relations manager at Ewing Irrigation. "All the characters, direct quotes, etc., came from

the actual kids involved in the process. This fact should make it easier for other kids to understand and internalize [the message]."

The "by kids for kids" approach of the book makes it an effective teaching tool, Ravencraft explains. "Teachers who are introducing units on water conservation are saying that it serves as a perfect text to keep the children interested. Many are having students read the book aloud in class, taking time out to discuss the different angles and situations in the story. [Teachers] who have not had units on water conservation have been inspired to develop them."

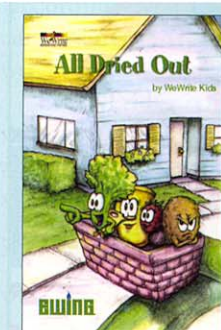
The young authors had a great time and learned valuable information that they were excited to put to practice in their own homes. Queen Creek siblings Austin Paetow, 14, and his sister Ashley, 13, were among the kids who participated in writing the book. Austin says it's important for kids to be informed so that they don't waste water unknowingly. His

favorite part of the process was making up the characters and planning what they would look like and what they would do.

Ashley enjoyed "meeting all of the different kids who came together to work on the book." She tries to put into practice some of the things she learned and helps her parents make water-conscious choices as well.

"I think a lot of times it's the kids who are telling their parents, 'You shouldn't hose off sidewalk; use a broom. Turn off the water while you're brushing your teeth,'" observes Ruth Greenhouse, grants and conservation outreach coordinator for the Arizona Department of Water Resources. "They can model good water conservation behavior and become more informed about where our water comes from." **RAK**

Brittney Walker, of Chandler, is the mother of William (4), Christopher (3) and Jack (1). Reach her at [brittney@raisingarizonakids.com](mailto:brittney@raisingarizonakids.com).



### Learn more

- *All Dried Out* and the Spanish language version, *Todos Secos*, are available for \$11.95 each at [wewrite.net](http://wewrite.net).
- The Arizona Department of Water Resources offers a kids page with coloring sheets, trivia and more. [azwater.gov](http://azwater.gov) (type "kids page" in the keyword search).
- Find tips for raising water-conscious kids at [raisingarizonakids.com](http://raisingarizonakids.com).