

Community POWER:

Partners on Waste Education & Reduction
Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board

**ROUND SEVEN (2007-2008)
FINAL REPORT**

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Executive Summary

Twenty-three community organizations and schools received a Community POWER grant in 2007-2008. Eleven of the projects were funded by SWMCB, while the others were funded through individual county allocations to the program. Individual allocations included four projects in Hennepin County, four projects in Ramsey County, two projects in Dakota County, and two projects in Washington County. The maximum grant amount was \$12,000.

All projects educated residents, engaged them in waste reduction activities, and promoted long-term lifestyle changes. **Typical projects** included helping residents start to recycle, learning about proper disposal of hazardous materials, getting off junk mail lists, preventing waste, reusing instead of throwing away items, or starting to compost.

9,368 residents of the metro area were engaged in active waste reduction activities through Community POWER projects.

Follow up surveys with over 2,000 people show that 73% of the people who participated in these projects **documented at least one long-term waste or toxicity reduction behavior change** because of the project, and many made more than one change.

An additional 142,000 people were reached with waste reduction messages through the marketing and communication efforts of grantees. Most of these messages included the Green Guardian and/or GreenGuardian.com. These messages were shared through newsletters, newspapers, email, radio ads, websites, presentations, and community newspapers.

Nearly all of the projects contain **elements that will be sustained** beyond the grant year, and grantees' **replicable resources** have been posted on-line at www.rethinkrecycling.com.

In addition to grant money, Community POWER helps community organizations create and implement high-quality waste and toxicity reduction projects by providing:

- quarterly grantee meetings that offer technical information on waste reduction, plus networking opportunities for community groups;
- individual meetings with grantees to offer resources and plan projects;
- workshops and presentations by county staff;
- email distribution lists linking grantees, county staff, and interested groups;
- an evaluation of long-term outcomes experienced by past grantees to uncover sustainability strategies; and
- an expanded website showcasing outcomes of each grantee project and disseminating grantee-created resources.

Examples of People Taking Action to Reduce Waste

The Association for the Advancement of Hmong Women printed reusable grocery bags with a culturally appropriate design and distributed the bags to elders and youth.

480 students' families Christa McAuliffe School took a waste reduction pledge and completed actions at home such as buying non-toxic cleaners and purchasing items with reduced packaging.

Classrooms at Garlough Elementary School created Zero Waste Fridays where they worked not to create any waste on this one day. They reported "if we can do it on Fridays, we can do it every day."

The Parent Teacher Association at Highland Park Elementary School led a year-long effort to bring waste and toxicity reduction practices to over 400 homes of the teachers and families of the school.

A partnership between two block nurse programs in St. Paul reached 523 senior citizens with information about reducing junk mail, proper disposal of household hazardous waste, and non-toxic cleaning. Follow up surveys showed that over 80% had made at least three behavior changes due to the project.

Examples of Ways Waste Reduction Messages Are Shared

Carver County Historical Society created a traveling waste reduction exhibit displayed at public events.

Cedar Park Elementary students conducted waste reduction research and education campaigns that were turned into videos and posted on the school web site.

The Girl Scouts of St. Croix Valley emailed weekly family waste reduction challenges to 83,500 people, 55 times.

Hands On Twin Cities staff advertised their project through their e-newsletter (sent to 5,000 people), their website, and a community event at Mall of America.

650 residents of Mahtomedi attended the RITE of Spring Earth Day event where they learned about waste and toxicity reduction. The City of White Bear Lake replicated the event.

The Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center created seven waste reduction workshops and presented them each three times to housing residents, clients, and those in their Family Stabilization Program.

On the Move...for Minnesota Families engaged youth to research improperly disposed of materials, document them with photographs, and create educational posters and sculptures about proper disposal that were publicly displayed.

Examples of How Projects Will Be Sustained

Arc of Greater Twin Cities completed 21 small group presentations to educate young parents, adults with disabilities, and professionals. Due to interest from parents, Arc will continue the project using their own funds and already scheduled presentations for fall of 2008 and spring of 2009.

Carver County Historical Society will continue their Eco Day Camps and green gift galas each year as a part of their curriculum.

