



## **ROUND 11 FINAL SUMMARY REPORT**

*December 2012*

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### **Executive Summary**

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Eighteen community organizations and schools received a Community POWER grant in the 11th round. Projects lasted 12 months from October 2011 to October 2012. Seven of the projects were funded by SWMCB, while 11 were funded through individual county allocations to the program. Individual allocations included five projects in Ramsey County, and one project in Dakota County. Hennepin County funded five projects through its separate but coordinated process. 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 recycling, learn about proper disposal of hazardous materials, get off junk mail lists, prevent waste, reuse instead of throwing away items, or composting.

Through Round 11 Community POWER projects, 5,618 residents of the metro area were engaged in active waste reduction activities.

Follow up surveys with over 2,000 people who participated in these projects show that 87% them 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 158,177 people were reached with waste reduction messages through the marketing and communication efforts of grantees. Most of these messages included Rethink Recycling information and/or RethinkRecycling.com. These messages were shared through newsletters, newspapers, email, radio ads, websites, presentations, and community newspapers.

All of the projects contain elements that will be sustained beyond the grant year and any grantees' replicable resources have been posted online at [www.rethinkrecycling.com](http://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:

- Grantee training 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 and other experts.
- Email distribution lists linking grantees, county staff, and interested groups.
- Evaluation of long-term outcomes experienced by past grantees to uncover sustainability strategies.
- An expanded website showcasing outcomes of each grantee project and disseminating grantee-created resources.

## Long-Term Behavior Change

For the past seven years, Community POWER grantees have been required to follow up with a select number of 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, 17 of the 18 grantees submitted data on 2,166 people.

The data show that 87% 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.

<b>Behavior Change Action</b>	<b>% grantees who focused on each topic</b>
Begin or increase residential recycling	56%
Start using canvas/reusable bags for shopping trips	44%
Make household nontoxic cleaners	44%
Begin recycling when away from home	39%
Buy products with reduced packaging	39%
Reading labels to properly handle household hazardous waste	39%
Compost to reduce food and yard waste	39%
Recycle electronics	33%

## Project Summaries

### SWMCB-Funded Projects

#### **Fishing for Life**—Anoka, Hennepin and Ramsey Counties

Fishing for Life (FFL) hosted family fishing and outdoor events that integrated environmental education on such topics as waste reduction, toxicity reduction, recycling and composting into programs through demonstrations and interactive displays. They engaged through hands-on environmental/outdoor recreational and fishing activities.

FFL hosted four environmental stewardship planning sessions to train volunteer ambassadors about toxicity, reuse, going green, and composting. The sessions featured numerous hands-on activities and demonstrations. FFL then hosted four lakeside events

where the trained volunteers educated participants on composting, rebuilding rods and other reuse and recycling topics. The events were held at Medicine Lake (Hennepin County), Powderhorn Lake (Hennepin County), Lake George (Anoka County) and Bald Eagle Lake (Ramsey County).

Through the grant, FFL created two videos and environmental displays, which they plan to use at future family fishing events.

**Minnesota African Women's Association**—Hennepin and Ramsey Counties

Though Minnesota African Women's Association (MAWA) intended to train 15 women and 15 girls, they were actually able to train a total of 60 African women and girls at three different workshops. Thirty-five participants went on to train their peers. Peer educators have reported that they have reached 480 women in one-on-one or group sessions. They expect that more women have been reached because some are still to report on their final numbers as of the writing of their final report. The peer educators reached their peers in schools, church, the mosque and community groups like the Cameroon Dynamic Ladies (CADYLAM), Ex-Students of Saker Association (Sakerettes-MN), Minnesota Cameroon Community (MINCAM), Abakwa Boys and Girls Organization, Igbo Women's Association (Nigeria), Ummunne Cultural Group (Nigeria), Association Togolaise de Minnesota, etc. Each of these social associations has a membership of 25 to over 100 members and each meets on a monthly basis. Some of these members are educated and literate while others are not.

The third training session, held in August, was highlighted in *Mshale* newspaper. The women who attended this last training was notable because they were all professional women, mostly registered nurses and social workers, basically, the kind of women whose opinion and experience others would respect. MAWA also published ads about their project and participated in a Somali radio interview.

**St. Francis Community Education**—Anoka County

The mission of the Go Green 4-H Team Initiative was to provide the St. Francis Community with the tools and training they need to create a "culture of conservation" within the community. The Go Green 4-H Team Project mobilized young people to act as stewards for positive change in their community around waste reduction and recycling. The Go Green 4-H Team initiated its programming through a partnership at St. Francis High School Environmental Club. Three members of the Environmental Club planned and facilitated lessons with St. Francis Middle School youth after school. Through a summer partnership with the Day Camp Guy Robinson YMCA camp, the Go Green 4-H Team was able to educate day campers on reducing waste and recycling. Within 10 weeks, they taught 17 hours and reached 547 youth. Fun and educational lessons on waste reduction and recycling were developed by 4-H Youth Development Staff from Anoka County Extension. They created project kits that reinforce the messages from spring and summer youth programming and are available for 4-H clubs and St. Francis Community Education upon request. In addition, Anoka County 4-H Clubs competed for outreach scholarships for projects related to increasing public awareness on the topic of waste reduction or recycling.

**Waconia Independent Public School District 110**—Carver County

Community POWER grant funding was used to engage students as ambassadors for social change to promote the "Living Better...Living Green" initiative. Waconia Public Schools contracted with Paul David (an award winning media specialist) who collaborated with Waconia's Lead High School Language Arts Teacher to engage a core group of nine students enrolled in the Video Production class. These students developed and produced a 20 minute Newscast, which used as part of the "Living Better...Living Green" education campaign to reduce waste in schools, businesses and the community. Students participated in all aspects of the Newscast production and approximately 35 other students, teachers, school personnel, agency/business staff and community residents were featured in the *Newscast*. The *Newscast* premier was debuted at the local movie theatre on February 27, 2012 to an

audience of over 140 parents, students, school staff, local officials, School Board Members, business owners and community residents. In March, the *Newscast* was presented to the local Rotary Club and 22 Rotarians (who represent local businesses and community leaders). A link to the *Newscast* was established on the district's website and an email message was sent to all parents/guardians of K-12 grade students to watch the video. Over 750 views were recorded. Also in March, students from Waconia High School Conservation Club staffed a Rethink Recycling educational booth during the Ridgeview Foundation "Friends and Family Come Together" expo. Approximately 550 people attended the event and approximately 100 informational brochures were distributed. Pledge Cards committing to reducing, reusing and/or recycling were signed by a total 112 participants who attended one or more of these events.

#### **Shiloh Temple International Ministries—Hennepin County**

The Living Clean Campaign educated members and non-members of Shiloh Temple International Ministries to recycle more and reduce waste at home. Activities included educating organization members on waste reduction, toxicity, and recycling through hosting seminars and providing hands-on opportunities for members to practice how to reduce waste and recycle. They reinforced these messages by running the *Get Less* advertising in the church.

The project began with training staff and leaders about the environment and the importance of changing habits within their church community. To reach congregation members, they set-up a table display with coupons to local reuse stores and information about Hennepin County.

In the spring they held a toxicity unit with teenagers. During this unit, the program facilitator met with a youth group every Wednesday night and discussed hazardous chemicals in the home. The group was taught how to identify hazardous chemicals and they had the opportunity to complete some hands-on exercises as well. The final event was a back-to-school event in September, where they taught congregation members about the proper way to recycle at home.

