Hiawatha CARE Project Project Update

What is the Hiawatha CARE Project?

Hennepin County started the Hiawatha CARE Project in early 2011. The project is working in East Phillips and western Longfellow to tackle environmental health risks in the area. The project aims to bring together community members to identify and prioritize ways to make a healthier local environment.

Who is Doing It?

Hennepin County is collaborating with the Longfellow Community Council and Women's Environmental Institute to involve those living, working, visiting, and worshipping in the community. In addition, a partnership of community groups, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies is guiding efforts to identify and prioritize risks.

What has Happened so Far?

During summer 2011, the CARE team talked to over 700 people in the area to learn the "assets" and "concerns" people saw in their community. Twenty-four environmental and health concerns stood out as important to them (see inset on back). The CARE project team created a set of Fact Sheets to help community members learn more about these concerns.

What is Next?

Through spring and summer 2012, the CARE team will be hosting community discussions to talk more about these concerns.

Did You Know?

- *One-third of Minnesota homes have a radon level that poses a significant health risk [MN Department of Health]*

- *There were 3,819 asthma hospitalizations among Hennepin County residents between 2006 - 2008 [MN Department of Health]*

- *25% of Minnesota adults were obese; 38% overweight in 2010 [MN Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey]*

- *39% of non-smoking 6th to 12th graders were exposed to secondhand smoke in a room, vehicle, or workplace in 2011 [MN Department of Health]*

- *56% of electricity in Minnesota comes from burning coal [Energy Information Administration]*

Project Area

The CARE team will also be at several community events throughout the summer. Check www.minnehaha-hiawatha.com/care or call 612-348-9344 to find out more. In fall, community members will prioritize their top issues and decide how the community and partners might address them.

How Does this Project Affect Me?

Environmental health risks affect your family, finances, health, and well-being. This project aims to bring community members together to figure out how to improve quality of life and health for everyone in the community.

What is CARE?

CARE stands for Community Action for a Renewed Environment. It is a program of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to deal with toxic pollutants in the environment. The EPA awarded Hennepin County $100,000 for the Hiawatha CARE project in December 2010. The Hiawatha CARE project is part of Hennepin County's Minnehaha-Hiawatha Community Works project.

Community-Identified Environmental and Health Concerns

- Access to health care, health disparities
- Access to healthy food
- Air pollution
- Asthma
- Bugs and pests
- Community blight
- Crime and personal security
- Economic instability
- Empty storefronts and business vitality
- Energy consumption
- Environmental sustainability and climate change
- Lack of community
- Lack of green space
- Lead
- Mold
- Nutrition and obesity
- Pollution from vehicles, traffic
- Radon
- Second-hand smoke
- Soil contamination
- Toxics in the home
- Trash
- Unfriendly bike and pedestrian environment
- Water quality and storm water management

CARE Process

Create advisory group of business, community, government, and non-profit stakeholders.

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Community members identify community assets and concerns.

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CARE team shares info on health and environmental concerns.

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Community ranks and prioritizes top concerns.

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Community develops Action Plan to address top concerns.

Spring '11 — Summer '11 — Spring '12 — Summer '12 — Fall '12