The Corcoran Neighborhood will continue their annual Green Sweep event and community outreach about reuse and HHW disposal.

Garlough Elementary created waste education activities at all of their Family Fun Nights which helped to increase event attendance; they plan to continue implementing these activities annually and have already shared these activities with new grantees this year.

The Girl Scouts of St. Croix Valley created a waste reduction kit that can be checked out by troops to fulfill badge requirements, and they plan to create four more for other service centers.

Hopkins Schools' Kids and Company program created a waste reduction curriculum and activity totes that will be used each year during their summer camps.

One issue of Kaleidoscope Place's monthly newsletter was dedicated to their Community POWER efforts and they will continue to dedicate one month each year to waste reduction themes.

Long-Term Behavior Change Study

For the past three years, Community POWER grantees have been required to follow up with participants in their projects to determine if Community POWER projects result in sustained lifestyle changes. The number of grantees who successfully complete these follow-up activities has risen each year. This year, 91% of projects submitted data on over 2,000 people.

The data show that 74% of the people studied reported making at least one sustained behavior change due to information learned through a Community POWER project. Most people reported making more than one change.

Grantees may evaluate up to 18 different ways the participants in their projects have made lifestyle changes. The following chart shows the *most typical actions* promoted through grantee projects, and the percentage of grantee projects that educated people about each issue.

	% of grantees who focused on each topic
Start using canvas/reusable bags for shopping trips	76%
Learn to make non-toxic home cleaners	71%
Begin or increase residential recycling	59%
Use of re-usable containers to reduce packaging waste	53%
Reduce junk mail	53%
Reading labels to properly handle household hazardous waste	47%
Make gifts, toys, gift wrap, etc. from reused materials	41%

Round 7 Grantee Summaries

Association for the Advancement of Hmong Women (AAHWM)

Minneapolis and St. Paul

This project was a unique partnership among AAHWM, Volunteers of America, Lind-Bohanon/Shingle Creek Neighborhoods, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization. Staff and board members from these organizations were trained in junk mail reduction and toxicity reduction. They in turn trained over 300 elders and youth in these practices. Elders were also taken on field trips and engaged in workshops to make non-toxic household cleaners. Reusable grocery bags were printed with a culturally appropriate design and distributed to the elders and youth. Residents of Lind-Bohanon and Shingle Creek Neighborhoods were also engaged in waste reduction education at National Night Out events.

Arc of Greater Twin Cities

Anoka County and Metro Area

This project focuses on educating young parents, adults with disabilities, and professionals through small group presentations. Twenty-one presentations were made, reaching 383 people. Of these, one-third of the people live in Anoka County. Participants completed a survey and commitment card at each event, then received a phone call several weeks later to check on their progress. 86 percent of those reached reported completing one or more waste reduction actions since the

presentation. An additional 611 people were reached through presentations at 14 community fairs. 5,000 people received a monthly e-newsletter for seven months with information about seasonal waste reduction topics. Due to the success of the project and interest from parents, Arc will continue the project using their own funds and has already scheduled additional presentations for fall of 2008 and 2009.

Arts Us

St. Paul

The "Rondo Rethinks Recycling" project engaged youth in creative activities to raise community awareness of waste issues. Youth learned about recycling and toxicity reduction during summer programs and after school programs. These trained youth led an effort to offer event recycling at the Rondo Days festival. They also knocked on doors and had conversations with over 150 households about recycling and reuse. Families and staff have started recycling and using non-toxic cleaners. At an annual event for senior citizens in the neighborhood, 96% of the waste created was recycled or composted.

Carver County 4-H

Carver County

As a second year grantee, Carver County 4-H expanded on their first year's activities (educating 4-H families) to educating the greater community. Their activities focused on out-of-school-time program education. Over 310 4-H families were reached with waste reduction information through the 4-H newsletter, Green Spot web page, county Demo Days, Waste Buster Days and other 4-H events. An additional 500 Carver county residents were reached with recycling and waste reduction messages through the Carver County Fair, Earth Day event, garage sale, and a Minnesota State Fair presentation. Additionally, 435 youth were given six waste reduction lessons at five different schools. Approximately 500 pounds of aluminum cans were also recycled at the Carver County Fair.