#### **Northeast Seniors for Better Living—Ramsey County**

The Northeast Seniors for Better Living had two project goals: to reduce unwanted junk mail seniors receive and to identify, label and/or dispose of properly hazardous materials. The staff at Northeast Seniors for Better Living delivered ten free Waste and Toxin Reduction Workshops to seniors in the East St. Paul community. Workshops began in March and continued through May. Details about each workshop was posted on their website and promoted via flyers, newsletter announcements, and two feature articles in the Lillie News. Home visits with 12 clients were offered to give one-on-one in-home waste and toxin reduction training. Clients also received information on how to safely dispose of medication.

#### **Stillwater Area High School Transition Program—Washington County**

This community education project was supported by the special education transition program at Stillwater Area High School. The overall goal was to reduce the amount of waste generated by students, families, and the larger community by educating and providing opportunities to reduce waste (using reusable bags and water bottles), composting (designing and constructing compost bins), and recycling (activities at Stillwater Sr. High and Boutwell's Landing senior housing). They began with providing environmental education and recycling support at a local senior home, Boutwell's, and partnered with the county and to host two presentations about the benefits and outcomes of recycling the spring of 2012. At these presentations, they handed out reusable shopping bags to residents to encourage recycling and reuse. Transition students collected to recycling from over 100 residents twice a week as part of their summer work activity during the 2012 summer. These activities were also paired with increasing recycling education and recycling opportunities at Stillwater

High school. Their efforts resulted with an increase in the number of plastic bottles collected. During the winter and spring, transition students partnered with the technical education department to design and build composting bins to sell to the community. Students also partnered with the high school green team to support the installation of hydration station (water bottle fountains), by providing 150 reusable water bottles to some of the student body in September.

### **Dakota County-Funded Project**

#### **On the Move for Minnesota Families, University of Minnesota Extension**

On the Move...for Minnesota Families educated low income and new immigrant families in Dakota County about creating a healthier home through reuse, rethinking and source reduction at numerous programs that occurred every week. During the project, five hundred and fifty four people learned about storing chemicals safely, reducing household waste and they also made non-toxic cleaners. Eighty-three participants removed their addresses from junk mail lists. In addition, hundreds of youth engaged in fun, interactive, educational activities in out-of-school-time programs that addressed recycling, reuse and composting and practiced worm bin composting. A *Shopping Used in Dakota County* directory has been updated and 650 copies were printed and distributed to low income program sites. Eighty-three people attended two Green Events, one in July and one in September.

### **Ramsey County-Funded Projects**

#### **Union Park District Council**

The Union Park Composter: A Resident Initiative, engaged over 100 residents, and provided educational material to over 18,000 to implement composting practices throughout St Paul Planning District 13 (Union Park). They created a webpage for the program linked off of the Union Park website ([www.unionparkdc.org](http://www.unionparkdc.org)) and included information on Union Park's web homepage. Residents participated in workshops, received educational materials on composting and food waste reduction, and began home composting. They promoted the Union Park District Council (UPDC) Composting Program and engaged approximately 87 residents. In April, a Master Gardener and University of St. Thomas (UST) Green Team members prepared and led a compost training for the public with assistance from UPDC board members, Master Gardeners, Eureka Recycling and community volunteers. Ninety-eight residents completed the training that day and received a compost bin. The remaining 23 participants who got a compost bin completed other training options. In May, UPDC staff, Mac-Grove District Council Staff and Macalester students toured Specialized Environmental Technologies, Inc./The Mulch Store, a composting facility in Rosemount. A Master Gardener taught a class on vermiculture, resulting in five participants purchasing worm bins.

#### **West 7th Community Center**

The goals for this project were to provide seniors and community members of the West 7th area, practical, simple and effective ways of reducing waste, reducing toxins in the home and recycling by providing information and hands-on activities. Volunteers participated in several events including the Aging Well Expo, West 7th Community Center's Annual Women's Health Fair, and the West 7th Community Center's Annual Plant Sale. At each event, volunteers attended training and staffed a booth. Participants who stopped at the booth were given information about disposing pharmaceuticals, how to read labels of everyday hazardous household waste (identifying least to most toxic), junk mail and composting. Participants were also given the opportunity to make a pledge to use a cloth bag when they go shopping and those who did, received a cloth bag to take home. There were 50 participants who stop by the booth and 50 participants took the cloth bag pledge. At the Community Center, teachers and staff were trained on how to recycle properly. The teachers for the summer kids program then taught a lesson on recycling and then participated in a recycling relay race.

### **Project Pride in Living—Hennepin and Ramsey Counties**

At several of PPL's affordable housing developments, staff engaged residents through green living and educational experiences. The goal of the project was to educate residents and help them take action in waste and toxicity reduction and recycling. PPL offered 21 interactive workshops/events at seven housing sites that covered three 'green living' topics – non toxic cleaners, e-waste disposal and creative ways to reduce household waste and increase recycling. They also offered a range of other experiences that supported residents in establishing recycling habits.

### **Laura Jeffrey Academy**

At Laura Jeffrey Academy (LJA), their goal was to provide interdisciplinary education for 200 girls and their families in grades 5-8 about the benefits of waste reduction, toxicity reduction, and composting. Teachers wrote lesson plans to integrate the topics into interdisciplinary units, utilizing community resources such as the Rethink Recycling website and presenters, as well as community education event. At the fall parent teacher conferences, students surveyed LJA families about their current practices. This data was used to focus classroom lessons and student lead information sessions around the knowledge of and behavior around recycling, composting and waste reduction. Waste reduction materials were placed on display and pamphlets were shared with families to introduce the quarter lessons/topics with families. In January, LJA 5th and 6th grade scholars traveled around their home communities (door-to-door) and shared information about waste reduction, composting, and recycling. They interviewed their neighbors, talked with their neighbors on ways to reduce their carbon foot print and helped neighbors create ways to change daily behaviors to enhance the quality of our environment. A field trip to Audubon helped the girls learn more about waste reduction and composting. Several girls choose to volunteer their time and talk with people who visited LJA's Farmers Market about backyard composting and waste reduction. They provided student-created hand outs and spoke with individuals one on one about these issues and helped them set individual goals and ways in which to change simple behaviors at home. Girls also asked LJA Farmers Market visitors to make a pledge to help their future and really evaluate their individual practices at home.

### **West Side Citizen's Organization**

The project coordinator cultivated a green culture among new immigrant communities and low-income renter households at three multi-family housing sites on St. Paul's west side. Working with resident leadership and site managers, the project coordinator targeted action, education, sustainability around recycling, waste and toxicity reduction and composting. WSCO staff conducted three workshops at two sites and reached a total of 32 residents. From these two sites, they identified two resident leaders, one at Dunedin and one at Torre de San Miguel. With the resident leaders help, WSCO staff organized a hazardous waste workshop and brought recycling into the communities (led in partnership with Eureka) and held composting workshops (led by leaders of WSCO's Urban Agriculture Work Group) at Torre de San Miguel, Dunedin Terrace and Bluff Park Homes. In addition, WSCO provided education to 135 individuals at the Chalchiutlicue Environmental Justice Summit.

### **Hennepin County Funded Projects**

#### **Armatage Montessori School**

Students studied recycling and waste issues via fieldtrips to the Recycling Zone in Eagan and integration into curriculum, and developed a home/school campaign to collect recyclable items like tile, gems and plastic bottle caps not typically collected. Sixteen students were selected to be part of the Eco Awesomeness Team (EAT) and met weekly with adult volunteers. The team plus the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders audited waste, organics and recycling at Armatage. Throughout the year, staff and volunteers used incentives such as

"smencils," reusable lunch wraps and a reusable spork. The EAT team collected plastic caps, which were used in April to create of a large mural, which was then recycled.

