

**COMMUNITY POWER: Partners on Waste Education & Reduction**  
Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board

## **Sustainability Report: 2005-06 Grantees**

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### **General Findings**

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*The information in this report was gathered from follow-up interviews with fourteen grantees whose projects ended in August of 2006. Follow-up was not possible with several groups, including Independent School District 197, Oromo Community of Minnesota, Salem Lutheran School, Somali Community Development Corp., and Watershed High School, most often due to staff turnover.*

*The purpose of the follow-up interviews is to determine the lasting impact of the grant on the organization. The results are similar to findings from follow-ups with groups from the four previous years, in terms of the high number of groups that continue to offer some waste reduction education beyond the end of their contract with SWMCB. A summary of each project appears in the second half of this report.*

#### **93% of the groups interviewed created replicable products or programs**

These can be accessed and implemented by new community groups with little or no cost, and can be included in a new database of grantee project ideas and resources to be added to the Community POWER website in 2008.

#### **86% of groups continue to offer waste reduction information and/or programming, reaching 15,000 additional people**

As in past years, nearly all of the groups continue to educate and engage their audiences in waste reduction after their grant ends. Past grantees report they have reached 15,182 new people with waste reduction messages since their grants ended in 2006. Examples include:

- Carver-Scott Educational Cooperative's "Dunk the Junk" junk mail reduction skit was revised by a new group of teens at the center.
- The Confederation of Somali in Minnesota continue to show the video they made that teaches women how to read labels and prepare non-toxic household cleaners.
- District 1 Community Council in St. Paul has a link to waste reduction information from their website.
- In Hopkins, teachers continue to use the waste reduction curriculum they created in their school age programming (after school and summer programs).
- Southside Family School still uses the curriculum they developed, and has continued to access county resources such as the HHW Learning Trunk.

- Southeast Como Neighborhood has continued to share information on non-toxic lawn care with new residents and has a permanent waste reduction display in their office.

### **Waste reduction became a larger priority for 79% of past grantees**

Many grantees report that waste reduction became a larger priority for their organization after participating in the grant. Some examples include:

- Arc of Greater Twin Cities created a Wellness Committee after the project and are working to improve their green practices.
- Pilgrim Lutheran Church's pastor is now committed to assisting the Caring For Creation committee in promoting their events, and has addressed these issues in her sermon.
- Promoting health in general became a larger priority for the Confederation of Somali in Minnesota. They are now working with other funders on health projects.

### **Nearly all groups changed their internal waste management practices**

As a result of their involvement in Community POWER, most groups make changes to reduce waste in their office or building. 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. Specific examples include:

- Arc learned about building recycling options and started recycling more internally, and using reusable dishware in the kitchen and for meetings.
- Carver-Scott Educational Coop started recycling aluminum cans, switched to real dishware, and uses recycled paints for art projects.
- Ce Tempoxcalli now uses 100% recycled paper and makes double-side copies in the office.
- In Hopkins, school activity calendars are now posted online instead of printed out for each family every week.
- Pilgrim Lutheran Church has turned sixteen regular events during the year into low-waste events, involving an average of 125 people per event. They use reusable dishware, recycle, and compost food scraps.
- Southside Family School pursued a grant to receive 15 recycling bins for their school. They changed the contract with their janitors related to non-toxic cleaning projects. They also changed their breakfast and lunch systems to reduce waste.

### **Half of the groups report their stakeholders are asking for more environmental information and resources.**

Seven of the groups report that their own stakeholders, members, or audiences have asked for them to continue providing environmental resources. Examples include:

- Residents of District 1 in St. Paul noticed that the monthly waste reduction articles stopped appearing in the neighborhood newspaper and asked for more articles to be included in the future.
- At Pilgrim Lutheran Church, members asked the Caring for Creation Committee to repeat the reusable gift bag workshop.

- Teachers in the St. Paul Public Schools continue to ask for assistance to design environmental projects that actively engage their students.

### **71% of groups required additional funding to continue their projects**

Several groups used their own operating budgets to continue their projects, while others have sought and received resources from other funders. Some groups report they would need additional funds to continue their projects, and half of the groups mentioned that they need more staff capacity to continue the projects at the same level. The following are **additional barriers** experienced by grantees to continuing their projects:

- ESL quizzes created by the Adult Basic Education program at Anoka School District 11 are not a complete curriculum for ESL teachers and can only be used to supplement other lessons.
- Staff turnover at Arc makes it difficult to be sure everyone is educated about the issues. They need to offer ongoing trainings.
- Several groups mentioned the \$1 charge for junk mail postcards as a challenge.
- Crosswinds Middle School feels overwhelmed by certification preparations for their International Baccalaureate program. All staff development time has been focused on that and not other projects.
- People connected to the Slavic Community Center were frustrated that someone couldn't take away their HHW once they identified it.