Carver County Historical Society (CCHS)

Carver County

CCHS worked with youth in creating a number of public events involving and educating 12,000 youth, families, and residents in Carver County. They developed an eco-history day camp and school curriculum for local teachers. Fifteen teachers were trained on how to use the curriculum. Youth put on two green gift galas, eco history skits, a traveling exhibit presented at the Carver County Fair, and hosted a community reuse project. All of these activities have become a permanent part of the curriculum for the Carver County Historical Society.

Cedar Park Elementary School

Dakota County

Cedar Park Elementary School's school community of over 700 worked to reduce the use of disposable bags, packaging waste, paper towels, and increase paper recycling. The 4th and 5th grades researched and created all-school educational campaigns for paper towel use reduction by asking students to "only push the button three times." They researched home plastic and paper bag use and decorated 700 cloth tote bags for reuse. 250 students participated in a no waste lunch contest, with most classrooms producing only one pound of garbage from their lunch waste and 190 students decorating and using reusable cloth napkins. They also offered a series of three Family Nights and an all school picnic involving 530 students and their parents in learning about waste reduction ideas to try at home. The students created video presentations and an EcoNews program that is broadcast on the school's Friday TV newscast and online.

Ce Tempoxcalli

Hennepin and Ramsey

The Chalchiutlicue Project through Ce Tempoxcalli used their culture-based approach to train 40 indigenous Latino youth about waste and toxicity reduction. These youth became leaders in their community and reached out to at least ten families, community members, or co-workers, reaching 240 households. Additionally, staff provided education about waste and toxicity issues to over 1,800 individuals through 20 community events and to 25 other partnering organizations. 300 of the people reached at events committed to making a change and created an eco friendly flag reminder to hang in their homes. After follow up surveys, it is estimated that participating families reduced their waste on average by ten pounds with a total of 2,600 pounds of waste reduced.

Christa McAuliffe Elementary School

Dakota and Washington Counties

Over 600 staff, students, and their families progressed through four waste reduction stages to become Masters of Trash. 80% of the families in the school took a pledge to take at least three waste reduction actions at home. The teachers incorporated education on these pledge topics throughout the year including a field trip to the Dakota County Eco Site, hall displays, and a distribution of reusable shopping bags to all 600 students. From follow up surveys, many of the families took actions such as starting to use reusable cloth shopping bags, purchasing non-toxic cleaners, and buying items with reduced packaging.

Corcoran Neighborhood Organization

Minneapolis

As a returning grantee, the Corcoran Neighborhood Organization continued their events from their first project including their Green Sweep. Additionally, over 500 residents were reached waste issues and CNO's *Living Green Block Talks* program through their monthly print and electronic newsletters and promotion at the Midtown Public Farmer's Market. Six backyard presentations were conducted by residents. Ten residents participated in the "green rewards" program offering \$50 for small improvements such as installing a compost bin or eliminating fertilizer use on lawns. Two murals on composting were created by over 45 youth and adults, and a Green Guardian mailbox next to the mural displayed SWMCB's "Good Clean Dirt" brochures.

Garlough Elementary School

Dakota County

Garlough Elementary, in partnership with Dodge Nature Center, engaged 200 families through materials in English and Spanish to take at least three waste reduction action steps. Activities for families included zero waste lunches, a recycling corner, reusable shopping bags, and five Families R Fun nights involving 790 teachers, parents and community members. Some of the family night activities included making non-toxic cleaners, a clothing exchange, and conducting a "junk walk" to learn how to properly dispose of and recycle items. Additionally, Student Ambassadors gave tours of the school and discussed their waste reduction work with over 200 students, teachers, and families. The school district began supporting the purchase of compostable cafeteria items and using non-toxic cleaners.