In the spring, the EAT spent one day creating a wonderful temporary art piece using the bottle caps the school had collected all year. The process was filmed and developed into a short video with music, which was then played at the Armatage Science Fair. The team also helped organize and staff a Recycling/Compost booth at the Science Fair. The booth included several display items borrowed from the Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board, including the popular Rethink Recycling Prize Wheel. Then, in May, the EAT Team was an active presence at the School Carnival as they promoted waste reduction. Organics composting has become a daily activity for all Armatage students and staff, and several organics bins were purchased to allow greater classroom participation in composting. The EAT Team presented to the principal and the PTA about writing a policy to eliminate the purchase of Styrofoam for school events.

### **Brooklyn Center School District**

The project goal was to change community, parent, student and teacher behaviors to reduce waste and recycling more through student-led education. The project coordinator focused first on education through presentations on greening celebrations in 20 classrooms. Then, she formed student green teams to work on several projects for the April EarthFest including art, presentations and displays about recycling and bottles. The Environmental Club at the high school created a display and an activity about landfills. The high school also sponsored a Teen Clothing and Book Swap in conjunction with Earthfest. Approximately 650 community members attended Earthfest.

The Green Team members then turned their focus to a waste reduction challenge, using activities and displays already put together for Earthfest—one for English speaking families and one for Spanish speaking families. Throughout the summer, surveys were collected from 20 households. Then, the team created recycling bin, trash and organics carts for the elementary school "pods", buckets to transport breakfast organics from classroom to organics bin, a four-part recycle station for the main office of Earle Brown, a tri-sort waste station for the staff lunchroom at Brooklyn Center High School, and two outdoor recycle bins for the athletic field.

### **Kaleidoscope Place**

The COLOR ME GREEN project was an opportunity for students to experience their environment through visual arts, storytelling, music, and performance. The staff and artists integrated into the curricula a special learning track focused on the environment. The students produced and exhibited their interpretation of how to save the world around them.

The interactive curriculum was written and taught in each classroom that included 15 lessons on the theme: rethink, recycle, reuse. Two additional lessons were added on composting and toxic chemicals. The classrooms were comprised of K-8th grade and were attended by 65 children. A recycled art project was completed by each classroom. The 2nd – 5th grade class wrote a script, designed costumes and recorded a video on rethink, recycle, reuse and composting. They performed this play for the other Kaleidoscope children. The 5th – 8th grade students did research and compiled what they learned in a PowerPoint presentation that they gave to the younger children. The 2nd – 8th grade class worked on interactive displays which they displayed for two afternoons in the lobby of the Center for Changing Lives in celebration of Earth Day. These displays were seen by approximately 80 people. Each display required the visitor to do an activity that was guided by the children.

In May, they hosted a celebration with parents where the children showed the parents what they had learned. It was attended by 120 people, 55 parents and relatives and 45 children,

and 20 volunteers. The summer program included a recycle, rethink, reuse component to the morning academics.

### **Nawayee Center School**

The goal of this project was to reduce food waste by increasing composting among Native Americans in Minneapolis. Center School staff and students created and built three very successful vermicomposting systems and a 12' x 4' x 4' - three bin composting system. Students and staff are now composting food and garden waste outdoors. In preparation, students in the Food Science class researched about how and why to compost. Then, those students taught the rest of the students about composting. Students created an information video and a composting brochure. The video and brochure were presented to community members by students at two events: Native American Month Kick-Off and Wellness Fair at the Minneapolis American Indian Center (over 1000 in attendance) and at Migizi Communications Indian Month Celebration at East Phillips Park Community Center (over 300 in attendance).

### **Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association**

Through a series of workshops, events, and other outreach efforts comprising the Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association (LHENA) Recycling and Compost Initiative, LHENA educated neighborhood residents on the importance of composting and recycling, while encouraging residents to implement sustainable solutions to reduce waste. Workshops focused on recycling, worm composting, sustainable containers and cooking, composting in Uptown, salvaging and preventing construction waste, and sharing resources/swapping.

In May, LHENA led a Neighborhood Swap to build community collaboration around waste reduction. The swap combined ideas of eliminating the throwing-out of usable items at move-out/spring cleaning time, reducing the need to buy new items, and allowing neighbors to donate and share items rather than throwing them away. They also produced a toolkit, which outlines how other neighborhoods can plan their own neighborhood swap.

## **Project Highlights: People Taking Action to Reduce Waste**

The following are a sampling of testimonies from grantees about proud moments and results during their Community POWER grant activities, which illustrate how people are taking action to reduce waste.

What we are most proud of is that Fishing for Life as limited as we are, are able to do more with minimal disruption to our mission; meaning by simply adding some workshops, awareness and dissemination environmental concerns into our mission we CAN do more. Our audience was more than receptive to this project and they are all outdoor enthusiasts and this has opened the door for us to do more and widen our connections to what is important for all of us – the environment but especially for those of us who enjoy the sport of fishing – We can “Do Our Part”. We’re proud to be able to do something more. Because of our environmental commitments we are being recognized by important players in both the fishing industries and environmental arenas than ever before.

--Carla Danielson, Grant Coordinator, Fishing For Life

We are very proud of the fact that the Il-Hasan mosque began recycling because of this project and most of the adult peer educators began using safer household cleaners because of the presence of children and grandchildren in their households. We are also proud of the fact that the African community newspaper decided to do an article on the last workshop because they admire what MAWA is doing in the African community and found our community power project to be innovative. We are also very proud of the enthusiasm with which the participants embraced this program and went on to educate even more people

than they were expected to. Above all, we are proud of the fact that the 30 post-survey respondents have adopted one or more behavior change actions because of this project.  
-- Melissa Nambangi, Executive Director, Minnesota African Women's Association

We are very proud that our grant project was able to educate such a large and diverse audience about recycling and reducing waste. We were able to work within the schools which helped promote the Go Green 4-H Team, present at community events, and work with hundreds of day campers in the St. Francis area. We believe that the greatest achievement, though, was working with the teen leaders. The girls who led the club meetings were excited about the subject and eager to teach to the youth and the girls who helped teach at the YMCA were extremely encouraging and reliable.

The best moment this summer occurred when Megan was running late for our weekly YMCA recycling program. When she arrived with the supplies for the program, the two teen leaders were already there and discussing how they were going to lead a program without any supplies! They had already decided on a couple of games and a quick lesson that could be done with supplies found around the campground. Megan was extremely impressed with these teen leaders and believes that they will use the experience in this program to become great leaders in their future endeavors.

--Tammy McCulloch, Extension Educator - 4-H Youth Development Programs

Engaging and empowering students as ambassadors for positive social change was the single most important outcome! Witnessing students of all ages get excited about educating their parents and the community on "going green" was a true inspiration. Our children are our future, and if we can help them get excited about waste reduction and recycling activities, we can have hope that their leadership will bring about a "greener and better" tomorrow.

This grant enabled teachers, business leaders, media experts, governmental agencies, community organizations, parents and concerned citizens to work with students to help make our schools, our businesses and our community a greener and better place to live, learn, work and play. According to program evaluation surveys, approximately 75% of all participants who increased their level of waste reduction or recycling activity did so (at least in part) because of this program and the work done by students. This grant solidified the enthusiasm of district leadership to support current and future waste reduction and recycling activity. It strengthened the partnership with Carver County Environmental Center, and helped launch additional waste reduction/recycling initiatives.

