

COMMUNITY POWER:
*Partners on Waste Education
& Reduction*

Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board

Sustainability Report: 2004 Grantees
April 2007

General Findings

The following information was gathered from follow-up interviews with grantees whose projects ended in 2005. The purpose of these interviews was to determine the lasting impact of the grant on the organization and its activities.

100% of groups created replicable products or programs

These can be accessed and implemented by new community groups with potentially little or no cost, and will be included in a new database of project ideas to be added to the Community POWER website in 2007. Examples of replicable products and projects include:

- The *Guide for Seniors to Predatory Junk Mail* from Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors (over 1,000 copies have been distributed to twelve other senior centers and programs);
- Anoka 4-H project kits (which continue to be used by club leaders);
- A manual for reducing waste in group homes (shared at a statewide conference); and
- A *Secondhand Store Guide* created by Thomas Dale/District 7 Community Council (which was reprinted after the grant ended and distributed to hundreds of low-income families in Ramsey County).

78% of groups continue to offer waste reduction information and programming

As in past years, over three-quarters of the groups continue to engage their audiences in waste reduction actions after their grant ends. Past grantees report they have reached 3,680 people with waste reduction messages and engaged 1,304 people actively in waste reduction since 2004. Examples include:

- Waste reduction information continues to be shared at the Midtown Public Market, and the entire market became a low-waste, “green” market since the grant ended;
- Mahtomedi Community Education made a commitment to only use reused materials in their summer camp activities, and created a partnership with 3M to secure some of the materials they need; and
- Conway Battle Creek/North End Como Block Nurse Programs integrated information on household hazardous waste and reduction of junk mail into their orientation with all new seniors served by the organizations.

Some groups continue projects with their own funds

Three groups use their own operating budgets to continue their projects, while five report they can continue activities with very little or no funding. Other groups report they would need additional funds to continue their projects.

Waste reduction becomes a priority for past grantees

Over half of the past grantees report that waste reduction became a larger priority for their organization after participating in the grant, and two groups formally incorporated waste reduction into their organizational goals.

Nearly all groups change their internal waste management practices

As a result of their involvement in Community POWER, most groups make changes to reduce waste in their office settings. Common changes include starting to recycle, using both sides of office paper, starting to compost, and using mugs and glassware instead of paper or styrofoam.

Staffing is a major barrier to continuing projects

Half of the groups report “lack of adequate staffing” is a major barrier to doing more with waste reduction after their grant ends. A few groups also report they experienced lack of interest by their constituents and/or staff.

Feedback on Community POWER’s structure

When asked what was most helpful about the way Community POWER was structured to help them be successful in their projects, the most common response is personal support provided by project managers and county staff, followed by grantee meetings, networking with other grantees, and resource materials. Several groups report Community POWER is unlike many grants program in terms of the high level of support grantees receive throughout the process.

Summaries

Anoka County 4-H

Anoka County 4-H integrated eight waste reduction programs into their general programming during their grant period. They have continued to utilize many aspects of the eight programs in a variety of ways with 4-H special events, day and over-night camps, club meetings, Anoka County Fair, and through service-learning projects. They have continued to reach a large number of people with waste reduction messages with their display boards and integrated programming and have presented waste reduction information by request to other 4-H programs in the metro area.

Conway Battle Creek / North End Como Block Nurse Programs

These organizations have sustained nearly all aspects of their project. They continue to provide toxicity reduction and junk mail information to all new seniors in their service areas. Talking about these issues has become second nature for the organization. They now have an organizational goal to reduce waste and help their clients reduce waste. They continue holding an annual garage sale that becomes more popular each year. When they encouraged their local neighborhood organization to apply for a grant and they did, the seniors were proud they had initiated something that spread to others.

Lexington-Hamline Community Council

They hired an independent contractor to do the work related to their project, and since the project ended the contractor left and the other staff have turned over, too. When they did strategic planning last year, environmental issues were a low priority for the organization in general, so they haven't pursued much. They know that some people really got interested in composting because of the project and continue to do it. They would like to publish junk mail information again in their newsletter.

Linden Hills Neighborhood Council

Linden Hills neighborhood residents went beyond being great recyclers and committed waste reducers since the grant ended by creating new and innovative projects in their neighborhood. Examples include working with Hennepin county on a neighborhood level compost converter, and continuing to promote their cloth bags and junk mail postcards to volunteers and residents. Council staff look forward to including more waste reduction information in their upcoming newsletters.

Longfellow Seward Healthy Seniors Program

The *Guide for Seniors to Predatory Junk Mail* was been the main product from this program. Since the end of the grant period, about twelve other senior centers and programs in the metro area requested over 1,000 copies of this brochure to distribute. The Longfellow Seward Healthy Seniors Program staff have also become more confident to educate and guide seniors about waste reduction issues and are excited to present more waste reduction education through their newsletter and social programming presentations.