Girl Scouts of St. Croix Valley (GSCSCV)

Dakota, Ramsey & Washington Counties

In collaboration with the Recycling Association of Minnesota (RAM), GSCSCV developed a waste reduction curriculum for families and troops to use to learn to adopt waste reduction practices through the Green Family Challenge. They kicked off their event with a Go Green Girl! low waste event hosting 275 girls using bandanas for a placemat and napkin. Over half of those in attendance took a waste reduction action such as creating reused art, making non-toxic cleaners, or composting their food scraps. They promoted 52 weekly Green Family Challenges to 83,500 members. They also created a waste reduction kit that was checked out by 26 troops to fulfill badge requirements. Their kits will be replicated and offered for check out at four other service centers.

Hands On Twin Cities

Hennepin County

Eleven nonprofit affiliates of Hands On participated in the project, including Catholic Charities, Lutheran Social Services, North Minneapolis Meals on Wheels, and other organizations serving home bound senior citizens. The Hands On staff prepared a friendly visitor packet and trained staff and volunteers at the affiliate organizations to complete home visits with seniors. The friendly visitors shared important waste and toxicity reduction information with seniors, such as how to read labels on household products and how to properly dispose of pharmaceutical waste and household hazardous waste. 946 friendly visitor packets were distributed. Hands On also advertised the project through their e-newsletter (sent to 5,000 people), their website, and a community event at Mall of America. Staff at the affiliates shared the feedback that "this project reached people who would have never received this information otherwise." Hands On will continue offering the information to their affiliate organizations in the future.

Highland Park Elementary

St. Paul

The Parent Teacher Association at this elementary school led a year-long effort to bring waste and toxicity reduction practices to over 400 homes of the teachers and families of the school. Strategies to reduce waste and toxicity were incorporated in the classroom curriculum in all grades and in multiple class subjects through hands-on homework assignments. Teachers plan to continue using activities developed this year in future years. Information was presented at all-school activities, such as Back-To-School Night, Earth Fair, and others. *The Lorax* (a Dr. Seuss book with an environmental theme) was chosen as this year's all-school book. Materials were translated for limited English learners and families. Articles on waste and toxicity reduction regularly appeared in the school newsletter. Leaders at several other schools are interested in replicating what Highland Park accomplished.

Hopkins Community Education – Kids & Company

Hennepin County

As a returning grantee, Kids & Company took the waste reduction curriculum created in their first grant and trained three other sites (Hopkins, St. Louis Park & Robbinsdale) to conduct waste reduction activities. To date, 360 students participated in the mini camps completing activities such as decorating a reusable cloth tote bag and making non-toxic cleaners. Two of the sites also incorporated a zero waste lunch program including educating the parents and tracking their daily lunch waste. Additionally, six day sessions and trainings were conducted for 262 individuals, students, parents, and educators. The curriculum and activity totes will be used each year during the summer mini camps.

Kaleidoscope Place

Minneapolis

This after-school and summer program for K-8th grade youth is located in the Phillips neighborhood of South Minneapolis. As part of the "We CAN Make a Difference" project, youth and families learned about junk mail reduction and recycling through multiple lessons and activities. Over 100 families removed their names from junk mail lists, started recycling, and/or started recycling new materials. Students completed an audit of Kaleidoscope's own recycling habits, and presented waste reduction information at two Family events. An issue of Kaleidoscope's monthly newsletter was dedicated to their Community POWER efforts. They will continue to dedicate one month each year to waste reduction themes.

Mahtomedi Community Education

Washington County

650 residents of Mahtomedi attended the RITE of Spring Earth Day event, where they learned about waste and toxicity reduction and started new waste reducing practices, such as using cloth grocery bags and nontoxic cleaners. In follow-up surveys, 90% of the event attendees reported continuing a behavior learned at the event. The City of White Bear Lake replicated the event. Results of the event were also shared with the Mahtomedi City Council. In addition, middle school students formed an "Environmental Rescue" club that educated the school about recycling resulting in a 50% increase in school recycling of paper, plastic and glass. The club also wheeled recycling bins in the homecoming parade to increase awareness. The school's art teacher started using reused materials for art projects, and all 4th graders completed a reuse art project.