--Richard Scott, Director Office of Grants & Development, Waconia Public Schools

We are proud of the response we received to the Community POWER Project. Recycling, reusing, and reducing waste is a new discussion topic within the apostolic church so we did not know how parishioners were going to react. However, to see 450 people take bags and inquire about the recycling bins and reusing paper allows us to see how our sector is really open to new things.

--Andrea Thomas, Director of Programs, Shiloh Temple International Ministries

The Community POWER Grant has proven to be a very positive and educational experience. Not only have we had the opportunity to inform community seniors about waste and toxin reduction the new information is so useful to seniors. Many of the seniors who participated did not realize they can dispose of medications at the Ramsey County Sheriffs' Office! Proper and timely disposal of medications not only reduces waste and toxins, it also reduces the risk of accidental medication mix-ups.

Seniors who received a resource grab bag have given us positive feedback. Within the bag they also receive a refrigerator magnet with local resources, including the [RethinkRecycling.com](http://RethinkRecycling.com) website and recipe books for homemade low-toxin household

cleaners. The *Waste and Toxin Reduction Workshops* have received positive media coverage through the Lillie News and participants appeared to enjoy and appreciate the information provided!

--Katie Fleming, Volunteer, NE Seniors for Better Living

I am most proud of the number of people we have impacted and the sheer size of recycling collection that we have done. We have made a significant difference in the amount of recycling being sent to the landfill. I am also really proud of the fact that we have brought individuals with special needs into the community to create a change. I feel that we are creating social change on many different levels through our projects.

--Dusty Dennis, Teacher, Stillwater Area High School Transition Program

We are so proud that we were able to successfully complete such a grand array of projects and to reach so many people. The partnership between On the Move and Dakota County Public Health enabled us to reach many new immigrant parents of young children with the non-toxic cleaner project. We were able to take the time to talk about home safety and have conversations about how non-toxic cleaners can be safer for their homes. I have run into some of these parents months after they attended our program. They remember me and have said that they are still making the cleaner. Also, some have said that they shared the information with others.

We reached and engaged a very difficult target audience—low income and new immigrant people—that was spread across Dakota County. We are proud to have helped engage this audience to make a difference in their lives and communities.

--Suzanne Sheridan, Coordinator, On the Move...for Minnesota Families, University of Minnesota Extension, Dakota County

We generated enough interest in composting to exceed our goal of directly engaging 100 households by more than two fold, including 121 households that got bins and five additional households purchasing vermiculture supplies. This success was a result of 1) a partnership with the UST's Green Team; they subsidized 20 percent of the bins sold, helped with event logistics, took the lead on the training, and organized volunteers to flyer the neighborhood 2) help from UST staff and faculty, six Ramsey County Master Gardeners, UPDC board members, and Eureka Recycling 3) community volunteer engagement including support from the Desnoyer Park Improvement Association and 4) a comprehensive composting website. In addition, we are proud to have increased our capacity to promote composting in Union Park by having trained the UST Green Team to run the program. Their program advisor reported that the students considered this to be the most important project they did this year.

-- Annie Johnson, Community Organizer, Union Park District Council

The activity that made me most proud was the relay races with the kids. The kids did a great job and got really into it. The younger children asked a lot of questions and were very excited to participate. I was surprised to find out that some of the kids never recycle at home. We found more small milk cartons in the recycling bins than ever before by the end of the day!

-- Jeannie Farrell, Program & Volunteer Coordinator, West 7th Community Center

Changing lifestyles to reduce waste and adopt recycling habits is challenging. We are proud of the number of youth that were active and engaged participants in activities – even those intended for adults! The programs we offered seemed to tap into their desire to both have fun as well as to learn new practices and adopt new behaviors. At one location, for example, many of the youth are responsible for taking out the trash, and with their new knowledge were able help their families start to recycle by sorting items prior to disposal. Our hope is that these new practices become lifelong habits.

We were also excited that the programs increased interest in establishing onsite recycling at several locations. One site began a recycling program during the year and at others staff are actively working with PPL's property management division to establish feasibility plans for implementation of recycling programs.

Overall, it was really rewarding to see how receptive residents were to the workshops and events we offered. People were especially responsive to the "non toxic cleaners" events and information and have really taken the information to heart, changing shopping habits to avoid toxic products.

--Sarah Koschinska, Director, Self-Sufficiency and Youth Development Programs, PPL

LJA is most excited about the level of advocacy the girls have taken upon themselves for the environment. The school has a different understanding and tolerance towards waste. Each and every girl is committed to our school environment and is willing to speak up for the way our school is disposing of goods, what we purchase, and how we most effectively use materials. Particularly in the art classroom girls have been researching materials that are either non-toxic or recyclable to use as their medium within projects. Our art teacher is ecstatic to see the amount of time and research the girls are spending at finding the best fit materials for their outcomes and the environment. Secondly, within the science curriculum girls are refusing to participate in particular chemical labs due to the use of the chemicals being used. The science teacher has had to find alternatives to her initial plan. One that is more environmentally friendly. Girls are really feeling comfortable at having their voice be heard and implementing change within their lives that support the environment.

--Lizzie Forshee, Teacher, Laura Jeffery Academy

Looking back at the grant, WSCO is most proud of reestablishing a recycling program at Torre de San Miguel and brought this site to a place where they feel all residents are fully versed in recycling, waste and toxicity reduction. Also, through our involvement with the Chalchitlicue Environmental Justice Summit, we were able to provide "actionable" methods to improve health and reduce waste for 135 youth of color and their families. This was not anticipated at the start of the project.

--Elena Gaarder, Executive Director, West Side Citizen's Organization

I am most proud of how our Eco Awesomeness Team met weekly and worked so hard to transform the school into a more environmentally aware school. I got so much positive feedback from the students and parents about behavioral change. Here are a few of the comments that came back on the surveys:

"Since my daughter learned a lot about recycling she was all over us to be diligent about what is waste, recycling, and what we can do to reduce waste."

"My child was on the EAT Team and she made sure that everyone in the house used reusable containers."

"My daughter was very interested in sharing what she'd learned at school about recycling and waste, and is demanding (which is good) that we get closer to zero waste than we are at currently."

"Hurray for such a great grant program! We would love to see these activities continue."

"We now only use reusable containers for our daughter's lunch - this was due to her initiative."

"While we have not been recycling more, as we were already active recyclers, we have been reusing or re-purposing items a lot more often at our daughter's urging, such as using paper towels for art projects and then recycling the art projects when they are done."

--Julie Railsback, Social Worker, Armatage Montessori School

I am most proud of how motivated the Green Teams were to create displays for EarthFest and for the Waste Reduction Challenges about various waste reduction subjects. I thought the displays they created were great!

--Jill Dalton, Green School Coordinator, Brooklyn Center School District

It was obvious that by the end of the year, children had internalized the importance of recycle, rethink, and reuse. They loved being a part of writing a script, teaching adults and acting. Much work was put into making the curriculum exciting, creative and interactive. At the end of each school year, a survey is done with each child to understand how they feel about the Kaleidoscope experience and what was most meaningful to them. After being given a list of all of the subjects and activities covered in the year, 80% of the children listed the work that was done as a result of this grant as the most meaningful and most fun! At Kaleidoscope we have a fair amount of children with emotional/behavioral needs. This unit was so popular that we used it as a reward for good behavior. We saw a significant positive difference in the behavior of the children on the days that we worked on this curriculum. The passion in which the volunteers who assisted in the classrooms was inspiring. They always had new ideas on how the children could become more active in the lessons. Each of them verbalized that their rethink, recycle, reuse practices have changed as a result of working with the children on this year long project.

