

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

Sustainability Report: 2006-07 Grantees

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General Findings

The information in this report was gathered from follow-up interviews with twenty-two grantees whose projects ended in August of 2007. Follow-up was not possible with a few groups, including SouthShore Community Center and Hmong Youth Education Services (YES), 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.

90% 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 will be or already are included, when possible, in the grantee resources section on the website www.rethinkrecycling.com in 2009.

91% of groups continue to offer waste reduction information and/or programming, reaching over 17,000 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 17,468 new people with waste reduction messages since their grants ended in 2007. Examples include:

- Camp Fire USA continues to use their Wise Old Willy waste reduction curriculum at their after school sites and has trained 15 new teachers and reached over 1,500 new youth on waste reduction issues.
- District 191 – Bursville –Eagan-Savage ECFE program continues to educate families about non-toxic cleaners and recycling in their weekly classes and have reached an additional 350 families since their project ended.
- Prince of Peace Lutheran church continues to educate their members through their web site, newsletters, and have trained in 200 new volunteers to work on on-going church events such as zero waste events and the t-shirts to diapers project. They also participated in creating the Waste and Toxicity Reduction Toolkit for Congregations with Hennepin County.
- Southwest Community Education continues to offer waste reduction classes through their Community Education program.

Waste reduction and internal waste management practices became a larger priority for nearly all of the groups

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

- Camp Fire USA has implemented recycling in their building, now conduct fundraising online instead of paper mailers, and try to hire “green conscious” staff.
- The Forest Lake Family Center ECFE program is moving to almost 100% paper-less communications with staff and families in their program. They are also worked with their district to implement a building recycling program.
- Hillel at the University of Minnesota now strives to hold low waste events and donate leftover food to Second Harvest.
- District 191 teachers and staff have noticed an increased waste reduction awareness since their program began and they have now transferred all internal communications to online only and utilize their web site to download handouts and resources for families.
- East Side Neighborhood Services set up a green team and are currently working with facilities management to set up an internal recycling program in their building. They also no longer use disposable paper plates or cups inside their thrift store and use washable dishware instead.
- At Friends School of Minnesota, faculty are now continually looking for ways to implement waste reduction in all aspects of school life, including on site recycling and other waste reduction practices.
- New Americans Community Services have made some internal changes because of their project including now shredding and recycling office paper, recycling ink cartridges, and using reusable coffee mugs.

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

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

- Residents from the Lyndale Neighborhood are now more interested in participating in and receiving more information about waste reduction practices.
- Over 300 members at Prince of Peace Lutheran church have now requested more waste reduction information and are now participating in waste reduction work through the church in some way.
- The Raptor Center has had many additional requests for their educational presentation titled “Think Globally, Act Locally: Raptors and You” at their events where they have reached an additional 250,000 people since their project ended.

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 almost 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:

- New Americans Community Services have found it quite challenging to address the junk mail issue now that the mail-in postcards are no longer an option.
- Dayton Avenue Church finds it challenging to reach out to their neighbors to participate in using their community compost bin and attending their workshops.
- Carver County 4-H has lost a half time position due to budget cuts and struggles to continue their waste reduction programming.
- Minnesota African Women's Association (MAWA) struggles to continue their project due to lack of staffing and funding.

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. They helped us to expand our project activities through gaining new ideas and resources.
- Grantee meetings offered us a teaching experience of how we can present these issues to our community, and served as an example of a low waste event.
- We appreciated the networking opportunities. It was very motivating to hear what other grantees were working on with their projects.
- It was vital to have technical support from project managers and county staff as they are committed to waste issues and helped us by providing resources, advice, and trainings.
- The resource materials from Ramsey and Hennepin counties were very useful. We were able to distribute them to all of those attending our classes.
- Dan in Washington County has been an invaluable resource for our organization. Working with him made our project much easier to implement. He was a ready reference for us any time we needed it and has continued to offer trainings even after our project has ended.

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

- We would like information on public recycling.

- It would be nice to have behavior change tracking tools presented earlier in the grant cycle to help us plan this portion of our project in advance.

Materials in other languages

- 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

- Help promote to applicants to “keep it simple”. It is easy to get overwhelmed by all the ideas, resources and materials, but we found keeping it simple made our project goals more attainable.

