



Community POWER:

Partners on Waste Education & Reduction
Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board

ROUND EIGHT (2008-2009)

FINAL REPORT SUMMARY

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Executive Summary

Twenty-three community organizations and schools received a Community POWER grant in 2008-2009. Nine of the projects were funded by SWMCB, while the others were funded through individual county allocations to the program. Individual allocations included six 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, engaged them in waste reduction activities, and promoted long-term lifestyle changes. **Typical projects** included helping residents start to recycle, learn about proper disposal of hazardous materials, get off junk mail lists, prevent waste, learn to reuse instead of throwing away items, or start to compost.

22,274 residents of the metro area were engaged in active waste reduction activities through Community POWER projects.

Follow up surveys with almost 1,500 people show that 73% of the people who participated in these projects **documented at least one long-term waste or toxicity reduction behavior change** because of the project, and many made more than one change.

An additional 711,868 people were reached with waste reduction messages through the marketing and communication efforts of grantees. Most of these messages included the Rethink Recycling brand and/or RethinkRecycling.com website. These messages were shared through newsletters, newspapers, emails, radio ads, websites, presentations, and community newspapers.

Nearly all of the projects contain **elements that will be sustained** beyond the grant year, and grantees' **replicable resources** have been posted on-line at www.rethinkrecycling.com.

In addition to grant money, 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 as well as networking opportunities for community groups;
- individual meetings with grantees to offer resources and plan projects;
- workshops and presentations by county staff;
- email distribution lists linking grantees, county staff, and interested groups;
- an evaluation of long-term outcomes experienced by past grantees to uncover sustainability strategies; and
- an expanded website showcasing outcomes of each grantee project and disseminating grantee-created resources.

Examples of People Taking Action to Reduce Waste

The Association for the Advancement of Hmong Women partnered with four organizations for their project that reached Hmong, Lao, Burmese, Cambodian and Vietnamese populations. The project offered 30 workshops on waste topics. Over 200 people made non-toxic cleaners, 327 opted out of junk mail and 185 people started recycling in their homes.

Highlands Elementary School launched a "How Low Can We Go?" project which turned four classrooms into Zero Waste Classrooms. Motivated by an "I Pledge" video they created, the students implemented what they learned in the classrooms at home.

Mahtomedi Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) disseminated toxicity reduction information and strategies to 100% of class participants for a total of 52 parents. Parent educators used the lesson plans from the Environmental Education Toolkit for ECFE, as well as training from county staff, to help parents learn how to reduce household waste and toxicity.

Minnehaha United Methodist Church initiated a "Pick One Thing" campaign throughout the church community to encourage members to take at least one action to reduce their household waste. 579 individuals signed waste reduction pledges as a result of the campaign.

710 seniors or residents in the Macalester Groveland Neighborhood opted out of junk mail or identified and removed hazardous waste from their homes by working with trained volunteers through workshops and one hour home visits.

The Chain of Lakes YMCA educated their members about reuse and refilling water bottles and reached over 2,200 members who tracked their reuse at the center while working out.

Examples of Ways Waste Reduction Messages Are Shared

Carver County Libraries launched a no-waste themed "Message in a Tube" social marketing program with teens and tweens. They reached over 500 students and families with educational films they created. The films were shown at all five library locations.

CTEP members translated and distributed more than 7,000 e-waste materials at community fairs and at community technology centers to non-English speaking residents including Spanish, Somali, and Hmong.

Dakota County 4H exposed nearly 75,000 people to the Community POWER message at the Dakota County Fair, where 4-H was predominantly featured. They integrated waste reduction messages throughout their programming and displays.

Over 100 Great River Senior High students researched and then created four lesson plans for elementary and junior high classrooms on waste reduction. Other students wrote a play titled "Tales from the Landfill" that was performed and recorded at four neighboring schools.

38 junior high youth from Guardian Angels Church were trained at waste reduction workshops. These students then presented the information they learned to 276 youth attending the church's summer day camps.

Hands On Twin Cities developed a waste reduction educational Power Point and an online follow up quiz called "It's Easy Being Green: Simple Reduce-Reuse-Recycle Practices.". Through training in their staff and affiliate organizations, they reached a total of 890 people.

Examples of How Projects Will Be Sustained

Honoring the Earth Partnership reached 446 families through 14 presentations on reducing toxicity and waste in participants' homes. They will continue partnering with organizations on these topics and may also begin promoting waste reduction and recycling at pow-wows in the future.

Several classrooms at Lincoln Center Elementary began worm composting as an educational tool for students and parents. This effort is being continued into the 2009-2010 school year.