--Cindy Johnson, Director, Kaleidoscope Place

Our students feel a sense of pride when they look at the compost system. They have an investment in this system and continue to use it on a daily basis. One of the students constantly teases that if there was a tornado he would feel more comfortable in the compost bin because it is so well built. On a school basis, we are extremely proud of how much waste we have reduced.

--Mary Cullen, Teacher, Nawayee Center School

The Neighborhood Swap—the event took a great deal of energy, creativity, and thought. We wanted to have an event that allowed neighbors to connect around waste reduction issues while serving a utilitarian purpose that the neighborhood CleanSweep had formerly used. Neighbors provided very positive feedback on the results of the swap, feeling pleased by being able to share unused items, and take home items that they needed.

The swap reduced 1,253 lbs of waste and facilitated conversation and education around sharing items. We also developed a toolkit for other neighborhoods to replicate the event in their own communities, and several Uptown Green Teams are already considering having an event such as this in the future.

--Caroline Griepentrog, Executive Director, Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association

## **Ways Waste Reduction Messages Are Shared**

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Grantees were asked to tell us how they shared waste reduction messages. Below are a few examples.

### **Fishing for Life**

They created project business size cards with website information, which have been distributed at all of their events and to key stakeholders. The business card point people to their website to learn more about their project and environmental efforts (1000 business cards were distributed). In addition, they created a compact Environmental Program that can be easily disseminated year after year; with add-ons. They promoted [www.RethinkRecycling.com](http://www.RethinkRecycling.com) on all printed literature, press releases, website, and announcement to board of directors and key sponsors via email.

### **Minnesota Africa Women's Association**

MAWA shared its project information by inviting the newspaper reporters to the last training session and that article was published in the *Mshale* edition of September 2012, a paper that reaches some 50,000 readers through print and online. We also shared the information on their Facebook page and will put up the final report on their website. MAWA staff and volunteers/participants continue to talk about the work covered in this project to their community and church groups because they find it very essential and important. They have promoted [www.rethinkrecycling.com](http://www.rethinkrecycling.com) by referring all participants and peer educators to the page for more information and to refresh their knowledge before doing presentations and also to learn more about recycling from there. They have had 7 African Girls' Initiative for Leadership and Empowerment (AGILE) participants do projects that include presentations to their school groups on what they learned from this website.

### **St. Francis Community Education**

The St. Francis Community Education partnership with Anoka County 4-H provided several opportunities for disseminating project results with youth serving organizations. Youth participated in the Spring Business and Community Expo in St. Francis by hosting a booth with educational materials that promoted [www.rethinkrecycling.com](http://www.rethinkrecycling.com). The event had over 750 people in attendance.

### **Waconia Public Schools**

Information about the "Living Green...Living Better" initiative has been shared with the Waconia Public Schools Administrative Staff (18 people), School Board (7 Board of Directors, with approximately 15 in the audience and others listening on local cable channel) and Governmental Advisory Committee (5 people). Lessons learned from the grant will be used for all future planning on waste reduction and recycling initiatives involving Waconia Public Schools. A partnership has already been established with Carver County Environmental Center to utilize their intern to expand organic recycling at Southview Elementary this fall, with additional plans to expand to Clearwater Middle School in the Spring 2013. Information pertaining to the Bayview Elementary "3-2-1 You're Done" organic recycling program highlighted in the *Newscast* video will be used as a model for expansion. Educational Pop Up Banners, RethinkRecycling Tote Bags and Brochures obtained through the Community POWER grant will be made available at future community events in collaboration with Waconia High School Conservation Club.

The RethinkRecycling logo and website were included on all marketing and educational material (including a link on the district's homepage). It was specifically referenced during the *Newscast* video. The RethinkRecycling banners and table display were prominently displayed during the Ridgeview Family and Friends "Come Together" event. *Newscast* production students utilized information taken from the RethinkRecycling website as part of their research in preparing the *Newscast* video.

### **Shiloh Temple International Ministries**

Shiloh Temple International Ministries is considered the hub of the Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, and South Dakota Council of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World. The Project Facilitator has had several discussions with "sister churches" about the project and the importance of recycling and reducing wastes. Thirty pastors from the council member churches have learned about the project.

### **Northeast Seniors for Better Living**

We are very proud of the outcomes of this project and are excited to share them with the community and our sister organizations! A short article about our Community POWER Grant Project was featured in their newsletter, *The Golden Gazette* and the *D2 Newsletter*; which was delivered to over 10,000 households. At the end of October, they sent a press release to the Lillie News that summarizes our activities, successes, and plans for next year; Lillie News is a free local paper which is delivered to all households in the area. Additionally, they

plan to update their website with a summary of our activities in 2011 and 2012 with early promotion for next year's activities.

All of their print materials associated with this project included an acknowledgement of Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board and RethinkRecycling.com. This includes the press release that was sent to the Lillie News. The Lillie News featured two articles about the Waste and Toxin Reduction Workshops in March and April 2012.

### **Stillwater Area High School Transition Program**

They spent a lot of time trying to disseminate information about Rethink/Recycle and about the Community POWER grant itself. The students put on two informational sessions at Boutwell's Senior Center. They also developed several hundred magnets and posters which were distributed to students, staff, and residents at the senior center. The magnets and posters displayed the rethink recycle logo and listed proper recycling items from the vendor in this area. Students also used presented projects related to the grant at several community meetings, Special Ed advisory Council and Transition Advisory Council for the school. They also had a compost bins, built by students, on display at a community event in Afton. Their hope is to continue disseminating information about recycling to improve recycling at sporting events on school grounds.

### **On the Move...for Minnesota Families, University of Minnesota Extension, Dakota County**

Student artists displayed social marketing messages as art throughout Dakota County including in apartment buildings and libraries, on bags and backpacks, at community events including the Dakota County Fair, libraries and on the RV. On the Move managed an educational display about non-toxic cleaners and household hazardous waste which included the RethinkRecycling logo and website at several public events. Staff interacted with more than 4,000 people at a Family Education Resource Fair and the Dakota County Fair.

All of their community programming takes place in partnerships with more than 28 organizations. Information about Community POWER was shared in conversations with agency partners and with program participants. In addition, the project coordinator talked about it at various collaborative groups including the New Americans Collaborative. The RethinkRecycling logo was printed on the Shopping Used in Dakota County directory that hundreds of people received and on signage at public events.

### **Union Park District Council**

They sent a memo notifying the following of this program: St. Paul District Council Community Organizers/Directors (17), City Council members, the City of St. Paul's environmental coordinator, the Mayor's office, our Minnesota House and Senate delegations, and Eureka Recycling. They also did some preliminary outreach through various online forums (e.g., UPDC Issues (247), UPDC Facebook (113) Transition Towns (88), Gardening Matters (1000+-). With the understanding that the City was planning to do a 2013 push for composting, they sought advice from the City and Eureka Recycling. They produced a three-minute video with highlights from the final report, both of which are posted on their website. They used this video and a preliminary report for presentations to interested 2011 and 2012 Community POWER grantees, the UPDC Board, and the UPDC Neighborhood Issues Committee. Finally, they have posted a program toolkit on their website, which others can download and adapt as needed.

RethinkRecycling.com continues to be promoted as a resource on their website and in various correspondences. They included its "Recipe for Good Clean Dirt" in the info packets given to participants and distributed them at Earth Day events, encouraging people to put this "cheat sheet" on their refrigerators (some reported they did so). Program participants also received a Rethink Recycling shopping bag. Finally, they used the compost banner at four events.