Grantees were also asked **how Community POWER can continue to assist them** in their waste reduction efforts. Many groups said they would like to be included on any relevant tips, resources, or training opportunities in the future. Some responses appear below:

E-newsletter

- Forward tips and resources. It does not have to be e-newsletter format, just forwarding one tip at a time is often more useful than sifting through a newsletter.
- Monthly e-newsletter. Notices about trainings, new resources available, newly translated documents, etc.
- Forward updates on new resources and pieces available in my county.
- One time a month at most would be useful.
- Newsletter ready material would be the best kind of content to pass along, especially issues that relate to us directly (our city or county).

Improvements to the website

- Remind us that we can make updates and add resources to our grantee web page and how to get there.
- Send updates on new pages/resources added to the web site.

Grantee Meetings

- Interested in attending CP trainings if there are new topics not covered as a grantee.
- Would be interested in attending CP trainings, \$10-25/person and offer scholarships.
- Offering speakers/presentations that are speaking from experience and presenting on real issues that organizations can relate to.
- Offering a separate training/information session for non-funded groups once or twice a year.
- A roundtable discussion would be nice as a way to network with other groups and as a way to bring our programs together.

Other

- It would be great to have a list of contacts for reordering more materials and handouts in the future.
- Keeping in touch is a good way to keep waste reduction on our radar.

Summaries

Camp Fire USA

Camp Fire USA implemented a waste reduction curriculum in five Teen Action Clubs using "What a Waste," and other Camp Fire curriculum and worked with 60 youth to implement a service-learning project about waste reaching almost 6,000 people. Since their project has ended, Camp Fire USA has trained in an additional 15 leaders and exposed an additional 1,500 youth to waste reduction education through their programs that continue to use the curriculum they created by demand from their partners. Camp Fire USA has also implemented recycling in their building, now conduct their fundraising online instead of mailers, and try to hire "green conscious" staff.

Carver County 4-H

Carver County 4-H accomplished their goal of reaching all 350 families in Carver County 4-H with waste and toxicity reduction information. They were also awarded a second grant and focused on expanding their education out into the community. Since their projects have ended, they are still continually educating about waste reduction through their monthly e-newsletters, web site, and through their education and recycling set up at the Carver County Fair. They have planned, set up, and managed the recycling and education at the fair for two years with over 2,000 lbs. of aluminum being recycled. Carver County 4-H has lost two positions in the last year due to budget cuts and are hoping to find another organization to take over their work in implementing a recycling program at the fair for next year.

Carver County Master Gardeners

Carver County Master Gardeners, in partnership with the Carver County Environmental Center, built a 500 square foot permanent compost demonstration site with ten unique compost designs at the Environmental Center that is still in use. They also have a plexiglass compost display inside the facility along with composting signs, displays, and information that is viewed by visitors to the HHW drop off site. Since their program ended, they have continued to offer composting classes through the Master Gardeners and have increased their compost bin sales by 125 bins this last year. They also have had three Girl Scout and Cub Scout troops and school classes come to tour the demonstration site. They are also currently reproducing the signage for the kiosk, as the original sign became weathered.

Chisago Lakes Area Homeschool Co-op

Program leaders created a 10-month waste reduction curriculum for 55 homeschool families called "Waste Not" and "Second Impressions" which is now posted www.rethinkrecycling.com for wide distribution and promoted to homeschoolers in the region. While they are currently not focusing as much on waste reduction, they have integrated many of the activities and education pieces into their regular curriculum such as making planetariums out of oatmeal boxes for science classes and reusing old cereal boxes for art projects. Since the project ended, families have formed a food buying club and now buy much of their goods in bulk, minimizing packaging waste. Some families have started raising chickens and sell the eggs to other families in the co-op, reusing egg cartons. They also continue to hold their family trade/swap events, and many families now make their own gifts rather than purchase them. Their project helped validate their commitment to minimizing waste and to be more inventive in looking for new ways to reduce waste.

