

COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM



CASE STUDY

Healthy Homes Guide Educates Parents on the Dangers of Lead Paint Poisoning

Located in Rochester, NY the Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning is a non-profit organization of community members who share the following conviction: childhood lead poisoning can and must end.

Founded in 2000, the Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning (CPLP) is an education and advocacy organization composed of nearly 100 individuals and community organizations dedicated to eliminating childhood lead poisoning in Monroe County. Their mission is to provide leadership and advocacy to empower the community and its residents to prevent the lead poisoning of children by creating an environment that is free of lead hazards, facilitates the creation of a system that protects children, creates jobs, and enhances property values.

Challenge

In the city of Rochester, the majority of lead-poisoned children live in the most economically challenged neighborhoods, although lead poisoning occurs in all corners of Monroe County. Of the approximately 15,000 children age six and under living in the City of Rochester, African American and Latino children are the ones disproportionately being poisoned by lead paint dust.

In Monroe County children diagnosed with lead paint poisoning will suffer permanent brain damage that can result in learning disabilities, behavioral challenges, and lifelong health deficits. This damage is the result of ingesting lead dust and the cause is nearly always because of deteriorated lead-based paint in the home. Lead poisoning is untreatable, but almost entirely preventable. The Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning is working to educate and assist Rochester parents on the dangers of lead poisoning.

Solution

Through support from New York State Pollution Prevention Institute (NYSP2I), the Coalition printed and disseminated 7,000 copies of "Healthy Homes, Healthy Families: A Guide to Protecting Your Family's Health by Making Your Home a Safer Environment". This guide provides information on reducing asthma triggers, improving air quality, and avoiding exposure to lead paint poisoning hazards. It also includes ways to reduce general home hazards including safe water temperatures, safe sleeping practices for babies, household chemicals, pesticides, and poisons.

Results

Working with community partners, the Coalition revised and updated the "Healthy Homes, Healthy Families" guide. Through support from Roberts Communications the initial goal of 5,000 guides was increased 40% to 7,000 copies. Guides were distributed to 30+ community agencies in the Greater Rochester area. From social workers to weatherization specialists, CPLP community partners shared the guides with their clients because the information contained was very helpful to improving home health.

In the past decade, this community has seen an 85%+ reduction in the number of children reported lead poisoned. The Rochester region is a national model of how a community works collaboratively to reduce a public health hazard.

More than 5,600 children have been spared the devastating effects of lead poisoning due to the on-going work of the Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning and many community partners including the City of Rochester, Monroe County Dept. of Public Health, property owners, educators, healthcare providers, local funders, and elected officials.

Still, the job isn't done. In 2014, there were 609 Rochester area children reported to have unacceptably high blood lead levels — that's enough to fill more than 30 kindergarten classrooms. The Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning remains dedicated to its mission to end childhood lead poisoning.

CHALLENGE

- Educate and assist parents in the Greater Rochester area on the impact of lead poisoning and its effects on young children

SOLUTION

- Print and distribute 7,000 copies of "Healthy Homes, Healthy Families: A Guide to Protecting Your Family's Health by Making Your Home a Safer Environment" to the Rochester community

RESULTS

- Over 7,000 copies were printed and disseminated to 30+ locations in the Greater Rochester area, exceeding original expectations of this campaign
- The Rochester region is a national model in reducing the number of children reported with lead poisoning, with an 85 percent reduction to date

CONTACT INFO

ELIZABETH MCDADE

Program Manager

585-224-3125

emcdade@leadsafeby2010.org

Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning
c/o Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency
1150 University Ave.
Rochester, NY 14607

Social Media

[Website: Let's Make Lead History](#)

**COALITION TO
PREVENT
LEAD
POISONING**

Indoor air levels of pollutants may be 2-5 times higher than outdoor levels. Occasionally they can be as much as 100 times worse.

—EPA

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

Asbestos

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral fiber that was used in building insulation, floor and ceiling tiles and other materials until it was banned in 1989. When the material is broken or crumbling, fibers can be breathed in through the air. Longterm exposure to these fibers can cause asbestosis, lung cancer, or mesothelioma.

Carbon Monoxide

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless, toxic gas. It comes from burning fuels (gas, oil, etc.). CO can kill you or make you ill before you are even aware it is present. Only a CO detector can detect it.

Furnace

If you have a hot air furnace, it greatly impacts your home's air quality. Make sure your furnace is working properly to avoid indoor air problems like dust and carbon monoxide.

Mold

Mold is a fungus that grows in moist, warm areas of the home, like the attic, basement, bathroom and kitchen. Certain molds can cause respiratory and sinus problems or asthma attacks. Many molds are harmless, but some can cause significant health problems.

Radon

Radon is a colorless, odorless, naturally occurring, radioactive gas found in soil. Radon may enter basements of houses through cracks in concrete walls and floors or through dirt floors. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States.

Tobacco Smoke

Tobacco smoke can cause many serious health problems. See page 7 and 8 of "Healthy Homes, Healthy Families" guide for more information.

One in 38 U.S. children has lead poisoning.

—CDC

Lead Hazards

Lead Poisoning

Lead is a toxin that affects the brain, heart, bones and kidneys. Because of children's growing brains and bodies, lead poisoning has a greater impact on children than adults. Even small amounts of lead in children's bodies can cause permanent learning and behavioral problems, often with no physical symptoms. This includes a lower IQ, hyperactivity and delinquent behavior.

Lead Hazards in the Home

Lead poisoning occurs when harmful amounts of lead are swallowed or breathed in. Homes built before 1978 are at risk for containing hazardous leaded dust and paint. Lead can also be found in soil, jewelry, toys, home remedies, ceramics, candy or water.

Lead in Rochester

Lead paint in homes was banned in the United States in 1978. Paint in homes built before then

may contain lead. Most of the homes in the city of Rochester were built before 1978, which puts them at risk for lead hazards.

In 2005, the city of Rochester passed an ordinance that adds a lead hazard assessment to city inspections of rental properties.

TESTIMONIAL

"We are grateful to NYSP2I for their support. As a result of our project, the "Healthy Families, Healthy Homes" guide was distributed to an additional 7,000 individuals and organizations in the Rochester area. Enormous progress has been made since the Coalition began its work over 10 years ago, however we still have a lot of work to do to finish the job. Lead is a neurotoxin and children are particularly susceptible to the irreversible and devastating effects of lead poisoning. We must continue to raise the awareness of families in Rochester and across the state - to request home inspections for lead hazards, get children tested for exposure to lead at ages one and again at two, and make sure any contractor hired to do renovation work in a pre-1978 home is RRP certified by the EPA."

- Elizabeth McDade,
Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning
Program Manager

NYSP2I PARTNERS

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University at Buffalo
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New York Manufacturing Extension Partnership

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For more information please contact us:

111 Lomb Memorial Drive, Bldg. 78
Rochester, NY 14623

Tel: 585-475-2512

Web: nysp2i.rit.edu

E-mail: nysp2i@rit.edu

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Golisano Institute
for Sustainability
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