### **West 7<sup>th</sup> Community Center**

Following the Community Power grant activities, they created a how-to/best practices guide that was shared with 74 organizations and non-profits. They promoted the Rethink Recycling through the use of cloth bags that had Rethink Recycling's logo imprinted on them. For the November/December West 7th Community Center Spotlight, a short article was written highlighting some of the success of their activities and also included the Rethink Recycling website.

### **Project Pride in Living**

They shared information about the project with fellow Community POWER grantees in early September 2012, which was a great opportunity to share what we learned over the last year. More informally, they are sharing information about what they learned with PPL's property management staff, who manage over 1,000 units of affordable and/or supportive housing in the Twin Cities region as well as program staff from PPL's Cabrini Partnership and New Foundations programs, which also offer onsite holistic support services to PPL residents. Through their project they have promoted [www.rethinkrecycling.com](http://www.rethinkrecycling.com) at most events, sharing with residents the range of information, tips, resources and tools available on the site. They used the website to get recipes for non toxic cleaners and activities that were featured at events. PPL's resident newsletters were used to promote the program.

### **Laura Jeffery Academy**

Laura Jeffrey Academy has shared information about their work about the importance of waste reduction, recycling, toxicity reduction and composting and creating behavior change through their weekly newsletter, which is shared with LJA families and community members who are enrolled in their list serve (approx 415 emails).

### **West Side Citizen's Organization**

WSCO plans to have a follow up meeting with Eureka Recycling to discuss how the CPG related work was beneficial in improving overall recycling numbers at each of the three sites. Their hope is that they use the information (workshop format and outreach) to target multi-family properties that have poor tonnage reports. WSCO also plans to work with the Neighborhood Development Alliance (NeDA), a local housing provider, to share the information so that they can initiative trainings at their various multi-family sites.

### **Armatage Montessori School**

Juile Railsback has spoken at several PTA meetings (about 30 adults), shared information at the Hennepin County School Organics Meeting (about 20 people), presented at the Community Power fall meeting, and discussed the ongoing project throughout the year through the school newsletter. Most of the Armatage families have been impacted by this grant, and as well as many friends and relatives that have visited the school.

### **Brooklyn Center School District**

In November, Jill Dalton presented to the school board about the grant activities. Hennepin County Environmental Services was credited on the pledge card at the Waste Reduction Challenges. The RethinkRecycling logo was on the reusable bags, brochures, and coloring pages that were been passed out to 500 people.

### **Kaleidoscope Place**

Cindy Johnson encouraged her congregation, Mount Olivet Lutheran Church (14,000 members) to apply for a Community POWER grant and was awarded a grant in 2012. The Kaleidoscope children's Earth Day displays were used to introduce the importance of the work to the newly formed Care for Creation committee—about 50 people.

### **Nawayee Center School**

Information about the Nawayee Center School project has been shared with other nonprofits such as MIGIZI Communications and the American Indian Center. The results were also

shared at the Community Power meeting in September. The information was also discussed at the June meeting of the Phillips Indian Educators. Approximately 100 people have received the information. Center School has promoted [www.RethinkRecycling.com](http://www.RethinkRecycling.com) and Hennepin County by putting this information on our brochure and video and by having students look at the website as a source of information. We also handed out 200 RethinkRecycling reusable shopping bags.

### **Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association**

The Rethink Recycling Logo was placed on LHENA promotional materials for events, and write-ups, and Rethink Recycling was mentioned in our first newspaper article. They shared information about the project through the following methods:

Tabling at Caffetto: 35 people

Tabling at the Uptown Market: 10 people

National Night Out: 200 people

LHENA Annual Meeting: 75 people

The Uptown Green Teams combined meeting: 18 people

The Wedge Neighborhood Newspaper: circulation of 4,500

The Wedge website and LHENA Facebook page: 193 "likes"

LHENA Email Listserv: 199 subscribers

## **How Projects Will Be Sustained**

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Grantees told us about which parts of their program will last beyond the grant period. Below is a sample of the different ways projects will be sustained into the future.

### **Fishing for Life**

Environmental student stewards will have opportunities to present and disseminate information to their own schools via presentations/displays, science fairs, and take-home flyers, and exhibits at their schools during the off-season of their organization's events. They will use the environmental displays created through the grant at all future events and lakeside events, impacting more environmental stewards. There will be approximately 500 youth and 750 parents will potentially be exposed in future.

### **Minnesota African Women's Association**

While some of the peer educators still have to report on their final total numbers reached, several continue educating groups they belong to even though they have reached and past the numbers assigned them by the project. MAWA staff members also continue educating adult participants who express an interest in learning more because a friend mentioned the training to them or because they read the newspaper article.

### **St. Francis Community Education**

Sustaining the concept of Go Green 4-H Team was a key objective to the project. By combining two community entities, St. Francis Community Education and Anoka County Extension 4-H Youth Development Program, they felt that they were ensuring success. Youth that participated in the spring after school programming were engaged and excited about the opportunity and it created a spark to possibly continue the program this fall. St. Francis High School continues to have an Environmental Club and it is their hope that they access the resources they have available as a result of the Community POWER Grant. The partnership with the YMCA has broadened the youth programming base for Anoka County 4-H and this audience is likely to be engaged in environmental education in the future. The learning kits that were developed for the project to expand learning are available for 4-H Clubs and Community Education to check out. The project kits will allow for waste reduction and recycling education to continue to a broader audience.

### **Waconia School District**

Information and lessons learned from the Community POWER grant will be used for future planning on waste reduction and recycling initiatives. A partnership has been established with Carver County Environmental Center to expand organic recycling at Southview Elementary this fall, with additional plans to expand to Clearwater Middle School in the Spring 2013. Information pertaining to the Bayview Elementary "3-2-1 You're Done" organic recycling program, which was highlighted in the *Newscast* video will be used as a model for expansion. Clearwater Middle School PTO hosts annual electronic recycling events to both educate the community on electronic recycling and generate donations to purchase new educational resources for students. Educational Banners, RethinkRecycling Tote Bags and Brochures obtained through the Community POWER grant will be made available at future community events in collaboration with Waconia High School Conservation Club.

### **Shiloh Temple International Ministries**

Shiloh Temple International Ministries has purchased a large recycling bin from Waste Management. They will continue to keep recycling bins in the offices and use recycled paper in the fax machines. They are also discussing putting in a garden in the back of the building.

### **Northeast Seniors for Better Living**

The subject matter covered in the Waste and Toxin Reduction Workshops is very important for seniors in particular. Many of their participating seniors have years of accumulation of household hazardous waste, medications that are expired or no longer needed, and an excess of junk mail. They plan to continue to provide seniors with reusable shopping bags and resource materials that will help them reduce waste and reduce toxins in their homes. These grab bags are currently made available to seniors who attend new senior social hour and are offered at many of our outreach events and activities. They are also encouraging seniors who attend social hours to take steps to reduce junk mail and offer assistance with this process.

Northeast Seniors for Better Living has also taken steps to implement green event strategies. This includes using reusable materials instead of disposable materials, when possible and offering recycling bins at events. Additionally, they have begun to use an e-mail blast strategy instead of mass mailings to reduce the amount of paper mailings. This is particularly important for promotion of outreach and fundraising events.

### **Stillwater Area High School Transition Program**

Transitions students will continue to oversee recycling collection including food waste and collect recycling from classrooms daily at Stillwater High School. In addition, the transition students, in collaboration with the student organization SADD, will coordinate clear stream recycle bins, and heavy duty recycle bins to the stadium and sport fields. And finally, students will continue the recycling program at Senior Center during the summertime.

