

Community POWER:

Partners on Waste Education & Reduction
Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board

ROUND SIX (2006-07) FINAL REPORT

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Executive Summary

Twenty-four community organizations and schools received a Community POWER grant in 2006-07. Half of the projects were funded through special county-specific allocations to the program, including four projects in Hennepin County, four projects in Ramsey County, two projects in Dakota County, and two projects in Washington County. The maximum grant amount was \$12,000.

All projects educated residents and engaged them in waste reduction activities. **Typical projects** included helping residents start recycling, finding alternatives for toxic household products, learning about proper disposal of hazardous materials, getting off junk mail lists, reusing instead of throwing away items, or starting to compost.

8,437 residents of the metro area were engaged in active waste reduction activities through these Community POWER projects.

Follow up surveys show that 80% of the people who participated in these projects **documented at least one waste or toxicity reduction behavior change** because of the project.

An additional 133,000 people were reached with waste reduction messages through the marketing and communication efforts of grantees. Most of these messages included mention of the Green Guardian and/or GreenGuardian.com. These messages are shared through newsletters, newspapers, email, radio ads, websites, presentations, and community newspapers.

Nearly all of the projects contain **elements that will be sustained** beyond the grant year.

continued

Beyond grants, Community POWER helps community organizations create and implement high-quality waste and toxicity reduction projects by providing:

- quarterly grantee meetings that offer technical information on waste reduction, plus networking opportunities for community groups;
- individual meetings with grantees to offer resources and plan projects;
- workshops and presentations by county staff;
- email distribution lists to link grantees, county staff, and interested groups;
- an evaluation of long-term outcomes experienced by past grantees to uncover sustainability strategies;
- waste related resource pages and email tips to assist grantees in promoting these issues properly.

Examples of People Taking Action to Reduce Waste

Camp Fire USA youth and families tracked their home waste on a calendar and worked to reduce their waste through recycling, no-waste lunches and making non-toxic cleaners.

Over 360 Carver County 4-H club families or individuals took actions such as using a worm compost bin, making bags from old blue jeans, and participating in a consignment sale.

Corcoran Neighborhood Organization turned their annual waste collection day into a Green Sweep with 298 homes participating. They achieved their goal of reducing the amount of waste collected by over 4,000 tons.

Dayton Avenue Presbyterian Church distributed 42 compost bins to church members resulting in over 700 gallons of food waste being diverted from the waste stream.

255 parents at the Forest Lake Family Center completed a waste questionnaire about current waste practices and then learned about reducing packaging, toxicity reduction, recycling and composting over the course of the year.

African women and girl “peer trainers” presented waste reduction information one-on-one to 156 neighbors. Minnesota African Women’s Association staff trained an additional 200 people through small group sessions in housing complexes and at the Al Huda Mosque.

A volunteer committee at the Prince of Peace Church held twelve special events or ongoing projects. Their outreach resulted in 3,258 waste messages disseminated to their members and 2,142 waste reduction actions taken, such as 288 junk mail cards mailed, 741 shirts made into diapers, and 500 cloth bags distributed.

Examples of How Waste Reduction Messages Are Shared

Community Neighborhood Housing Services incorporated a household hazardous waste chapter into their first time home buying classes offered in English, Spanish and Hmong, reaching 500 people.

Chisago Home School Co-op's 10-month waste reduction curriculum for homeschooling families will be posted to GreenGuardian.com for wide distribution to homeschoolers in the region.

Corcoran Neighborhood hired an illustrator to promote waste reduction messages and Green Guardian in their neighborhood paper and e-newsletter through a waste reduction comic strip called "Acorn Logic."

Through the Hillel project, Tikkun Olam (healing the Earth) teams have instituted regular columns in their monthly newsletters featuring waste reduction and held educational events focused on waste and toxicity reduction that correspond to Jewish holidays.

Ads about the Minnesota African Women's Association waste reduction project appeared in African News Journal and Mshale, two major African community papers.