Community Action Council (CAC)

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 that they learned more about reducing waste and many took waste reduction actions at home. Community Action Council continues to educate youth and parents about recycling and waste and toxicity reduction through on-going events reaching over 100 people since their project ended. Kids clearly have learned waste reduction as they point out to staff the many poor packaging choices distributed through their food shelf. CAC's involvement with the grant program was like opening a gate where they can now walk into bigger awareness. They hope to continue their education efforts, but are also faced with a 95% increase in their programming and food shelf usage.

Community Neighborhood Housing Services (CNHS)

CNHS incorporated household hazardous waste and recycling education into the first chapter of their materials about home buying, used in over 40 first time homeowner classes. Since their project has ended, their materials in English, Spanish and Hmong are still being used in first time homebuyer classes including 30 classes in 2008 reaching 351 individuals. CNHS has always been environmentally conscious with their internal practices in their building and offices, but their participation in the grant brought the importance to the forefront and brought additional changes such as switching to non-toxic cleaners.

Corcoran Neighborhood

The Corcoran Neighborhood integrated waste reduction education and action into their existing annual events including their Green Sweep, Housing Fair, annual volunteer dinner during their project. They also created a weekly e-newsletter and waste reduction comic strips called "Acorn Logic" printed in their online and in print newsletters. Corcoran was funded a second grant during 2007-2008 and expanded their education into "backyard talks" to engage community members in learning about waste reduction by experience. The Corcoran Neighborhood has reached over 200 new residents since both of these programs have ended and they are continuing their weekly e-newsletter with waste reduction tips, their newly designed Green Sweep, and low waste community events.

Dayton Avenue Presbyterian Church

Dayton Avenue offered a composting program to their members and surrounding community as well as subsidized bins. They also offered a series of waste reduction presentations throughout their project. Their original project coordinator has left the church and they are no longer offering their programming, but have seen interest from their parishioners. Their community compost bin is still available for use to their neighbors and they plan to promote composting again this spring. They also hope to begin adding monthly tips in their newsletters about junk mail, toxicity reduction, and composting.

District 191 – Burnsville-Eagan-Savage

During the grant period, over 730 Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) staff and parents and 725 children were educated about waste and toxicity reduction in their weekly classes. District 191 is still offering the curriculum for teachers to implement waste reduction education into their weekly classes and have reached over 350 additional families to date. This last year their classes focused on non-toxic cleaners, organic food, recycling, and tree planting. District 191 teachers and staff have also noticed an increased waste reduction awareness since their program began and have now transferred all internal communications to online only, and utilize their web site to download handouts and resources for families.

East Side Neighborhood Services (ESNS)

The Silver Angel Thrift Store implemented a recycling and waste reduction education campaign reaching their store customers, donors, and clients of about 14,000 people. They have continued to offer their recycled Halloween, gift wrapping, and reuse art workshops as well as sending out tips in their newsletter. They have also participated in the Choose to Reuse campaign each year. Their project has also affected their internal operations including creating a Green Team currently working on setting up recycling stations throughout their buildings as well

as switching to less toxic cleaning agents. They also no longer have paper plates or cups inside their store for employees and use washable dishware instead.

Forest Lake Family Center ECFE Program

During their project, the Forest Lake Family Center ECFE Program trained twenty-four program staff in waste reduction and created lesson plans to use in their early childhood parenting classes reaching 255 families. They continue to use their curriculum reaching at least 60 new families and have also put internal waste reduction changes into practice including; using re-usable mugs; minimizing paper use by working to offer handouts and communications electronically; the district now provides regular recycling collection; building management staff have switched to non-toxic cleaners; and teachers teach kids to use recycled/reclaimed materials for art projects. They have also begun making connections to home care providers working with Dan Schoepke to train them in on their waste reduction curriculum.

Friends School of Minnesota

Friends School of Minnesota completed an internal waste audit during their grant and now each day students sort waste in the lunchroom and classrooms into what is compostable, recyclable, and garbage saving the school over \$800 a year on waste hauling. They continue to compost all snack and lunch room food scraps on-site and recycle and reduce paper use throughout the school. Faculty are continually looking for ways to implement waste reduction in all aspects of school life. Friends School has been asked to mentor students at CENTRO, St. Paul Academy, and Summit School in developing similar waste reduction and recycling practices at their sites.