### **Feedback on Community POWER's structure**

When asked what was most helpful about the way Community POWER is structured (in terms of what helps the grantees to be successful in their projects), the most common response was technical support provided by project managers and county staff, followed by grantee meetings, networking with other grantees, and resource materials. Comments included:

- Grantee meetings and break-out sessions were very informative. This grant helped expand our thinking beyond recycling.
- Grantee meetings, resources and technical support were invaluable and we continue to use the information and county staff contacts. It was great to have Hennepin County staff train our educators about household hazardous waste.
- Grantee meetings and trainings were great, as was Erin's assistance with project design.
- Grantee meetings were always relevant and useful - it is invaluable to hear from others' experiences. Because we attended a meeting, we started using waste reduction materials before even receiving the grant.
- Technical support from Erin was helpful because it seemed accessible, consistent, and we received useful feedback.

Grantees were asked **what they needed that was not provided** during their grant experience. Three grantees requested additional materials in multiple languages. Several had comments about grantee meetings and trainings. Two would have like assistance with required evaluation (this is available, but the grantees may not have known or remembered.) The responses are summarized below.

### *Meetings / Trainings*

- Meetings/trainings on weekends or evenings for volunteers to be able to attend.
- The grantee meetings might work well for other groups, but they would have preferred a mid-year check-in on site at school instead.
- It felt like a lot of meetings to attend for our small staff.
- We would have liked to do more networking, but we were too focused on our project activities. Training on how to get staff on board and educated about waste issues.
- I was told Eureka Recycling would come and present on recycling but they wouldn't.

### *Materials in other languages*

- Expanding resources for more non-English speaking audiences.
- Information available in more languages.
- More materials are needed in multiple languages.

### *Evaluation / Tracking*

- Assistance on how to document/track results.
- Assistance to work the behavior change tracking into our work plan.

### *Miscellaneous*

- Our original staff person did not continue managing the project through to the end, creating a great time burden on others.
- Some of the final reporting questions were hard for us to answer. Also, people weren't always interested in the topics. Youth might have been better as a target than older women.

Grantees were also asked **how Community POWER can continue to assist them** in their waste reduction efforts. Many groups said they would like to receive an e-newsletter if it was succinct, attractive, and included tips and information they could pass on to others. All responses appear below:

### *E-newsletter*

- Forward tips and resources. Would like to be updated on the general progress of waste reduction metro/statewide.
- Monthly e-newsletter. Notices about trainings, new resources available, newly translated documents, etc.
- Forward updates on new resources and pieces available in different languages.
- E-newsletter – but not necessarily monthly (maybe quarterly?). As an example, the Ramsey-Washington Watershed District e-newsletter is great. She would distribute this to others. Send us new resources as they become available.
- A short and frequent e-newsletter.

### *Improvements to the website*

- Make the GreenGuardian.com site more user friendly with more resources to download.
- Easier navigation and resources on the GreenGuardian.com/CP web site link.

### *Grantee Meetings*

- Interested in attending CP trainings if there are new topics not covered as a grantee.

- Would be interested in attending CP trainings, \$25/person maximum and offer scholarships.

*Other*

- Create a full curriculum on waste and toxicity for educators.
- We are always looking for new outlets for reuse of items we (Arc) do not sell.
- Phone follow-up is a good “gentle nudge” to keep us thinking about what else we can be doing.

## Summaries

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### **Anoka-Hennepin School District 11**

Anoka Hennepin School District 11 created online environmental lessons and quizzes for non-English speaking students participating in the North ABE/ESL program. Since their grant ended, they have continued to offer their quizzes online if teachers choose to use the resource, and they have linked to the quizzes through other ESL-related organizations such as the Minnesota Literacy Council. They have tracked an average of 300 hits per month to the quizzes and one-third of those completed one or more quiz. They have updated a few of the quizzes to keep them current.

### **Arc Greater Twin Cities**

Arc provided waste reduction training for their staff and volunteers, offered waste reduction resources to their customers and donors, and organized a series of workshops on waste reduction topics such as junk mail, non-toxic cleaners and creative re-use. Arc continues to train their volunteers to distribute waste reduction handouts that assist donors in getting rid of items Arc does not accept. Arc continues to put environmental articles and tips in their newsletters and emails distributed to 4,500 monthly. They are involved in a campaign to educate donors and shoppers on identifying and properly disposing of lead in toys. As a Round 7 grantee, Arc continues to offer their waste reduction workshops and is working on educating families on household hazardous waste, recycling and reuse through moms clubs and parent group meetings.

### **Carver-Scott Educational Cooperative, District 930**

Carver-Scott Educational Cooperative, District 930’s “New Beginnings” program for pregnant and parenting teens spearheaded the “Dunk the Junk” project on junk mail reduction. The teen group has continued to promote reducing junk mail through junk mail cards and reduction tips to over 100 visitors at their center. They have seen results since they now receive less junk mail in their own homes. They plan to recreate the skit with the new teens in their program and will also work as waste education mentors to 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders. As a result of their grant, the center also made internal changes, such as recycling aluminum cans, switching to real dishware, and sourcing used paints for art projects instead of buying new.