New Americans Community Services trained 75 youth and 152 adults to be community "waste leaders." These leaders visited over 250 apartments bringing junk mail, waste reduction, and household hazardous waste information.

Raptor Center staff and volunteers incorporated waste and toxicity reduction messages into 80 live bird public programs, reaching over 13,000 people.

Examples of How Projects Will Be Sustained

Camp Fire USA will continue to integrate their "Green Guardian" activities in five clubs and have made the resources available to other clubs in the region.

The Carver County compost demonstration site will annually offer tours, summer composting workshops, and serve as an outdoor classroom for Chaska High School students.

Community Neighborhood Housing Services now includes household hazardous waste information in their first time home buying classes in English, Spanish and Hmong.

District 191's ECCE classes will continue to include waste and toxicity reduction education and activities. They now offer a web site called Growing Up Green.

The Silver Angel Thrift Store (East Side Neighborhood Services) will continue their waste reduction corner, weekly email tips, and annual workshops including a re-use Halloween costume workshop.

The SouthShore Center plans to make their re-gift holiday event for senior citizens and youth an annual event.

A permanent science curriculum called "It's Not Easy Being Green" was created and implemented with all 280 7th grade science students at Oltman Junior High School.

Examples of How *GreenGuardian.com* Was Promoted

Carver County Master Gardeners' compost demonstration site displays the GreenGuardian.com logo and web site on an information kiosk as well as on the exit sign of the Environmental Services building. GreenGuardian.com will also be placed on their spring movie screen advertisements.

Twenty "Think Before You Throw" ads promoting GreenGuardian.com were put in local papers and church bulletins reaching over 86,000 people by East Side Neighborhood Services.

The Green Guardian participated in the Forest Lake Family Center's "Unscary Halloween Party" (attended by 500 families) where parents and children could make Green Guardian buttons.

A Green Guardian display was presented at the Friends' School annual plant sale that attracts thousands of visitors. The Green Guardian mascot also appeared at the event.

Oltman Junior High School's Science & Math Night featured the Green Guardian and student presentations on waste reduction for over 600 families, teachers, and other students.

GreenGuardian.com was promoted by the Raptor Center by distributing a SWMCB household hazardous waste brochure to each person attending one of 80 live bird presentations; by giving away hundreds of Green Guardian pencils; and through large, attractive banners showcasing the Green Guardian and this project (now on display permanently in the lobby of the Raptor Center).

Behavior Change Summary

In the second year of our new, required evaluation study determining behavior changes, twice as many projects successfully completed the evaluation as compared to the previous year. Fourteen of 24 groups submitted data on over 700 people for the study. An additional nine groups submitted evaluation data using alternative formats.

The data showed that of the 721 people in the study, 575 (or 80%) reported making behavior changes after learning about waste and/or toxicity reduction through a Community POWER project. Most people reported completing more than one behavior change. Typical examples included people who started recycling for the first time, people who started reading labels before making purchases of hazardous materials, people who started composting, and people who starting purchasing reused items and donating reusable materials.

Round 6 Project Summaries

Camp Fire USA

Minneapolis, Hennepin County

Camp Fire USA implemented a waste reduction curriculum in five Teen Action Clubs using www.greenguardian.com, "What a Waste," and other Camp Fire curriculum, exposing over 1,500 youth to this information. This curriculum has been made widely available to other Camp Fire club leaders. About 60 teens learned in depth about waste issues by attending a field trip to the Hennepin County recycling center. These youth also brought waste reduction information home by conducting home waste assessments, documenting waste disposal on a calendar, making non-toxic cleaners, and playing the staff created "Earth in Jeopardy" game. The teens implemented large scale service-learning projects in all five club locations reaching 5,954 people. Projects included working with custodial staff to reduce waste at school, creating and implementing waste education campaigns, chalking footprints to recycling bins, composting in the cafeteria, and distributing non-toxic cleaning packets to friends and family.