### **On the Move for Minnesota Families, University of Minnesota Extension**

Many grant activities will continue because of the partnerships that have been built. Most of the programs will continue meeting next year, and participants will build on last year's projects. They were thrilled to be able to create active games and play things out of worthless items. We saw the empowerment that children gained when they learned that they could reduce their footprint on the earth by creating something with their own hands and minds that was engaging. They were so excited about making banks from thrown away containers.

Their original Community POWER project enabled them to purchase some items that they continued to use in recent programs such as a portable worm bin container and reusable plates, cups and napkins. On the Move will continue to work with many of the same students at program sites. Participants will build on some of the themes and projects they did last year and share what they know with new program participants. The portable worm

bin will continue to be used at youth sites and we will continue to serve low-waste fruit for snacks and create art with a green theme.

The Community POWER grant project has been a great asset to them as they strive to connect with a very difficult audience to engage. This grant has enabled them to reach even more people in need and given us leverage to receive additional funding and continue bringing programs and services to new immigrants and low income audiences in Dakota County. They state they are very grateful for that.

### **Union Park District Council**

Thirty-three participants expressed an interest in a neighborhood "green club". They plan to engage this group in future activities, possibly including work they will be doing with their second Community POWER grant to promote composting among businesses. In addition, using a train-the-trainer model, this program built capacity among UST students, such that they could offer some form of this program again, either with UPDC or other partners. One idea to keep the cost of bins down in the future while reaching buyers would be for UPDC to organize various groups (schools, churches, clubs) to do a bulk purchase. UPDC continues to host the Resolution Compost 2012 website and field requests for compost bins, "Union Park Composts!" stickers and information. In the meantime, the newly established Merriam Station Community Garden is a potentially site for public composting demonstrations.

### **West 7<sup>th</sup> Community Center**

The West 7th Community Center Senior Program will continue to offer a vegetarian meal option at our monthly Lunch-N-Bingo events, Volunteer Recognition Dinner and Aging Well Expo. They will also keep information on junk mail reduction. As clients have questions about how to reduce junk mail, they will be able to easily provide them with resources to take action.

### **Project Pride in Living**

PPL is continuing to offer education and information on waste reduction, recycling and e-waste disposal to residents at community gatherings and on Family Literacy nights. They provide a copy of the Healthy Living Guide to all new residents as they move in, and it is also posted on The Hub, PPL's online portal to information, tools and resources. It is readily accessible to residents as well as to the larger community. In addition, based on the high degree of resident interest in recycling, they are working to establish onsite recycling programs at additional PPL affordable housing developments.

PPL provides services to people living in scattered site affordable housing units who are often not able to attend community events. To extend the reach of their efforts, they made 'green' welcome baskets for filled with a variety of non toxic cleaning supplies, recipes for green cleaners and the Healthy Living Guide, and distributed to 20 households this year. The response was overwhelmingly positive. In 2013, they are actively looking for volunteer groups to who can supply materials and assemble green baskets for distribution to new residents in our supportive housing portfolio.

PPL's most recent strategic plan calls for the establishment of an organization-wide Green Team. The team will advise and guide all PPL departments in an effort to improve the efficiency of PPL buildings and will provide resources that assist program staff in promoting green living to participants as they work toward self-sufficiency. The team will also set goals for energy cost savings and reducing PPL's carbon footprint.

### **Laura Jeffery Academy**

Since LJA's work on stressing the importance of waste reduction, recycling, toxicity reduction and composting in the classroom and sharing this information with family and community members, LJA students have pushed to start an after school club that focuses on environmental issues. Girls Go Green currently is meeting every Wednesday after the

school day for approximately one hour. This group of girls is continuing the work of improving our school environment and "green" culture through educational assemblies, day of service for the environment at each of LJA's three intersession's, and weekly posts within LJA's Newsletter.

### **West Side Citizen's Organization**

WSCO will begin distributing project related information and materials (non-toxic cleaners and recipes, blue bags etc) when residents come in to pick of recycling bins. They anticipate that they will be able to provide education on waste and toxicity reduction to 200 households per year using this method.

### **Armatage Montessori School**

The school still actively promotes bringing waste-free lunches, has volunteer parents in the lunchroom to help with composting, and now is starting paper towel composting in all the classrooms and bathrooms. The PTA has committed to not purchasing Styrofoam products and are working to turn this into a policy. They are also trying to find new parent volunteers to coordinate the Eco Awesomeness Team.

### **Brooklyn Center School District**

The grant funded recycling containers for the elementary school and high school. These will be utilized for many years to come. The district has agreed to continue to fund the position of Green School Coordinator for one hour a day through the school year.

### **Kaleidoscope Place**

The curriculum, books purchased and supplies used will be stored in a cupboard, used and added to every year. They now have a group of passionate volunteers who want to continue to be a part of teaching "rethink, recycle, reuse" to students in the future. This will become foundational in their work with the children. As a result of the assessment that the Kaleidoscope youth did on the recycle practices at the Center for Changing Lives, they are in the process of planning with the Director of the Center for Changing Lives, an ongoing committee that would be comprised of key staff people in the building and some Kaleidoscope youth. The function of the committee would be to assess and improve all practices in the building regarding "rethink, recycling and reuse"

### **Nawayee Center School**

The whole school composting project will continue. They continue to produce more worms than needed in the indoor composting bins and have been sharing these with families who are interested. Survey aside, observations about how to best make changes in the community is through the students; that is where they truly saw the greatest impact. What they carry to their families and neighbors will have far more influence on behavior than presentations. The hands on, doing, and seeing the result of their labor seems to have left the deepest impressions. They truly learned and carried their learning forward.

### **Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association**

LHENA plans to again replicate the Neighborhood Swap next spring. The Swap toolkit will be made available to other neighborhood groups and associations. Information will be available on our website regarding outreach. Folders of information were compiled and will be stored in our office and available for checkout/dissemination for any interested neighbors. A LHENA neighborhood Environmental Committee/Green Team was formed with a leader, and will be collaborating on a quarterly basis with the Uptown Green Teams.

## **Lessons Learned—In their words...**

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### **Keep it Focused**

I would also advise future grantees to not take on more than they can handle. My recommendation would be to focus on one area of interest be it recycling, composting or waste reduction, and concentrate all of the agency's efforts into that one area.

It usually takes more time, expertise and resources to accomplish your outcomes than expected. It is often better to focus your topic and saturate your activities and community outreach/education on that topic, than trying to cover it all.

### **Budget**

It was helpful to have written in a stipend for our project organizer because she was very committed to seeing the project through to the end. She spent many more hours working with students than we were able to reimburse.

Be more proactive in keeping track of expenses- especially payroll and benefits. I did not know that benefits were also taken out - we ended up over budget on payroll because of that.

The lesson I learned that I would pass onto future grantees is to research items that are free before you complete the budget.

Never assume a budget item's cost; as in our example, it was assumed that worms would be cheap to do worm composting demonstrations and to provide worms for participants but come to find out red wiggle worms can be costly and so therefore that blew our budget a bit.

Keep your receipts as you go and label your receipts. Keeping track of receipts and having to communicate between the curriculums, teachers, materials, vendors, and accountants, there are many steps to collecting all the appropriate information.

### **Be flexible and expect changes**

Be flexible- always! Perhaps not be so specific in the original grant, but leave it more open to possibilities.