Mahtomedi Community Education

They continue using lesson plans they developed during their project with the 150 children in their summer programs. They continue to compost and have started thinking about their buying practices and are always trying to create less waste. Waste reduction became an accepted priority for the program. Part of their philosophy is now "how to have fun and not create waste." They only use existing materials in their programs, such as items from ArtScraps and 3M overruns. They are part of a new city-wide Earth Day initiative.

Marcy Open School

Although the Marcy Open School's Gifted and Talented program has experienced budget cuts, they still continued some waste reduction in the school. As a result of the student-based research and presentations on waste reduction and paper recycling, a number of classrooms are still incorporating these waste reduction issues in their curriculum and in the community. For example, the school has influenced many parents to switch from receiving printed newsletters to e-newsletters. In addition, the composting flyer created by students was made available at the Seward Co-op for many months after the grant period ended. They believe the most important part of the project was creating a model for solving waste issues in their classrooms.

Midtown Public Market

Midtown Public Market staff and volunteers have not only continued to promote waste reduction to shoppers at their information table during the market season, they have been working to create a "green" market. They partnered with another organization, Sister's Camelot, to reduce all produce waste at the end of each market day by distributing it to those in need. The market also added lead tackle education through the PCA, they continue to promote the Choose to Reuse Week

through Hennepin county, and promote www.GreenGuardian.com on their cloth tote bags sold at the market. The market volunteers also distributed the 100 remaining Clean Community Cookbooks since their grant period ended. The Market staff believe "Community POWER helped to form our organizational world view."

North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale Schools

The Community Bridge Consortium's "Green Living For ALL" program continues at some of the eight group homes that initially participated. Due to staff changes and lack of interest, some group homes did not continue their recycling and waste education and activities. The manual they created on waste reduction activities for group homes continues to be shared with others and was presented at the Spring 2005 Neurological Diseases conference where Community Bridge was presented with a Most Outstanding Project Award.

Partners for Violence Prevention

Because of their project, PVP changed the name of their annual peace essay content to "Peace and Environment Essay Contest" and continue to manage this annual contest that now includes connecting peace issues to environmental issues. They starting making more of a link between issues affecting the natural world and peace, and are helping present a conference on those issues in spring 2007. They made several waste reduction changes around their office as a result of the project, including reducing the amount of junk mail the organization receives, and they started recycling. Riverview Specialty School

Riverview Specialty School

The Kids for Saving the Earth organization that served as the leadership group during the grant period continues to meet and work on waste reduction and other environmental issues at school and at home. The core project of collecting, weighing, and composting lunchroom food scraps has continued to reduce their garbage by putting over 200 pounds of food scraps in the school's three active compost bins. The parent handouts will be used in the curriculum every few years to "keep parents continually involved and affecting human choices about waste reduction." 200 new canvas bags with the Green Guardian logo have been printed and distributed to parents and volunteers since the end of the grant period. The school plans to add a "green" section on their website with information and resources about waste and environmental issues and events.

Southeast Seniors

The staff at Southeast Seniors continue to receive requests for junk mail reduction information, and continue to send in the postcards on behalf of their residents about once a month. Children at Marcy Open School who collaborated on an intergenerational project with the seniors still talk about the junk mail trees they created. Waste reduction became a new focus for the organization. They wish that Household Hazardous Waste collection events would be organized in the neighborhoods they serve, because they think their residents would actively participate. They are still interested in running waste reduction information in their newsletter.

Thomas Dale District 7 Community Council

District 7 created a Secondhand Shopping Guide for St. Paul that was re-printed by Ramsey County after the grant ended and distributed to hundreds of people. District 7 still gets requests from residents for the guide and automatically puts it in recycling bins that are distributed to new residents. They continued publishing reduce junk mail information a few times in their neighborhood newspaper.

Village in Phillips

The three square block area in the Phillips neighborhood involved in the project has continued to compost over 100 bags of leaves at the shared community garden space. Many of the 45 family compost bins are still active in the neighborhood. An additional 15 bins will be distributed at the Midtown Public Market this summer. The students and teachers involved in creating the learning gardens at Center School are no longer involved with the project due to turnover in staff. The community garden continues as an environmental learning tool for the community focused on composting and learning to grow their own food.

Unreached Groups

Three groups from 2004 could not be reached for follow-up contact. In one case, Farm in the City, significant staff changes had taken place since the grant ended. In two cases (Community Volunteer Services in Stillwater and East African Women's Group), repeated attempts at communication did not produce any response.