Carver County 4-H

Carver County

Carver County accomplished their goal of reaching all 350 families in Carver County 4-H with waste and toxicity reduction information. They integrated waste reduction programs into their 4-H clubs, including presentations at their 4-H Federation meeting, Waconia Whiz Kids 4-H club, and Waste Busters family events. They reached 16,000 people by placing information in their newsletters and local newspapers. They also created a web page called the Green Spot. Over 360 people took actions such as building and using a worm compost bin, making bags from old blue jeans, and participating in a consignment

sale. In addition, Carver County 4-H worked closely with Carver County Environmental Services and the Recycling Association of Minnesota to provide recycling for the first time at the 2007 Carver County State Fair. Approximately 1,200 pounds of aluminum cans were recycled. These activities will be continued and expanded as a second year Community POWER grantee in 2007-08.

Carver County Master Gardeners

Carver County

Carver County Master Gardeners, in partnership with the Carver County Environmental Center, built a 500 square foot permanent compost demonstration site at the Environmental Center. The demonstration site includes ten unique compost designs, an information table and plexiglass compost display inside the facility, and educational signs that include the Green Guardian logo on all kiosks. The site has been open for tours since October. Newspaper ads, circulated to 24,000 households, helped promote the site. Hundreds of people have visited. Seventy students in Chaska High School's biology classes used the demonstration site for compost education. Four community composting classes were held at the site in the summer educating 68 people in depth. Eighty-seven percent of people who completed surveys about the new site noted they will buy or build a compost bin because of the education they received at the compost site.

Chisago Lakes Area Homeschool Co-op

Washington County

Program leaders created a 10-month waste reduction curriculum for homeschool families called "Waste Not" and "Second Impressions." The final version of the curriculum will be posted to GreenGuardian.com for wide distribution to homeschoolers in the region. Families (55 people) attended monthly waste reduction activities and completed at-home assignments between meetings. Examples of families' behavior changes include starting to compost and changing buying habits to consume less packaging. The families also coordinated two "Totally Free Swaps" to promote reuse of household goods, involving over 150 community members. The children also interviewed local seniors to learn about how people wasted much less in the past; program leaders created a booklet with the seniors' stories. Several articles about the project were published in local papers. 100% of families reported that they will continue using lessons and activities from the curriculum in the future.

Community Action Council

Rosemount, Dakota County

The Rosemount Recycle, Reduce and Reuse project offered twelve educational presentations on topics such as recycling and non-toxic cleaners to 250 participants. Nearly all of the participants stated they have learned more about reducing waste and many have taken waste reduction actions at home. In addition, over 100 people participated in four clothing exchange events with a total of 2,500 items being reused.

Twenty of these participating families received one-on-one assistance to create and implement a household recycling and toxicity reduction plan. Community Action Council plans to continue their clothing exchange and waste reduction educational events and workshops.

Community Neighborhood Housing Services (CNHS)

St. Paul, Ramsey County

CNHS incorporated household hazardous waste education into the first chapter of their materials about home buying, used in their first time homeowner classes. The materials were shared in classes that are offered in English, Spanish and Hmong. Classes have been presented to 483 people thus far including – 22 English classes, 19 Spanish classes and 12 Hmong classes. Follow up surveys and phone calls showed that due to their participation in the class, 75% have checked their homes for hazardous products and disposed of them properly, 50% now read product labels, and 50% now recycle more than they used to. CNHS also promoted waste reduction information in their newsletters and distributed over 200 Green Guardian pencils. They plan to continue the household hazardous waste education in their first time homeowner classes.

Corcoran Neighborhood

Minneapolis, Hennepin County

The Corcoran Neighborhood integrated waste reduction education and action into their existing annual events. They conducted two Green Sweeps with 298 homes participating. As a result of their education efforts, there was an increase in the number of items recycled and donated for reuse at the Green Sweeps, and a reduction in the amount of garbage collected -- from 17,660 to 13,320 tons. They offered Reuse information at their Housing Fair and turned an annual volunteer dinner for 100 into a low waste event. They also started a weekly e-newsletter offering at least one waste reduction message each month for 372 resident subscribers. Waste reduction information is also put in each monthly print issue of the *Corcoran News* reaching 4,228 people. They hired an illustrator to create waste reduction comic strips called "Acorn Logic" for their e-newsletter and newspaper. They will continue most of these activities and incorporate new waste reduction activities as a second year Community POWER grantee in 2007-08.

