HBCAC Educates Student Ambassadors on Endocrine Disrupting Materials to Ensure Better Lifestyle Choices

The Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition, Inc., (HBCAC) is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) community grassroots organization that has been in existence since 1993. HBCAC is dedicated to the eradication of breast cancer through education and awareness. As a community group partnering with research institutions, HBCAC continuously works to translate science and educate the community on environmental health through creative outreach platforms. Recognizing the diversity in New York State, HBCAC targets reach multiple socio-economic, ethnic, gender, and age groups.

Challenge
Endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDC) are mostly man-made chemicals found in various materials such as pesticides, metals, additives or contaminants in food, and personal care products. Throughout one’s life, there are seven windows of susceptibility where individuals are more vulnerable to low-dose detrimental chemical exposures, which can increase the likelihood of disease onset later in life. These chemicals are also detrimental to the environment, causing harm and leaving long lasting impacts as the chemicals build up over time. The pubertal period is one of the critical windows of susceptibility for harm from EDCs.

Solution
HBCAC educated 2,000 middle and high school students on EDCs, through peer-to-peer interaction. HBCAC taught them to translate and disseminate scientific information on hazardous chemicals through a variety of outreach platforms. These platforms included interactive presentations, social media, videos, email, handouts, and more.

Results
HBCAC developed content for their program by partnering with a school network, community leaders from Huntington, libraries and senior centers, Dr. Sarah Evans from Mount Sinai Health System and HBCAC interns. Six student mentors were chosen as environmental health ambassadors to be trained to educate their peers. The ambassadors developed a baseline survey (200 distributed with a 60% return rate) deciding what information to provide to their community, peers, and middle schoolers.

With guidance, the ambassadors created videos, a group presentation, individual presentations, and handouts on hazardous chemical identification in personal care products, how to avoid these chemicals, other exposures of concern, the health impact these chemicals can have, and the impact on the environment through contamination.
The materials were used for mentors to help train additional mentors and were disseminated to the community through outreach events, HBCAC’s website, email, and social media platforms; this included 25 events with 2,135 total attendees and 2,500 educational materials distributed through events and social media. In addition, the students distributed an exit survey and compiled the lessons learned from the surveys. They also developed a toolkit and shared it via social media.

**Mercury Mythbusters**

- Mercury is a natural element. It is released from rocks, soil, fish, and water in the environment.
- Mercury is a common element that is found in many other materials, such as rocks and water.
- Mercury is a heavy metal that can be harmful to humans.

**Why Should We Be Concerned About Mercury?**

- Mercury affects the brain and nervous system, organs, and circulatory system.
- Mercury can cause problems in the brain and nervous system, organs, and circulatory system.

**What Can We Do?**

- Mercury can be found in many materials, such as rocks and water.
- Mercury is a heavy metal that can be harmful to humans.

**Beauty is More Than Her Deep**

- A study on the effects of beauty on the brain and nervous system.
- Beauty is more than her deep.

**Climate Change Challenge**

- Climate change is a global issue that affects everyone.
- What is it?
- Climate change refers to the warming of the Earth’s surface, oceans, and atmosphere over time.
- Why should we be concerned?
- Climate change is a major concern because it can lead to severe weather events, rising sea levels, and other problems.

**Online Media:**

- Website
- Facebook
- LinkedIn

**TESTIMONIAL**

“During my time as an educational leader in two school districts, I have witnessed directly the tremendously positive influence HBCAC programs have had on so many students from diverse backgrounds. I have served as Superintendent of the Huntington School District for the last eight years, during which time numerous students have found their passion and achieved immeasurably as participants in HBCAC’s Students & Scientists Environmental Research Scholarship Program; others have found their way through internship opportunities offered by the organization. Additionally, HBCAC has helped our staff on several occasions to integrate hands-on, inquiry-based curricular components at the elementary level, particularly at our STEM Magnet School, that have succeeded in broadening student interest and engagement.”

– James W. Polansky
Superintendent of Schools
Huntington, New York

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