Linden Hills EcoParents will continue to meet monthly after the grant period. There is now an established group of individuals who are interested in learning more about how to reduce waste and toxicity as well as other ways to reduce their impact on the planet. The schedule for the coming year includes a focus on sustainable lifestyles. The Linden Hills Neighborhood Association has agreed to financially support the efforts, through their Environmental Committee.

Mahtomedi Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) staff have been trained to use the ECFE Toolkit. The ECFE program will be sustained without further funding. ECFE will continue to offer waste reduction and recycling sessions to parents in classrooms, during special events, and during parent/child activities.

The Minnesota Children's Museum's "Wise About Waste" initiative, in partnership with Glacier Hills Elementary School, resulted in waste-related kinetic and sculptural robots on display at the museum for a year. The museum has since opened a new exhibit utilizing SWMCB's Trash Mountain display.

The Association for the Advancement of Hmong Women conducted a broadcast on Hmong Minnesota radio and plan to do more on radio and cable stations in the future.

Long-Term Behavior Change Study

For the past four years, Community POWER grantees have been required to follow up with participants in their projects to determine if Community POWER projects result in sustained lifestyle changes. The number of grantees who successfully complete these follow-up activities has risen each year. This year, 91% of the projects submitted data on almost 1,500 people.

The data shows that 73% of the people studied reported making at least one sustained behavior change due to information learned through a Community POWER project. Most people reported making more than one change.

Grantees may evaluate up to 18 different ways the participants in their projects have made lifestyle changes. The *most typical actions* promoted through grantee projects include: using reusable shopping bags, making and using non-toxic cleaners at home, begin or increase residential recycling, reducing junk mail, reading labels on household materials and properly disposing of them, and making gifts, toys, and gift wrap from reused materials.

Round 8 Grantee Project Summaries

Association for the Advancement of Hmong Women (AAHWM)

AAHWM partnered with four organizations for their project that reached Hmong, Lao, Burmese, Cambodian and Vietnamese populations. During their project, AAHWM attended almost 30 community and organizational events offering workshops to over 640 people on household hazardous waste, non-toxic cleaning, recycling, junk mail, and household waste. Over 200 people made non-toxic cleaners, 327 opted out of junk mail, and 185 people started recycling in their homes. In addition, some events also offered a non-toxic cleaning station where past and new participants could make or refill a bottle of non-toxic cleaner. Lastly, AAHWM staff conducted a broadcast on Hmong Minnesota radio and plan to do more on radio and cable stations in the future.

Carver County Libraries

Carver County Libraries launched a no-waste themed "Message in a Tube" social marketing program with teens and tweens, which reached over 500 students and families. The project included training, video creation and educational film debuts at Watertown and Chaska schools and all five library locations in Carver County. Hands-on activities were conducted at the film showings and other library events, reaching 450 library patrons. These activities included creating recycling log journals, recycled woven bracelets, and non-toxic cleaners as well as decorating reusable muslin bags. In addition, all five library locations offered a new Go Green book collection used in the summer reading and story time programs. The book collection reached 871 children. The films are currently posted on You Tube. The Go Green video collection will grow to 250 media items and the Go Green storytelling programs will be offered each year.

Community Action Council (CAC)

488 residents received information and had the opportunity to practice recycling at two domestic abuse shelters. At these shelters, CAC implemented and integrated recycling, reuse, waste, and toxicity reduction education and modeling. Both shelters now offer recycling for all recyclable items and resident and staff efforts have reduced the amount of waste pick-up from three times per week to one time per week. 75 residents attended at least one waste reduction training and 25 staff received training on how to implement waste reduction modeling at their sites. 300 staff, volunteers, and clients have actively increased their knowledge through emails, handouts, and activity surveys. 300 individuals also attended community clothing exchange events. Additionally, CAC has produced a best practices recycling and waste reduction guide for clients and will share this guide with other community partners.

Community Technology Empowerment Project (CTEP)

The Community Technology Empowerment Project (CTEP), through its AmeriCorps program, implemented a unique grassroots level electronic waste reduction initiative to immigrant and low-income populations. Five CTEP members led efforts and distributed more than 7,000 e-waste materials at community fairs and at community technology centers. Half of the community members that were reached were non-English speaking, including Spanish, Somali and Hmong. An e-waste curriculum was also created and incorporated into six community technology centers in Ramsey and Hennepin counties reaching 45 participants. The community technology centers will continue to use the curriculum beyond the grant period. Finally, CTEP developed a two minute Public Service Announcement video in English, Somali, Hmong and Spanish on how to properly dispose of e-waste which is now posted on RethinkRecycling.com.

Dakota County 4-H

Dakota County 4-H educated youth and their families to actively participate in additional recycling and waste reduction. They developed a "Reuse, Recycle, Rethink" curriculum and added an additional four educational unit to reach a wider group of youth. 478 Out of School Time students and 100 In School Time students were actively involved in the project. Dakota County 4H disseminated their waste reduction message to 78 representatives from 26 4H Clubs and built partnerships in schools, community organizations, and after-school programs that will continue on after grant period.

