



The Center for Urban Responses to Environmental Stressors

A Wayne State University Community Outreach and Engagement Newsletter | Vol. 3



Indoor Air Quality

1%

OF ALL WASTE

from Detroit homes was recycled in 2015. Recycling stops plastics from going into incinerators and releasing harmful chemicals into the air.

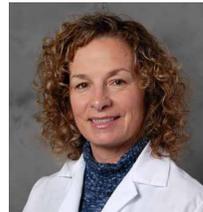
Please recycle!

Contact Zero Waste Detroit at 313-986-2990 to learn how.

Zero Waste Detroit
A coalition for recycling and an end to waste incineration

The Inside Story on Your Health

When we think of things that are bad for our health we often think of air pollution, stress, or not getting enough exercise. But most people spend most of their day inside so we're turning our attention inside the home and so are our researchers. "I want to tell grandmothers and mothers that they don't have to feel guilty for not having a really clean, tidy house," says CURES Deputy Director Dr. Christine Cole-Johnson.



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— Christine Cole-Johnson

She conducts research on exposures that affect health, especially early in life. "We originally thought, the more allergens in the home the more disease, like asthma and allergies. We found out it was the opposite. We learned that pregnant mothers and babies that were exposed to allergens like dust and pet dander were

less likely to be allergic. This was stunning to us," said Dr. Cole-Johnson.

Her work supports the 'hygiene hypothesis' that found cleaner environments have actually led to an increase in asthma and allergies. Modern practices like using dishwashers, antibacterial soap, and bleach impact our home environments. "We're finding that homes are like microbial deserts," said Dr. Cole-Johnson. This lack of exposure to germs and allergens has had adverse effects. Research has found that families that use dishwashers actually have higher incidences of

see **Health** page 2



Pictured L to R: Rebecca Meuninck, Brian Smith, Carrie Leach, Melissa Sargent

Partner Spotlight: ECOLOGYCENTER Healthy People. Healthy Planet

Improving environmental health is a job for all of us. We work closely with our partners to get important information to those who need it most. Our friends at the Ecology Center have been working with us to create programs and materials that benefit everyone. Melissa Sargent is the chair of our Community Advisory Board and longtime champion in educating Detroiters about matters of environmental health. Both she and Deputy Director Rebecca Meuninck have been great collaborators working to improve the health of Detroiters.

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allergies.

Being exposed to germs matters most very early in life. Even an unborn child's immune system can start to program responses to germs to protect their health.

A recent ruling by the Food and Drug Administration supports a less sterile approach to home keeping. The FDA banned antibacterial soaps, ruling that they were no more effective or safe than washing hands with soap and water. Our friends at the Ecology Center agree that less is more. They're committed to helping people clean smarter by providing recipes for cleaning products that are less expensive and greener (see page 4). The recipes are easy to make and less focused on killing germs and more focused on good, old fashioned cleaning.

Understanding Environmental Justice through Story Sharing



Our intergenerational discussion with CURES Community Advisory Board member Dell Stubblefield (third from right), focused on environmental justice and racism. Our group of teens chose a journal article to read, discuss, and share thoughts about. Dell's personal narrative of growing up in Detroit added unique insight from a historical perspective.

Meet Maya: Our Teen Intern Talks Exposure

Maya Sopory is a 16-year-old high school student, explorer, and intern at CURES

My experiences talking to bench scientists and social scientists, spending time in the office, attending the CURES environmental health tour, and watching the CURES videos expanded my world knowledge. For instance, touring the lab at the iBio building helped me realize the great expanses of information that we do not yet know, and all of the infinite explanations an experiment can help discover.

After attending the environmental health tour of Detroit with Brian and Carrie, I realized how people are affected in their day-to-day lives by corporate and governmental decisions. These huge organizations create environmental hazards that seriously negatively impact peoples' lives. After these two experiences I was able to draw a connection. The scientific research conducted in the lab about the physical impacts of environmental hazards parallel the challenges of the people experiencing the negative physical impacts.

It is these connections that I made



that I found the most interesting. Months after the fact, I am still thinking about these connections. I use them to enhance my thinking and how I can look at issues from a broader perspective.