Hillel at the University of Minnesota

During their project, Hillel helped to form Environmental committees and waste reduction events in conjunction with their holidays at three synagogues and two Jewish community centers. Since their project ended, their Tikkun Olam (healing the Earth teams) have instituted regular columns in their monthly newsletters featuring waste reduction reaching over 150,000 people and have offered action ideas on their web site. Also, because of their project, Hillel and their partners now strive to hold low waste events and donate leftover food to Second Harvest, use reusable mugs, and copy double-sided. Hillel's biggest constraint in continuing their programming is a lack of staffing.

Lyndale Neighborhood Association (LNA)

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. Since their project has ended, LNA has continued to educate over 2,000 residents about non-toxins in the home, including over 100 new residents making a non-toxic cleaner. They have also continued to partner with the YMCA in implementing a green curriculum they developed for their programs and have been helping businesses in their neighborhood to reduce waste. The residents in their neighborhood are now more interested in participating in and receiving more information about waste reduction practices.

Minnesota African Women's Association (MAWA)

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" reaching over 356 people. MAWA currently struggles to continue their project due to lack of staffing and funding. Since their project ended, MAWA have made some internal changes including using reusable mugs, copying double-sided, and purchasing recycled content paper.

New Americans Community Services (NACS)

NACS translated waste reduction information into Somali, Oromo and Amharic and used it to educate over 250 community members during their project. They continue to educate their communities on recycling and junk mail reduction during group education sessions have reached an additional 800 people since their project ended. In addition, they have made some internal changes because of their project including now recycling office and shredded paper in their offices, ink cartridges, and use reusable mugs. They have struggled with promoting junk mail since the mail-in postcard is no longer an option. They would be interested in obtaining future funding to incorporate non-toxic education into their programming due to a demand for this type of information.

Oltman Junior High

A permanent science curriculum called "It's Not Easy Being Green" was created and implemented with all 7th grade science students and then presented at-home projects to over 600 families. Currently, the curriculum is still in use and has reached an additional 225 youth. Also, students and staff and still reusing their reusable water bottles, mugs, and now do double-sided copying. They feel their success during their project and now is due to the support and resources they gained from Community POWER and county staff. The teachers have also found

themselves making personal waste reduction changes at home which are affecting their students at school.

Partners for Violence Prevention

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. They then created a waste reduction display and distributed brochures to 400 families. Partners for Violence Prevention is currently struggling to continue their project due to staff turnover. However, since their project ended, they have offered three trainings to staff from three other organizations, use reusable mugs, do double-sided copying and are much more careful in selecting non-toxic products for use in their homes and in properly disposing of hazardous products.

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

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; and weekly tips published in the church bulletin reaching over 10,000 members and 2,142 of those took action. Since their project ended, they have reached an additional 300 people with waste reduction messages and over 200 volunteers continue to be trained in-depth about recycling and reuse during their annual mega garage sale, their summer picnic is now a zero waste event, they continue to use reusable cups at Sunday coffee, and have eliminated the use of single-serve water bottles at their Mission Outpost. Prince of Peace also participated in designing the Waste & Toxicity Reduction Toolkit for Hennepin County and is assisting other congregations with waste reduction projects, including teaching various senior centers to make diapers out of old t-shirts.

The Raptor Center

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. Since their project has ended, The Raptor Center has reached an additional 250,000 people through their newly developed public education program called "Think Globally, Act Locally: Raptors and You" which is offered at 1:00 PM every Saturday and Sunday at the Raptor Center and off-site. They continue to have several visual displays and banners on waste reduction themes prominently displayed throughout their center and continue to include articles with waste reduction messages in their newsletters. They also now give out envelopes for their members to recycle their ink cartridges.

Southwest Community Education

Southwest Community Education created a Green Team of adults and Southwest High School students and offered adult education classes to 112 community members. They also incorporated waste reduction information into their youth Summer Trek Program reaching 150 youth and their families. Since their project ended, they continue to implement green topics into their community education classes, waste reduction education through their Summer Trek Program, and continue their Green Team work on waste reduction and environmental issues in their community.

Washington County 4-H

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. Due to staff turnover and loss of continuity, nothing was carried over from this grant to current programs.