Our lesson learned was that everything takes much more staff time than you think. We used the Hennepin County resource book and internet teacher resources for curriculum ideas but adapting them to our situation took a great deal of time.

The biggest surprise in this project was how long everything took to accomplish. The bins themselves took about two months to make. We did not expect that it would take so long.

Understanding that plans change and that flexibility is needed are two key lessons that we have learned throughout this grant process. There were several changes in our plan and staffing that could have disrupted the quality of the project. We believe that our open communication allowed all of us to work together easily in order to deliver quality lessons to the youth while also being able to develop enthusiastic youth leaders.

Make sure that every project is planned very thoroughly. Sometimes an idea is very sound in theory, but when you go to put into physical implementation you encounter a lot of stumbling blocks.

## **Get support and find partners**

We learned that anytime we take on this kind of program, it is essential that we have many volunteers to work with the children who are passionate about the theme.

If LHENA would replicate these activities again, we would work to build more extensive partnerships with local groups, and would have put more emphasis on collecting contact information to do follow-ups and conversation-building.

Also if they are a small organization run under the good fortune of volunteers, it is mindful to know that when it comes down to the actual tasks that, although volunteers are helpful, it is necessary to have integral staff on board to help execute project as volunteers schedules and commitments change unlike perhaps paid staff.

If the grant is in partnerships with specific organizations or institutions, enter into a written MOU prior to beginning the work. That way, if staff changes, you have on paper what the project entails and are more likely to see follow through from your partners.

Working with partners maximizes bin purchasing power and reach. We worked with the UST Green Team, but it's easy to imagine other groups that could have also been good partners.

Collaborating with multiple organizations to promote a common and consistent message helps create a perceived community norm regarding the specified practice. When people learn that certain behaviors are expected, and that others are doing it, then they are more apt to do it as well. Carver County Environmental Center experienced a significant increase in the number of people dropping off items and purchasing composting bins after the *NewsCast Premier* was debuted. This corresponded to the release of an article in local paper and information distributed by the Environmental Center.

Collaborate with others who have a shared interest, but try to unify your message and branding so the community hears and sees the same thing through multiple media formats and at different locations and times. The famous quote, "many hands make light work" can greatly amplify and leverage your effectiveness as long as everyone is "singing off the same song sheet." If not, the chorus can sound more like noise than music.

## **Promote your project**

Strong promotion of the events was key. Simply advertising in the newspaper wasn't enough; flyering, social media, using networks, and multifaceted outreach is critical. The Green Team was a useful way of building neighborhood and event support, as were monthly articles. Social media is a useful way of encouraging a more extensive discussion and allowing community questions and feedback, which we gradually expanded throughout the year.

At first glance, it would appear that physical communications (e.g., hard copies of newsletters, flyers) resulted in more people setting up bins than electronic communications did (e.g., e-newsletters, Facebook). A variety of communication approaches was needed to reach our goal of directly engaging 100 households.

## **Getting participation**

Incentives are very important. Though a few participants came because of the incentives, all stayed because they found the information useful and actually enjoyed learning together. Incentives also help us get reports of participants' activities.

PPL's activities took place onsite at our affordable and/or supportive housing locations and were led by several of AmeriCorps members. The primary lesson we learned was the importance of integrating grant project activities with other onsite community building events. Building on established events (such as National Night Out, Family Literacy activities

or monthly resident meetings) was quite effective in drawing the best audience. Providing attendance incentives was also a useful tool for garnering participation.

As we had expected, using resident leaders was a great way to build enthusiasm for recycling and generate participation in events. The leaders continue to serve as 'building experts' on recycling, which truly helps to extend the work of this project.

A large percentage of PPL residents at several locations are non-native English speakers; at those locations, it was helpful to have an interpreter available. Using a resident leader as the interpreter worked out well. In addition, simultaneously addressing the needs of adults and children led to positive reinforcement of new behaviors.

Plan to use two or three methods to conduct educational activities. For some constituent groups, doing workshops where people live is effective. For others, using already organized community events is more helpful.

While nice, incentives such as drawings for gift certificates did not appear to encourage people to get a bin. The same incentive for taking the compost quiz was also ineffective until we distributed a flyer door-to-door. However, it's possible that incentives used to encourage participants to do the post program survey might have been effective.

Workshop participants seemed to appreciate having tangible and useful take-away items.

This grant provided an opportunity to gain a better insight into those factors that motivate and inhibit behavior change, both at the personal and community level. It became evident that parents are highly motivated to make behavior changes based on their children's recommendation and/or involvement. When students get excited and deeply engaged in waste reduction and recycling initiatives, and are provided an opportunity to share those activities with their parents, it becomes very difficult for parents to ignore their child's encouragement. When both kids and their parents become excited about something, the rest of the community pays attention, and are more willing to support those initiatives.

### **Programming advice**

As much as I loved the activities which included the whole school (field trips, incentive programs, Science Fair), I feel like the strongest work was done with our small EAT Team.

Fall compost bin workshops/sales could fill a need. By the time some people get around to responding to promotional materials, the area bin sales were done for the spring. Fall sales would mean that participants wouldn't have to wait a year to get a bin. It would also mean that participants would have plenty of leaves or "browns" when they started composting. Three (3) of 80 (3.75%) surveyed mentioned lack of brown materials was a concern.

Training was divided into short lessons that could be done in any order: 1) benefits of Composting/Food Waste Reduction 2) bin placement 3) what to compost 4) aerating and watering compost 5) harvesting compost. The objective was to help participants avoid common problems and for the most part we succeeded with 62 of 66 (94%) respondents reporting they were composting with no problems. However with 7 of 66 (10%) reporting frustration with flies, it might have been a good idea include a lesson that addressed troubleshooting specifically.

The process of producing and assembling resource packets and acquiring reusable shopping bags does take some time and coordination. Early preparation is particularly helpful.

Multiple motivation strategies were utilized for the Waste and Toxin Reduction Workshops. For example, waste and toxin reduction is not only important to the environment, but it is important for identity protection, personal health, and can help reduce household costs.

Reducing junk mail helps reduce the risk of identity theft. Proper disposal of medications and household hazardous waste reduces the risk of accidental poisoning and medication mix-ups- a benefit to adults, children, and pets. Use of low-toxin household hazardous waste helps prevent accidental poisoning and reduces household costs. Many retailers offer discounts for shoppers who bring in their own reusable shopping bags.

Changing community norms regarding waste reduction and recycling are closely tied to the relative ease in which those behaviors can be incorporated into everyday practices. Moving toward "single sort" recycling and including a greater variety of plastics to be included in the "single sort" pick up makes it easier for people to recycle. Providing multiple opportunities for people to learn about what needs to be done and the availability of resources to help them carryout their desired behavior change improves the likelihood of that change.

### **Surveying**

Answers to some survey questions might have been easier to interpret if the survey also included a question about whether the respondent was a homeowner who had control over lawn care practices or a renter who did not.

Calling people proved to be very difficult. The volunteers often got answer machines, busy signals or no answer. This was a very labor intensive way of getting survey information. I would suggest using an online survey or paper survey with an incentive for participating.

We found it really helpful to use Survey Monkey to compile the surveys. For some of our programs, we had participants respond that way and were very successful in obtaining responses. I would recommend future grantees look into using this method. However, be aware that if you are using the free program, there are limitations.

### **Reporting**

Start everything early. Even if you do not feel like you have adequate amount of information to start the progress report or final report, there is always parts that can be accomplished prior to the end of the program activities.

Do not forget to document all activities, no matter how small or insignificant they may seem at the time. It is best to have bundles of documentation you can then sort through at a latter date.