## **Chalchiutlicue/Danza Mexica Cuauhtemoc**

Chalchiutlicue trained 26 community educators about waste reduction, went door-to-door to 4,000 homes, did waste reduction presentations in fourteen schools and put on their first Chalchiutlicue Environmental Conference. Since their project ended, Chalchiutlicue continued to host the annual conference and did presentations at two schools, at the Living Green Expo and Cinco de Mayo. They also continue to educate local residents by going door-to-door with waste reduction information and sharing the GreenGuardian.com website. As a Round 7 grantee, Chalchiutlicue, now known as Ce Tempoxcalli, is working with many of their original educators to work with their families, friends, and classmates to teach and track behavior changes at home.

## **Confederation of Somali in Minnesota**

CSM hired two women to train other women in how to read labels and make their own household cleaners. They provided over 20 workshops during the grant. They produced a video about the project and the issues that they continue to show. People in the community continue to ask if they can attend the workshops, but CSM does not have the staff capacity or supplies money to continue providing them. Involvement in this project led the organization to focus on health issues in general, and they now have closer connections to agencies, foundations, and government offices connected to other health issues. They would like for Somali men to start learning about these issues, too, not just the women.

## **Crosswinds Middle School**

Several teachers were trained in how to integrate waste reduction in their classroom curricula. The project manager left before the project was complete, so the art teacher took over coordination and rewrote her curriculum to incorporate reused materials and other waste reduction concepts. The art teacher continues to include these lessons in her teaching.

## **District 1 Community Council**

District 1 inserted a monthly article on waste reduction into their neighborhood newspaper and had waste reduction displays at neighborhood events. Residents noticed when District 1 stopped including the articles and asked them to continue. Due to budget cuts, they have cut back the number of times the newspaper is produced each year. They continue to distribute information on toxicity reduction at neighborhood events, and appreciate how attractive and well designed the county, SWMCB, and state materials are, so they can easily pass them on to residents.

## **Hopkins School District "Kids and Company" Program**

Kids and Company created an after school and summer program about composting and no waste lunches. Their grant activities were a great success and they continued their programming again in 2006 and 2007, reaching over 600 youth and their families. The youth that were "knighted" continue to wear their Green Guardian t-shirts and bring no waste lunches to school. The program coordinator has trained 15 new staff to use the curriculum. As a Round 7 grantee, they expanded their project into two new school districts

and their ECFE program. They feel their curriculum is a great tool to help educators implement the district's recycling policy.

### **Pilgrim Lutheran Church**

Pilgrim Lutheran Church offered a series of four themes about waste and toxicity reduction during their grant period. They had some initial struggles when their paid staff left at the end of the grant, but they are now actively continuing their environmental education to the congregation. The Caring for Creation Team continues to offer environmental presentations and low waste events. They have continued their annual Earth Day event, updated their eco information board, and are working to repeat the workshops that were offered during the grant period – including the non-toxic cleaning workshop and make your own cloth gift bags.

### **Slavic Community Center**

The Slavic Community Center attempted to educate Russian-speaking immigrants about junk mail and proper HHW disposal, but had limited success. Their audience was frustrated that they needed to drive their own HHW items to a drop-off facility, since many are elderly and/or do not have their own vehicles. Involvement in Community POWER contributed to their knowledge of how to organize their community for involvement in a new tobacco cessation program and a financial literacy program.

### **Southeast Como Neighborhood Improvement Assoc.**

Southeast Como Neighborhood taught residents about non-toxic alternatives for lawn care and has continued to share that information with new residents. They have a permanent waste reduction display in their office, and continue to include articles on waste reduction in their e-newsletter. They have used the list of residents who participated in this project to promote other environmental projects, like rain barrels. They continue to take advantage of county materials and county staff, now that they know about them. They are looking to other funders for expanded environmental projects, such as creating a Green Village in the neighborhood.

### **Southside Family School**

Southside Family School trained students to make presentations on waste reduction to other schools and to families. They tracked changes in families' behaviors and they started composting and recycling at school. Teachers developed lesson plans for the project that they continue to use, and they continue to access county resources (like HHW Learning Trunks) that they became aware of through the project. They wrote a grant to another funder to secure 15 recycling bins for their school. The Community POWER grant gave teachers, students, and families opportunities to explore the issues and values involved with waste reduction, and it continues to be a value of the school.

### **St. Paul Public Schools**

The Service-Learning Program at SPPS worked with teachers in several schools to integrate waste reduction service-learning projects in their classrooms. They continue to use the "Service-Learning Workbook" and planning documents created for the project. Three teachers took students to the Newport waste-to-energy facility again. One teacher formed an afterschool group that is still active and is working to involve the PTA and the rest of the school. Teachers are asking for more help with environmental projects. As a Round 7 grantee, SPPS worked with additional schools to integrate waste reduction information in student projects.

### **Seward Neighborhood Group**

SNG created the "Toxic Alert" project to educate residents in the East and West Seward Towers about using less toxic products and making their own non-toxic cleaners. At the end of the grant, college students working on the project ended their involvement. This created a gap in staffing. The SNG Environment Committee believes education about household hazardous waste and children is important and continues to offer presentations and information to neighborhood residents on this issue. Due to financial problems, SNG no longer has any paid staff. They hope to expand "Toxic Alert" when they are more financially stable.