

## **Sustainability Report: 2007-2008 Grantees**

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The information in this report was gathered from follow-up interviews with Round 7 grantees whose projects ended in August of 2008. Follow up was conducted with twelve of the twenty-three grantees including; *Cedar Park Elementary, Garlough Elementary, Ce Tempoxcalli, Girl Scouts, Christa McAuliffe Elementary, Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center, On the Move...For Minnesota Families, Carver County 4-H, Hands On Twin Cities, Marine Elementary, Mahtomedi Community Education, and Highland Park Elementary.*

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. As previously found, a high number of groups continue to offer some waste reduction education beyond the end of their contract with SWMCB.

## **Replicable Products or Programs**

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### **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 have been and will continue to be included, when possible, in the grantee resources section on [www.rethinkrecycling.com](http://www.rethinkrecycling.com).

#### **Examples include:**

- Garlough Elementary created many replicable activities during their project year that have sustained into future school years. Activities include waste reduction education at family nights and making non-toxic cleaners in all classrooms.
- Ce Tempoxcalli continues to use their youth training manual focusing on recycling and toxicity reduction to train in new youth each year. They now have national contacts seeking assistance in implementing a similar project.
- Girl Scouts continues to offer their Go Green Girl kit for check out.
- The Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center continues the toxicity reduction and recycling trainings that were developed during their project.
- On the Move...For Minnesota Families created a Deadly Lookalikes kit and continues to use it at ECFE, ESL, and other family programming.
- Carver County 4-H created a recycling program at the Dakota County State Fair that continues each year.
- Highlands Elementary created a classroom-based curriculum and a "Greening Your Holidays" curriculum, both of which continue to be used.

## **Continue Waste Reduction Programming**

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### **90% of groups continue to offer waste reduction information and/or programming past the grant period, reaching over 44,000 additional people**

As in past years, nearly all of the groups interviewed continue to educate and engage their audiences in waste and toxicity reduction after their grant ends. Round 7 grantees report they have reached 44,466 new people with waste reduction messages since their Community POWER grants ended in August of 2008.

#### **Examples include:**

- Cedar Park Elementary continues to incorporate waste reduction education and activities into their Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) family nights.
- Ce Tempoxcalli continues to host discussions, trainings, and presentations on waste reduction in connection with their Taking Care of the Earth program.
- Girl Scouts continues to offer Family Challenges in online newsletters and has expanded their Go Green Girl kit for check out at all five service centers in Minnesota.

- Christa McAuliffe Elementary continues waste reduction activities in the classroom and beyond. Their theme this year is “ReUse It, Just Do It”. They will have Trisha and the Toonies perform again, are organizing a book and magazine swap, annually collect reusable school supplies for the next year, and regularly reuse materials for art projects. Their parent group is also currently planning another Earth Day carnival.
- The Minnesota Indian Women’s Resource Center continues to offer trainings and presentations on reducing toxicity, making non-toxic cleaners, recycling, and other waste reduction practices to their residents, staff, and day care families.
- On the Move...for Minnesota Families offers presentations on toxicity and recycling. They continue to distribute homemade non-toxic laundry detergent samples and to offer toxicity reduction presentations.
- Marine Elementary continues to use compost bins and lesson plans from Washington County, although the time they can spend on this is very limited because they are required to devote the majority of the school day to state mandated standards.
- Highlands Elementary used their “Greening your Holidays” curriculum with several other local schools and presented it at the Green Gifts Fair. They also did a presentation for a Round 8 group, St. Matthew’s Church.
- Mahtomedi Community Education had over 600 people attend their R.I.T.E. of Spring event last year, where they now focus on waste reduction.

## **Internal Waste Management**

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### **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 made 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.

### **Examples include:**

- Cedar Park Elementary's school district is moving forward working on lunchroom and classroom recycling and has joined the S.E.E. (Schools for Energy Efficiency) program.
- Garlough Elementary’s school district is now using less-toxic cleaning solutions and has implemented recycling and composting in all of their schools. Their school district also recently hired a “Green Coordinator”. In addition, their district newsletter is now delivered electronically instead of in print.
- Ce Tempoxcalli has developed their three day annual event, Chalchiutlicue, into a low-waste event. This year, the event created only 10 pounds of waste. They are also working with Caravan Kids to create less wasteful lunches at the schools they partner with.
- Christa McAuliffe Elementary has organized a shoe recycling drop off and other school collections such as magazines and books.

- The Minnesota Indian Women’s Resource Center now makes double sided copies, purchases recycled content paper, and recycles ink cartridges in their offices. The residents in their housing building now also recycle weekly.
- On the Move...for Minnesota Families now offers vermiculture composting at all youth events and incorporates education about composting. They also have a low-waste event kit with reusable dishware for events and meetings.
- Carver County 4-H purchased reusable plates and cups and now uses them for monthly federation meetings.
- Hands On Twin Cities uses ceramic mugs for meetings and in-office usage, practices double sided copying, purchases recycled content office paper, recycles ink cartridges, and incorporates waste reduction education into staff in-services/trainings. Their office building only recycles two items, so they have set up their own recycling station for other items and the staff takes turns bringing it home.
- Highlands Elementary is now very focused on recycling. Every classroom has a recycling bin. Students are also focused on reducing food waste. The principal pursued the option of switching to reusable trays in the cafeteria instead of disposable but, unfortunately, the school district turned them down.
- Mahtomedi Community Education reports that the 700 students at the elementary school are now using reusable instead of plastic silverware. The 1,000 students in the middle school are also in the process of converting to silverware instead of plastic. Community Education staff are currently working on paper reduction in their offices. Staff did a baseline survey of their level of paper usage and are currently making a plan for reduction. They also got off junk mail lists and catalog lists, which they learned to do at Community POWER workshops.