Dayton Avenue Presbyterian Church

St. Paul

Dayton Avenue began their composting and waste reduction education program by distributing 42 compost bins to church members. This resulted in over 700 gallons of food waste diverted from the waste stream. To aid the new composters, the church set up a compost bin demonstration site on the church grounds to compost potluck leftovers. Throughout the year a series of eight speakers included topics such as household hazardous waste, non-toxic cleaning, Is God Green?, and recycling to 100 church members. They have also included waste reduction chapters in their Sunday School

lessons to 16 adult members, created a newly formed Eco Study Group, and distributed an Environmental Cheat Sheet to 47 households. Dayton Avenue plans to continue their workshops, lessons, and composting education.

District 191- Burnsville-Eagan-Savage

Dakota County

Over 730 Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) staff and parents and 725 children were educated about waste and toxicity reduction in their weekly classes. Many hands on activities took place, and the program encouraged at home changes, including making non-toxic cleaners (650 bottles). Fifty percent of the families reduced their use of toxic cleaning products. Families also learned about recycling at home and reducing junk mail. Three issues of the Early Childhood catalog sent to 3,800 families included waste reduction information. Thirty students were educated during lunchtime activities in the Gifted and Talented program for a three week period. Staff developed a website called www.growingupgreenkids.com and plan to continue their activities in the ECFE programs.

East Side Neighborhood Services

Minneapolis, Hennepin County

The Silver Angel Thrift Store implemented a recycling and waste reduction education campaign reaching their store customers, donors, and clients. Staff were trained on waste reduction, they educated their customers, started an in-house reuse and recycling effort, and created a waste reduction information corner in the store. Over 340 clients and 13,000 customers have had access to this information. The store credits their 10% donation increase to their waste reduction education. Twenty "Think Before You Throw" ads promoting GreenGuardian.com were put in local papers and church bulletins reaching over 86,000 people four times or more. 225 people received a weekly store email for one year containing waste reduction tips. A waste reduction booklet was compiled containing all the tips. They also hosted two re-use events for Halloween costume creation and a Reuse Art event engaging 80 people. They plan to continue their waste reduction corner, weekly email tips, and workshops.

Forest Lake Family Center ECFE Program

Washington and Anoka Counties

Twenty-four program staff received training in waste reduction and created lesson plans to use in their early childhood parenting classes. 255 parents completed a waste questionnaire about current waste practices and then learned about reducing packaging, toxicity reduction, recycling and composting over the course of the year. The Green Guardian participated in the Unscary Halloween Party (attended by 500 families) where parents and children could make Green Guardian buttons. Additional events and fieldtrips were held in the spring and summer. The Center's evaluation efforts show the majority of the families in the program changed *multiple* behaviors due to the project, including starting to recycle, compost, or read product labels for the first time.

Friends School of Minnesota

St. Paul and Minneapolis, Hennepin and Ramsey Counties

The school completed an internal waste audit and each day students sort waste in the lunchroom and classrooms into what is compostable, recyclable, and garbage. The school is saving \$800 a year on waste hauling due to significant reductions in their waste. Fifth and sixth grade students created public service announcement videos and skits to introduce recycling and composting information to the school community. A Green Guardian display was presented at the annual plant sale that attracts thousands of visitors. The school initiated a junk mail reduction program with a neighboring senior high rise building that will be completed Fall 2007.

