

ReNU Niagara  
COPC--Environmental Justice Team

Environmental Justice Activities

**I. Environmental Helpline**

1. Purpose:
  - Be a community resource for reporting public health and nuisance concerns.
  - Share information and services related to local environmental health and justice issues in the community
  - Build trust and rapport between NU/Healthy Neighborhoods (HN) and community
2. Issues to ponder/clarify
  - Training for EH volunteers
    - NIH Training available online
    - Done in a classroom setting – at NU?
    - Volunteers should include community members as well as NU students
    - Involve staff from various agencies in the training process
    - Trainers need to develop a relationship with various agencies to which calls may be referred
    - Mock calls to oversee volunteers' interaction with callers
  - Data issues
    - Instruments for recording calls and follow-up
    - Instruments for maintaining data for assessment and research
    - Human subject data – issues, informed consent
  - Hosted at NU or COPC office
  - Hours of operation
  - Publicity
    - Refrigerator magnets, flyers, Block Clubs
    - Public service announcements – Public Access TV, radio

**II. Information Sessions (Workshops)**

1. What should these be called?
2. Conduct community workshops to include the following topics:
  - Household hazardous waste, materials
  - Hygiene; rats, cockroaches, etc.
  - Lead
  - Indoor air quality and asthma
  - Outdoor air quality
  - Brownfields
3. Work with Independent Health Foundation (IHF) and their Good for the Neighborhood Initiative
4. Issues to ponder/clarify
  - Incorporate interests of community and block clubs
  - Integrate people from the EH to put a face with the program
  - Publicity

- Established events--local festivals, school open houses, crime night out
- Brown-bag lunch series with NFMMC--healthy foods
- Public service announcements

### **III. Outreach and Follow-up through Home Assessment**

1. NU students will accompany HN to extend their reach and develop further outreach opportunities
2. Focus on topics detailed in II.2 above in these home visits – testing, sampling of these?
3. Reservation – water testing may be useful because they use wells and cisterns not public water
4. Incorporate Environmental Helpline volunteers into the HN home assessments

### **IV. Vacant and Abandoned Lots**

1. Strategies to address vacant/abandoned lots and related issues – drugs, illegal dumping
2. Alleys are a problem as well
3. Should focus only on City land – e.g., houses that are torn down
4. Work with Weed and Seed – overlapping with neighborhood programs and watches that they are doing
5. What to do with these lands?
  - Playgrounds, soccer fields--tie in to reduce childhood obesity
  - Community gardens
    - Cornell Cooperative Ext. – master gardeners that would provide the expertise
    - Block Clubs as the lead community groups
    - Rain gardens, rooftop gardens
  - Develop a “Backyard Habitat” that will serve as an outdoor environmental classroom for school age children.
    - Cultivate flowers, plants and locate structures on the lots that will attract butterflies and birds – the focus should be on native species of plants and animals
    - Students will use this outdoor classroom to learn about the lifecycle of butterflies, various species of birds, insects, and plants.
  - Sewer stencils (No Dumping! This drains to the \_\_\_\_ River.)
    - To promote awareness of pollution and increase environmental stewardship
    - Stencils can be borrowed from Riverkeeper (Friends of the Buffalo-Niagara Rivers)
  - Contact City Hall to discuss policies relevant to these lots.