## **Require Additional Funding**

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### **83% 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 for materials to continue their projects while others mentioned that they need more staff capacity to continue pieces of their projects. The following are **additional barriers** experienced by grantees to continuing their projects:

- Cedar Park Elementary would like to continue waste reduction programs in their classrooms, but have to focus on STEM related priorities instead. They will be seeking funding to implement a demonstration community garden area.
- Garlough Elementary has continued waste reduction activities in their classrooms and has expanded their project through a second grant with Community POWER, which focuses on using a community garden space to talk about less packaged foods, pre-cycling, and composting.
- Ce Tempoxcalli is seeking funding from other grant making sources to continue and grow their environmental programming.
- Girl Scouts has received a third Community POWER grant to expand their Go Green Girl kit and integrate it into all their troops and summer camps.

- Christa McAuliffe is currently seeking funding to pay for postage and Trisha and the Toonies presentations in the future.
- On the Move...for Minnesota Families will be seeking funding to provide mini-grants next summer for implementing home or community gardens. They are not able to continue some of the programming in Spanish due to lack of funding for a translator.
- Highlands Elementary wrote an Ecolab grant that unfortunately wasn't funded. They considered Captain Planet grants and the MN ELM grants, but they were not a good match. They would appreciate learning of additional funding resources for environmental or waste reduction work. They considered doing a second Community POWER grant, but because they had already reached every family in the school, they had trouble showing further reach. There were 400 children at the school and about 380 families were reached.
- Mahtomedi Community Education has received funding from the City of Mahtomedi and from Sam's Club. They now have a Green Corps member who is persuing local businesses as annual partners for funding.

## **Feedback on Community POWER Program**

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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:**

- Our project became more than just the planned activities. It triggered actions outside of the classrooms into the school as a whole, into families' homes, and even into our school district.
- Grantee meetings were very informative. The meetings offered us an example of how to present the issues to our communities and showed us how to organize 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. They are committed to waste issues and helped us by providing resources, advice, and trainings.
- We now notice small things that can be done in our school and feel more confident saying something or taking action because of our involvement in the Community POWER program.
- All of the resources were very helpful! POWER has done a great job trying to make the resources available electronically.
- Community POWER was such a disciplined, organized organization and process. The program worked to develop community leaders and community cultures.
- The Community POWER grant managers do an outstanding job of making informational (people, materials) resources available.

- If there is more funding available, then there is that much more that can be done. Grantees could go deeper and longer with additional funding.

Grantees were also asked for feedback on the structure, occurrence, and time frame of the training meetings.

**Comments included:**

- We felt an obligation as a part of the Community POWER program to attend the training meetings.
- They were well organized and extremely helpful for obtaining resources and talking to real people working on similar projects.
- We also really liked the Wellstone Center meeting space.
- Offer one of the mid-year trainings closer to county sites so groups can network with other groups working in their area.
- The meetings were very valuable and were a great way to tag team train-in our youth and project participants.
- Past or current grantees could host trainings or take leadership in presenting workshops. Survey them to find out what their strengths are.
- We would be interested in attending Community POWER trainings to keep up on waste reduction issues and resources even though our grant has ended.
- We were really impressed with all of the information and training sessions that were available at the meetings.
- The networking, camaraderie, and support we received at the meetings were invaluable.
- It would be nice to be able to include money in our budget for substitute teachers so we can attend the training meetings. (Average \$120/day for a substitute).
- The meetings motivated us to do more and do better with our project.
- We felt a little pressure to have progressed with our project to be able to report on it at the meetings.
- We couldn't wait to go to the meetings. Working in a more rural area, we don't have as much contact with others. We always felt invigorated after the meetings.
- County staff could purchase some supplies such as spray bottles or tote bags and meet with past grantees to offer them incentives to continue some pieces of their project.
- The grantee meetings were incredibly helpful, not only to gather resources and find out what's out there but to network with other grantees.
- The February meeting had great information, but it would have been more useful earlier in the grant year. Access to more resources earlier in the year is most helpful.
- Everyone from Mahtomedi Community Education on the Community POWER committee attended the "amazing" Community POWER workshops. This solidified their belief in what they were doing.

## Future Recommendations

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Grantees were 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.
- Notices about trainings, new resources available, newly translated documents, etc.
- Forward updates on new resources and materials 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*

- We would be interested in attending CP trainings if free or a minimal fee.
- We suggest offering a separate training/information session for non-funded groups once or twice a year maybe headed up by county staff in our area.
- It might help groups sustain their work to offer county specific roundtable discussion or networking gatherings. This would be a way to rejuvenate our programs, learn about new resources, and get motivated.

### *Other*

- Update us every now and then on who our county contact is for reordering more materials or handouts and for setting up presentations.