Forest Lake Community Education School Age Care

The School Age Care program of Forest Lake Community Education educated children and their parents to reduce waste through hands-on activities, family nights, newsletters, school announcements, and community service projects. Education, outreach, and activities reaching over 1,000 students and over 21,000 community members have included reducing lunch waste, making lunch bags from old jeans, safely disposing of household hazardous waste, identifying toxins, making and using non-toxic household cleaners, and assisting seniors with junk mail reduction.

Great River School

Over 100 Great River Senior High students in Physical Science and Theatre classes learned about and researched waste reduction issues and then created four lesson plans for elementary and junior high classrooms. Another 20 theatre students used the lesson plans to write a play script called "Tales from the Landfill" that was performed and recorded at four neighboring schools. Over 50% of those who viewed the play committed to working on a waste reduction program in their school and publically displayed this pledge by wearing "Caught Recycling" or "Caught Reducing" buttons. The lesson plans, DVD of the play and 600 Rethink Recycling bags were also shared with ten schools to help them continue learning about waste reduction after the performance.

Guardian Angels Church

Guardian Angels Church trained 38 junior high youth to teach 276 children in an area day camp how to reduce, reuse, and recycle. Both groups of young people then educated their parents to make specific waste reduction commitments. A summary of these activities was posted on Facebook for Summer Stretch members, which includes over 60 churches and over 2,000 junior high participants. Project coordinators also educated church members, including setting up recycling stations with information at the back of church, which reached an estimated 5,000 people.

Hands On Twin Cities

Hands On Twin Cities developed and provided a waste reduction educational Power Point and interactive training session called "It's Easy Being Green: Simple Reduce-Reuse-Recycle Practices" to their staff and to 175 affiliate organizational partners. They did this through six workshops including events at Travelers, Century College and the 2020 event at the Mall of America, for a total reach of 890 people. They also developed an online training quiz that included simple Reduce, Reuse, Recycle tips. The quiz was given to workshop participants and promoted to 6,000 additional people.

Highlands Elementary (Edina)

Highlands Elementary School launched their "How Low Can We Go?" project which began with a presentation to 96 parents at the parents' curriculum night. Over the course of the school year, 96 students in four classrooms worked to make their classroom a Zero Waste Classroom. Motivated by an "I Pledge" video they created and by parent-student nights, the students implemented what they learned in the classrooms at home. Activities throughout the year included distributing reusable lunchbox kits, initiating a student-run paper towel composting and plastic bag program, decorating 200 reusable shopping bags and making video pledges. 400 people attended their Earth Day event, which was featured on Fox 9 and Kare 11. The teachers will continue their low-waste classroom practices and curriculum for future students.

Lincoln Center Elementary (South St. Paul)

13 fifth and sixth grade Lincoln Center Elementary students developed six lessons on waste reduction. They used these lessons to educate the 925 other students in their school. They also shared waste reduction information via morning announcements and posters. 25 students participated in Earth Camp, which included specific information on waste reduction. Project coordinators have shared resources with 50 families at parent-teacher conferences and 50 families bought low-cost compost bins at Family Fun Night.

Linden Hills Neighborhood Council

Linden Hills EcoParents had 44 unique individuals attend at least one monthly meeting, including 21 individuals who attended more than one meeting. Meetings included sharing information about waste and toxicity reduction actions families could take at home. 71 individuals signed up to receive updates and notifications of EcoParents activities and meetings. 63 individuals are members of the "Linden Hills EcoParents" group on Facebook. At EcoParents events, individuals discussed regularly checking the blog. 105 families participated in one of four "green parties," which included information on low-waste/ no-waste events and education around action steps residents can take to reduce waste and toxicity in the home. 130 families received information and saw waste reduction being modeled during National Night Out block parties. The EcoParents group formed partnerships with the Linden Hills Natural Home Store and other local retailers, who donated incentives for meetings.

Macalester Groveland Seniors Program

The Macalester Groveland Seniors Program educated over 46,710 seniors and neighborhood residents about reducing junk mail and properly disposing of household hazardous waste. 710 seniors or residents were directly involved in waste reduction through activities such as attending a training session or workshop, opting out of junk mail, identifying and/or removing hazardous waste from their homes and replacing these products with non-toxic cleaners. The Macalester Groveland Seniors office also now hosts a waste and toxicity reduction resource room, which is open to the public.