Hillel at the University of Minnesota

Synagogues and Jewish organizations in the region

Environmental committees were formed at three synagogues and two Jewish community centers. The Tikkun Olam (healing the Earth) teams have instituted regular columns in their monthly newsletters featuring waste reduction and held educational events focused on waste and toxicity reduction that correspond to Jewish holidays. For example, events were held in conjunction with Hanukkah for proper disposal of compact fluorescent light bulbs and with the Jewish New Year for the Trees focused on junk mail reduction. Rabbis at two synagogues incorporated environmental messages into their High Holiday services. Jewish students at the University participated in Choose to Reuse Week and learned about waste issues.

Hmong Youth Education Services (YES)

St. Paul

Hmong YES trained a youth group of 28 teens to educate their elders about waste and toxicity reduction issues. Teens met with 150 families and friends one-on-one to educate them about recycling and survey them about their waste reduction practices. Waste reduction information was also disseminated to 200 people at an event at the state capitol. 50 youth were educated about waste reduction and recycling through their Summer Reading Program and 100 youth through a presentation at Como Elementary School. Multiple staff turnovers throughout the year presented challenges to accomplishing all original goals. Hmong YES plans to continue implementing recycling and waste reduction education through their teen leadership group and offering community outreach opportunities throughout the year.

Lyndale Neighborhood Association (LNA)

Minneapolis, Hennepin County

The neighborhood association's Environmental Committee spearheaded a series of community workshops, events, information tables and monthly newsletter articles educating at least 4,350 residents about junk mail, recycling, hazardous and automotive waste, and non-toxic cleaning alternatives. They held a Sustainable Lyndale Waste Reduction workshop with 45 in attendance, offered a series of workshops where 275 non-toxic cleaners with English, Spanish and Somali labels were made. They distributed junk mail removal cards, automotive fluids waste disposal flyers, reusable water bottles, and reusable cloth shopping bags to hundreds of residents. LNA helped the YMCA develop a green curriculum to integrate environmental activities, including waste reduction, into their summer programming. They will continue putting monthly "Environment Tips" in their newsletter, offering waste reduction information at events, and promoting and distributing reusable water bottles and cloth shopping bags.

Minnesota African Women's Association (MAWA)

Brooklyn Park and St. Paul, Hennepin and Ramsey Counties

Two staff members plus ten African girls and ten African women were trained to teach others about household hazardous waste and junk mail reduction as "peer trainers." Many of the peer trainers and participants live in two high density apartment facilities -- Skyline Towers in St. Paul and Park Haven Apartments in Brooklyn Park. The women and girl peer trainers presented information one-on-one to 156 others. MAWA staff trained an additional 200 people through small group sessions in housing complexes and at the Al Huda Mosque. All 356 people were required to share the information they learned with at least one additional family member or friend. Ads about the project also appeared in African News Journal and Mshale, two major African community papers. MAWA staff were pleasantly surprised by the strong interest in these topics from their community.

New Americans Community Services (NACS)

Minneapolis and St. Paul

NACS translated waste reduction information into Somali, Oromo and Amharic and were used it to educate over 250 community members. NACS trained 75 youth and 152 adults to be community "waste leaders." They held weekly workshops that included action messages about junk mail, recycling, household hazardous waste, label reading and non-toxic cleaning. Over 250 apartments were visited by the waste leaders to share junk mail, waste reduction, and household hazardous waste information. They also used the "Recycling Needs You!" MPCA flyer to visually explain which products are recyclable and what they can be turned into. About 1,000 junk mail postcards were mailed. NACS plans to continue to promote recycling and junk mail reduction through their weekly meetings and household visits.

Oltman Junior High School

St. Paul Park, Washington County

A permanent science curriculum called "It's Not Easy Being Green" was created and implemented with all 280 7th grade science students. The students studied waste reduction topics including use of plastic bottles and overly packaged consumer products. They visited a local waste and recycling facility and completed classroom and at-home projects to reduce waste in their own lives. The semester culminated in a Science & Math Night featuring the Green Guardian where students presented their projects on waste reduction to over 600 families, teachers, and other students.