Marine Elementary School

Washington County

Teachers and students in the 3rd and 4th grades learned about waste issues, set up a compost bin for their classrooms, and took a waste reduction field trip. The students used the knowledge they gained to promote waste reduction in their homes, neighborhoods, and the broader community through service-learning projects. Students created door hangers with recycling information and distributed them to 100 homes near the school. 300 reusable shopping bags filled with waste reduction information were distributed to school families and through the Marine General Store. Students created a tree showcasing the types of paper that can be recycled and displayed it in the Marine Public Library.

Merriam Park Living At Home Block Nurse Program

Ramsey County

Elderly residents in four neighborhoods in St. Paul received information and took actions to reduce junk mail (144 seniors) and identify and properly dispose of toxins in their homes (101 seniors). The seniors were educated through workshops and at community events such as the flu shot clinic. Three staff worked one-on-one with seniors. They also educated seniors about junk mail and household hazardous waste through their print newsletter that went to 230 seniors. Merriam Park Living at Home Block Nurse Program is confident they will continue their education to seniors now that they have become knowledgeable about these waste topics.

Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center

Hennepin County

The Natosi Saakoom Project (Sacred Earth Project) provided waste reduction education to American Indian families who are housing residents, clients in the Family Stabilization Program, or staff. They conducted 21 presentations. Over 80 individuals have been educated and taken actions such as making non-toxic cleaners, recycling, and buying in bulk. They have noted most of their residents making changes including recycling more and switching to non-toxic cleaners. As a final event, they put on an Environmental Children's Fair with over 169 in attendance. They will continue their waste reduction education and activities throughout their programming.

North End / South Como and Conway-Battle Creek Block Nurse Programs

St. Paul

This partnership between two block nurse programs, one located on the East side of St. Paul and the other in the North End-South Como neighborhood of St. Paul, reached 523 senior citizens with information about reducing junk mail, proper disposal of household hazardous waste, and non-toxic cleaning. Follow up surveys showed that over 80% had made at least *three* behavior changes due to the project. They also conducted training for 60 staff of other senior-serving organizations, such as those who provide cleaning services in seniors' homes. The training was so well received that they will provide a refresher course again next year. Two full-page newspaper articles on waste reduction ran in the neighborhood newspaper with a circulation of 11,000. The project will be sustained now that staff are trained and are committed to continue sharing the information with new seniors in the neighborhood. In September 2008, the leaders of this project made a presentation about their project at the annual statewide meeting of block nurse programs.

On the Move...for Minnesota Families

Dakota County

Through on-going community events, On the Move staff reached 7,065 immigrant and low income people at 12 locations. They worked with youth to create a social marketing campaign about waste reduction and the Green Guardian. They researched improperly disposed of materials, documented them with photographs, and created educational posters and sculptures that were put on display at the Farmington community center. They also worked within their programs to educate 1,038 individuals and families about waste reduction. They created reuse objects, decorated reusable shopping bags, made non-toxic cleaners and laundry detergent, removed themselves from junk mail lists, and learned about worm composting.

Senior Community Services

Hennepin County

Two of Senior Community Services' centers – Plymouth Creek Center and Minnetonka Senior Center – have educated over 618 elders and 150 youth through seven intergenerational classes and workshops on alternative gift wrap, junk mail removal, non-toxic cleaning and reduced packaging. Over 159 junk mail envelopes have been mailed, 200 non-toxic cleaners distributed, and 60 reusable cloth shopping bags given out. The directors also shared their project with other senior center directors through their common agency, United Way. Both senior centers plan to continue their waste reduction education and activities including hosting future speakers on recycling and non-toxic cleaners, making recipes available to seniors, and offering recycling and composting at all events.

St. Paul Public Schools Community Education Service-Learning Program

St. Paul

230 students from five St. Paul schools (Harding Senior High School, Highland Park Junior High School, American Indian Magnet, Hancock/Hamline Collaborative, and Randolph Heights Elementary) learned about waste reduction topics from presentations made by county staff and other experts. Using a special workbook created for the project, students surveyed their families' current waste practices, planned action steps to make changes at home, implemented a service-learning project, and made presentations on waste issues to over 1450 people. The focus of the service-learning projects included toxicity reduction among Hmong families, reducing paper waste at school, worm composting, and recycling. Teachers involved in the projects plan to continue the environmental lessons in future years.