I am truly grateful for having these experiences that enabled me to grow as a person. I think that all people my age should try and find similar experiences because it has been hugely beneficial. If there was an internship program that could be applied for at CURES, I would definitely recommend it to my friends and peers.

Say it
forward

Sharing information that you learn with others helps improve community health.

If you learn something, say it forward so someone else can benefit from the information also! >>>

98%

OF PEOPLE AT OUR EVENTS

said they would share the information they learned with others



Center for
Urban Responses
to Environmental
Stressors



Indoor Air Quality

FACT SHEET

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY | DETROIT, MICHIGAN | WWW.CURES.WAYNE.EDU

Community Resources



**Green & Healthy
Homes Initiative®**
Detroit-Wayne County

GHHI is a collaborative dedicated to creating green, healthy, and safe homes for children and families in Detroit and Wayne County.

To find out if you qualify for the following services call 313-473-7566.

Home Repair Loans

Lead Abatement Grants

Refrigerator Replacement

Free Smoke & Carbon
Monoxide Detectors

Utility and/or Water Assistance

Home Safety Products & Education

Energy Efficiency Education

Asthma & Allergy Management



To learn more about CURES contact Brian Smith at 313-577-5045 or brian.smith9@wayne.edu

Tips For a Healthy Home



Open windows as much as possible. Welcome in fresh air. The EPA finds that indoor air is more polluted than the air outside, no matter where you live.



Use greener cleaners (see back for recipes).



Take shoes off at the door to prevent tracking in outdoor pollutants.



Eliminate use of pesticides inside and out. Use traps and non-toxic sprays.



Cleaning labels that say, "danger," "poison," "flammable," or "toxic" should be avoided.



Antibacterial soaps were banned by the FDA
SOAP + WATER = CLEAN HANDS

Research How can you clean your indoor air? Grow indoor plants. Plants are nature's air filters. NASA has done studies to find out which common indoor plants work best to absorb contaminants such as benzene, formaldehyde and trichloroethylene.

To learn more visit: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NASA_Clean_Air_Study



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TIPS FROM OUR FRIENDS AT THE



Use Greener Cleaners

Combining specific common household ingredients — many of which are food-grade — will save you money. Remember as with any cleaning agent, test on a small spot to be sure you are satisfied with the results. Also be sure to use clean, dry containers. Label any jars containing cleaners you will save for another day.

- Rather than air fresheners or artificial fragrances, use **baking soda** to absorb odors.
- Avoid anti-bacterial soaps and products labeled with claims to “kill germs”.
- **White vinegar** is a food-grade antimicrobial. Spray it on countertops to clean.
- Wash hands for 20-30 seconds with **warm water and mild soap** to remove germs.

RECIPES



ALL PURPOSE SPRAY

- 1 teaspoon borax
- ¼ - ½ teaspoon washing soda
- ¼ teaspoon liquid castile soap
- 10 drops of essential oil (optional)

Put borax and washing soda in spray bottle. Add 8 oz. hot water. Shake to dissolve. Add liquid soap and essential oils. Leave out washing soda if using on fiberglass—it will scratch.

MILDEW ERASER

You don't need harsh chlorine bleach to kill mold and mildew. Instead mix one cup of water with **one** of these:

- 1 teaspoon of tea tree oil
- 1 cup of hydrogen peroxide
- 1 cup distilled white vinegar

OR

- 2 tablespoons borax

GLASS CLEANER

Pour equal amounts of distilled white vinegar and water in a spray bottle. Wipe dry with crumpled newspaper, a lint-free soft cloth, or use a squeegee.



Earth Friendly Shopping Around Detroit

These stores carry non-synthetic fertilizers and non-toxic pest control products.

Allemon's Landscape Center
17727 Mack Ave., 48224
(313) 882-9085

The Cultivation Station
2518 Market St., 48207
(313) 394-0441

DeRonne True Value Hardware
18561 Nine Mile Rd., 48021
(586) 779-5000

English Gardens
22501 Kelly Rd., 48021
(586) 771-4200

Detroit Farm & Garden
1759 21st St., 48216
(313) 655-2344

Home Depot
20300 Kelly Rd., 48230
(313) 245-9216

Meldrum and Smith Nursery
17750 Mack Ave., 48224
(313) 885-5433

Village ACE Hardware
18165 Mack Ave., 48224
(313) 882-9230