Partners for Violence Prevention

St. Paul, Ramsey County

Fifty-five students from Harding High School and St. Paul Open School learned about waste issues and then took photographs of waste they see in their daily lives. The students at Harding created a toxicity reduction brochure featuring photos of household hazardous waste with proper disposal information and distributed the brochures to 400 families. They also created a display on toxicity reduction that was featured in the lobbies of the Battle Creek Parks and Recreation Center and the American Indian Family Center. St. Paul Open students displayed their photos and art at Fresh Grounds coffee shop in St. Paul. Examples of the art projects included "The Ugly Head of Waste" which raised awareness about how much each of us throws away, and "Fashionable Change" which turned items that would otherwise be trash into fashion.

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

Dakota County

A volunteer committee at the church called "Justice for Creation" held twelve special events and projects, including: a Creation Fair (attended by 900 parishioners); junk mail campaign; alternative gift-wrapping event; reusable shopping bag distribution to low-income families; weekly tips published in the church bulletin; monthly table displays; a waste reduction webpage; Earth Day celebration; and family nights. In addition, Prince of Peace educated the community about their waste reduction projects at the Living Green Expo and has educated other congregations. Through all of their outreach and events, waste messages have been disseminated to their over 10,000 members and community members and 2,142 waste reduction actions have been taken.

The Raptor Center

Regional

Raptor Center staff and volunteers incorporated waste and toxicity reduction messages (such as how heavy metals enter the waste stream and the environment and can harm humans and birds) into 80 live bird public programs, reaching over 13,000 people. At

each presentation, the volunteer or staff discussed how to reduce waste and toxicity and how this benefits the birds and humans. GreenGuardian.com was promoted by distributing a SWMCB household hazardous waste brochure to each person attending the presentation; by giving away hundreds of Green Guardian pencils; and through large, attractive banners showcasing the Green Guardian and this project (on view in the lobby of the Raptor Center). The Green Guardian was also highlighted on the Raptor Center's e-newsletter and website. The new public education program "Think Globally, Act Locally: Raptors and You" is offered at 1:00 PM every Saturday and Sunday at the Raptor Center and can also be presented off-site.

SouthShore Community Center and the Gillespie Center

Shorewood and Mound, Hennepin County

These two community centers serving senior citizens in the Western suburbs created an on-going program called "Make a Difference." They both held four educational programs for seniors on waste reduction topics: toxicity reduction, junk mail reduction, low-waste holidays, and composting. 288 people attended the events and many took waste reduction actions as a result. The SouthShore Center plans to make the re-gift holiday event for adults and youth that they piloted through this project an annual event. The "Green Spot" was a new page in the centers' newsletters featuring waste reduction tips, reaching over 1500 people. The centers also produced a cable television show focused on waste reduction and the Green Guardian, and also promoted the projects in local newspapers.

Southwest Community Education

Minneapolis, Hennepin County

Southwest Community Education has created a Green Team of adults and Southwest High School students. The team of 20 took six fieldtrips to learn about waste, after which they offered three waste reduction workshops through Adult Education, such as "Reducing Wastes & Toxic Substances in the Home & Workplace." Through the workshops they educated 112 community members. They also incorporated waste reduction information into their youth Summer Trek Program reaching 150 youth and their families. They also offered waste and toxicity reduction information in local publications reaching over 13,000. They sponsored a household hazardous waste drop off event for Earth Day attracting 100 people. They plan to offer their workshops annually and continue their Green Team work on waste reduction and environmental issues in their community.

Washington County 4-H

Washington County

4-H added information about waste reduction in their monthly newsletter, reaching 400 families each month. They developed two new curriculum plans ("Waste Busters!" and "Gizmos & Gadgets") that were used to engage 279 youth in waste reduction activities through 4-H clubs. These curricula are now available on their website and can be checked

out by 4-H clubs and other youth development programs. Topics focus on creative reuse of materials for science and art projects, composting, and others. Six 4H clubs received a mini Community POWER grant and taught an additional 600 people about waste reduction at the Washington County Fair, day camps, and other community events.