Congratulations to our August Spotlight Member, Idali M. Hanson. Idali is a Senior Water Quality and Environmental Compliance Specialist with NJ American Water. She has been a member of AWWA since 2015. Idali found her way to the Section’s Young Professionals Committee and immediately became involved, including hosting a tour at the Canoe Brook Water Treatment Plant in Short Hills, NJ on behalf of the YP Committee. She also volunteered to become a Committee Liaison to the Education and Professional Development Committee. Idali is bilingual, fluent in both English and Spanish of Puerto Rican descent. Idali recently earned her T2 license from the NJDEP, is certified in Water Resources Management and has her 40-Hour HAZWOPER. Idali has an Associate’s degree in Business Administration and a Bachelor’s degree in Marine Biology and Aquatic Sciences. Idali is currently enrolled at Montclair State University, pursuing a Master’s Degree in Earth and Environmental Sciences.

Idali won two awards for her graduate research presentations a few years ago. And, during the 2016 Annual Conference her team won the Operator's Bowl Trophy.

**Why did you decide to go into the field of water?**

My love for water began at a very young age. I have fond memories of summers with my parents, spending time on the beach enjoying recreational fishing, swimming, crabbing, and clamming. The water became a second home to me and my personal oasis. As the years progressed, I began to understand how increasingly susceptible our water systems were becoming to natural and anthropogenic impacts. I knew I wanted to make a career out of preserving aquatic systems, an invaluable natural resource that I’m so fond of. Personally, I feel there’s nothing more important than environmental stewardship and children, as they both are our future, I wanted to dedicate my life to making it better as water is life!

**How did you become a volunteer for AWWA? What motivates you to be active in the Section?**

I joined AWWA shortly after I began my career with NJ American Water in 2015 and have had the pleasure of attending the Annual Conference in Atlantic City, NJ numerous times. I had always wanted to be a part of the Young Professionals’ Committee and once the opportunity presented itself, I immediately joined. AWWA has been crucial in helping me learn the water utility industry. AWWA has provided me with educational insight, informative exposure, and invaluable networking opportunities with past and current peers, while allowing me to meet new professionals throughout the business. AWWA also provided important study materials, which allowed me to successfully acquire my Water Treatment license, as well.

**Hobbies and outside interests?**

I love travelling, dancing and music, the beach, languages and cuisines, reading, science, and am a huge animal lover!
What legacy would you like to leave behind?

It would be an honor to leave a legacy in which I helped influence those around me to be mindful and caring of our planet and its natural wonders. For them to think of me when they visit the ocean and other bodies of water. Life and the world are majestic and beautiful achievements can be made when you put your mind to it. As a Latina scientist, growing up in a challenging urban area and as the only college graduate in my family, the sky’s the limit and I want my family to be proud of me! I want to be remembered as a passionate professional and advocate, who loves what she does and gives it her all. I want to enhance the aquatic sciences and environmental conservation in the water utility industry to innovative new heights. I want my successors to thrive and be more successful than me. Reach for the moon, even if you miss, you’ll land amongst the stars!