Mahtomedi ECFE

Mahtomedi ECFE educated and assisted parents and preschool children in waste reduction practices in three main themes throughout the school year: reuse, recycling, and toxicity reduction. Activities included staff training, parent education sessions, parent-child activities, and field trips. Two parent educators and five ECFE teachers were trained. Waste reduction information and strategies were disseminated to 52 ECFE parents through parent education sessions. 293 children participated in a waste reduction and recycling lesson. In addition, 500 people attended the R.I.T.E. (Really into the Earth) of Spring Event, where information about waste and toxicity reduction was distributed. 200 people attended the annual preschool carnival, which included a recycling exhibit, game, and button maker.

MEP/Honoring the Earth

The Honoring the Earth Partnership (HTE) partnered with four American Indian serving organizations and a multicultural early learning program called Way to Go. HTE provided 14 presentations, which reached 446 families. The presentations included action step strategies to reduce toxicity and waste in participants' homes including recycling, identifying toxins, disposing of toxins safely, making non-toxic alternatives including non-toxic cleaners, and learning about integrated pest management techniques. Over 60% of the participants committed to changing their

behaviors at home after the presentations. HTE will continue partnering with organizations on these topics and may also begin promoting waste reduction and recycling at Pow-Wows in the future.

Minnehaha United Methodist Church

Minnehaha United Methodist Church's Green Team launched a "Pick One Thing" campaign to get church members and neighbors to commit to pick one waste or toxicity reduction action to change at home. 579 pledges were signed. Members and neighbors were educated through adult and child forums and workshops, summer camps, annual events open to the community, and through worship experiences. In addition, 1,000 reusable bags were distributed with information about reuse.

Minnesota Children's Museum

The Minnesota Children's Museum's "Wise About Waste" initiative was in partnership with Glacier Hills Elementary School to create an in-depth, interdisciplinary waste reduction project with 100 third grade students. The students learned to reduce waste at their school and in their homes and collaborated with an environmental artist to create waste related kinetic and sculptural robots using recycle materials. Half of the participating students and their families reported taking at least one waste reduction change at home. The robots have been on display in a gallery at the museum along with a take home brochure and "talk back" station for visitors to write about their own waste reduction or reuse actions. 192,000 visitors will have seen the exhibit by December 2009. The Wise About Waste program and curriculum will be offered again to next year's 3rd grade students.

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church engaged church members and members of the surrounding community with information on waste reduction through performances, exhibits, forums, a green gifts fair, and educational workshops. Monthly workshop attendees included both church members and residents of the surrounding community for a total of 1,160 people. 59 households went online and pledged to reduce waste. These families were given a cloth bag and a reusable bottle for non-toxic cleaner. Youth and adults were trained to conduct household waste audits to assist people in identifying waste reduction opportunities particular to their home and lifestyle.

Southeast Seniors Block Nurse Program

The Southeast Seniors Block Nurse Program assisted isolated seniors in reducing junk mail, identify household hazardous waste and enlisting family members to properly dispose of it, and switching to non-toxic household products. 52 seniors and 15 home health aides attended action-oriented workshops and 12,500 homes received a newsletter with waste reduction, junk mail, and household cleaner tips.

Unity Unitarian Church of St. Paul

A total of 75 adults and 25 youth attended workshops and forums on backyard and worm composting. Team leaders also spoke with 100 people at the Gardening Matters Spring Resource Fair, where the Community POWER project had a table and a constant stream of people seeking composting information.

Worldwide Outreach for Christ

Worldwide Outreach for Christ church used the program model "Inform, Inquire, Repeat" to educate their 900 members about waste reduction topics throughout the year. They reached mostly low-income and African American members of their church and Hispanic members of their surrounding community. They offered a kick-off event at the church in May and continued programming such as gardening classes, recycling education, a logo contest, reusable bags as a part of their food drive distribution and weekly Sunday youth programming focused on waste reduction.

YMCA Chain of Lakes

The Chain of Lakes YMCA reached over 2,200 of their members with reuse messages, including promoting and distributing reusable bottles and asking members to track their reuse at the center. The YMCA also shared waste reduction messages with 300 youth and their parents through their Kids Stuff program and offered educational displays in their lobby. Events included America Recycles Day, Earth Day and a low waste holidays event reaching 200 members. An environmental club called Eco Club is now offered weekly for children seven years and older.

YWCA –Downtown & Midtown

YWCA of Minneapolis reached over 9,000 members at their Downtown and Midtown locations through a series of educational events including green art displays, green ideas contest, Hennepin County educational handouts, newsletter articles, and web site information links. However, both locations focused their waste reduction activities at their Children's Centers where they reached over 124 low income families about waste reduction throughout their year programming. Education included parent education classes with presentations, hands-on activities, family night activities, plant boxes, composting and field trips on waste issues. In addition, 40 youth created a recycling and clothing collection program at their center. The YWCA will continue their parent programming and maintain their classroom recycling and compost bins.