

March 2004
Volume 1

The Networker



An Occasional Newsletter Dedicated to the Grass Roots
Community Concerned About Environment and Asthma in Detroit

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CAAA Partners

Friends of
Parkside

Warner/Conner
Development
Coalition

Community Health
and Social
Services (CHASS)

Latino Family
Services

Detroiters Working
for Environmental
Justice

Detroit Hispanic
Development
Corporation

Detroit Health
Department

Henry Ford Health
System

University of
Michigan's
Schools of Public
Health and
Medicine

What is The Networker?

Those of us with Community Action Against Asthma (CAAA) came up with the idea of an "occasional" newsletter dedicated to the grass-roots community concerned about environmental issues affecting the health and quality of life of people in Detroit. CAAA's three priorities are air quality, housing (as it relates to asthma), and community participation in and involvement with decisions affecting the environment and health. We are interested in working together to change policies in these areas.

The first volume of The Networker contains articles and information about activities in Detroit. The newsletter insert is a fact sheet on zoning laws. Please photocopy it and distribute it widely. We envision The Networker as a way to

highlight issues we all should know about and another way to try to mobilize people when and where they're needed. There are many people who are concerned about these issues and it would be useful to have a way to communicate formally, other than through e-mail (which everyone doesn't have). And, you can read The Networker in your spare time!

Want to submit an article or announcement to The Networker?

If you have an issue related to our priorities to share with the group, feel free to contribute by emailing it to kedgren@umich.edu or mailing it to the address on page 4.

CAAA Presents to Detroit City Council

On Tuesday, February 11, CAAA presented to the Public Health and Safety Committee of the Detroit City Council. Community Partners Linda Gonzalez (from Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation) and Donele Wilkins (from Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice) described Detroit's asthma problem and what their involvement in a

community partnership has meant to them and to their agency. Marquette Sims talked about being a CAAA participant and how valuable it was to her and her family. Maria Salinas, CAAA Field Supervisor, described details of the household intervention. Tom Robins, a University of Michigan faculty member, presented data on air quality. Community

organizer Ron Stewart gave examples of next steps and things the City Council could do. City Councilwoman Sheila Cockrell, a Co-chair of the Committee, was very enthusiastic in her support for the activities and the recommendations presented. We will let you know what comes of this in our next issue!

Would your organization like to have a CAAA presentation?

One of our goals is to present our findings to groups (block clubs, civic organizations, agency staff and boards) and to try to engage them in organizing and policy change. If you know of a group that would like a presentation, please call our toll free number: 877-640-4064.

“Since 1999, CAAA has been researching air quality and interventions to improve children’s asthma.”

What is CAAA?

Community Action Against Asthma (CAAA) is a community-based, participatory research partnership working to improve the health of children with asthma in the east side and southwest Detroit. The partnership members are listed on the first page of this newsletter.

Research projects like CAAA seek to enhance understanding of issues

affecting the community and develop, implement and evaluate plans of action to address those issues in ways that benefit the community.

Since 1999, CAAA has been researching air quality and interventions to improve children’s asthma. For the intervention research, outreach workers called Community Environmental Specialists (CESs) visited homes of volunteer families. During these visits, CESs worked with the families to educate

them about asthma triggers, and to develop a plan to reduce household environmental triggers for asthma.

For the air quality research, CAAA is collecting information on the quality of the indoor and outdoor air in southwest and east side Detroit and looking at the relationship between the quality of the air, lung functioning, and reports of asthma symptoms of the children enrolled in the household project.

Is your organization interested in joining an inter-organizational network to work on local environmental issues? Contact us:

East Side Detroit:

Ronald Stewart
Community Organizer, CAAA
Warren-Conner Development Corporation
14600 Mack
Detroit, Michigan 48215
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Phone: 313-571-2800 Ext. 1158
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Southwest Detroit:

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Community Organizing at CAAA

CAAA also has a significant community organizing component which works with neighborhood and community organizations to reduce local environmental threats by:

1. Sharing data collected in the household and air quality research with neighborhood and community organizations.

2. Identifying and engaging existing community organizations interested in working on local environmental issues and joining an inter-organizational network (IN).

3. Working with member groups of the IN to organize, coordinate and conduct activities to reduce physical environmental threats related to asthma.

4. Increasing community awareness and knowledge of factors associated with the environment and asthma through sharing of findings to community residents.

Contact us if you or your organization wants to get involved.

SAVE THE DATE!!!
CAAA Community Leadership Forum
Thursday, April 22, 2004
5:30-7:30pm
Wayne County Community College
1001 W. Fort Street

I-94 Expansion Update

After several years of planning and discussion, the expansion of I-94 through Detroit could begin as early as 2006. This project has the potential to greatly impact neighborhoods and communities near I-94.

As of November 2003, we gathered the following information. Newer plans and information may be available soon.

The project would begin with widening I-94 from I-96 to Conner Avenue. Upon completion of the entire project, I-94 would have a total of eight lanes with disabled vehicle shoulders and continuous service drives. Many exit ramps, entrance ramps, and bridges will be removed, including the John R ramp and the McClellan vehicle bridge. Other features, including the

Conner Avenue ramps and the John C. Lodge junctions, will be redesigned.

The expansion still proposes to eliminate and/or relocate numerous businesses and homes near the highway. Under the most recent design, fewer homes and businesses will be affected than under previous plans.

The current project schedule calls for construction to begin in 2006.

To find the most up-to-date information on the I-94 expansion project, watch the MDOT I-94 project website (www.mdot.state.mi.us/i94rehab) or call the MDOT contact person for I-94 Expansion, Bob Parsons, at (517) 373-9534.

How do I keep informed about the community activities surrounding the DIFT plan?

Attend a Local Advisory Council (LAC) Meeting. Meetings are always held at the Holiday Inn at 5801 Southfield Service Drive. They start at 7pm. Upcoming meeting dates are March 10, April 14, and May 12.

Or contact CAAA toll free at 1-877-640-4064

By now you've probably heard about the proposed Detroit Intermodal Transfer Facility, commonly referred to as the DIFT. It is a plan to consolidate Detroit freight transfer facilities into one giant facility, possibly in Southwest Detroit.

CAAA is working hard to keep Southwest Detroit communities informed of ways to participate in the shaping of the DIFT plan. Here is what we know so far.

The current plan calls for a 595 acre expansion of the 300 acre Junction Yard intermodal freight terminals on Livernois at John Kronk. Three alternative DIFT sites include Corktown, the Southfield Freeway at Interstate 96, and Ferndale.

The Detroit City Council, the Detroit City Planning Commission, and Ford Motor Company have all publicly stated their opposition to current DIFT plans.

Any increase in truck traffic leads to concerns about the impact of diesel engines on health in local communities. Diesel engines are one of the largest sources of fine particulate matter (PM 2.5). These particles can pass through the nose and throat and become lodged in the lungs, aggravating respiratory conditions such as asthma and cardio vascular disease. More truck traffic would potentially increase the levels of PM 2.5 in the air. Several studies in other large cities found negative health effects at PM 2.5 levels at and below those currently measured in Detroit.

A Local Advisory Council (LAC) has been established to provide an opportunity for local residents to obtain information and voice their comments and concerns about the DIFT. Monthly LAC meetings are free and open to the public. Refer to the box on the left for meeting locations and dates.

More trucks in Southwest Detroit?

The Networker Local Agency Profile...

Community Action Against Asthma

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1420 Washington Heights
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Arab American Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS)

Since 1970, ACCESS has been committed to the development of the Arab American community in all aspects of its economic and cultural life. The ACCESS Environmental Program works to increase environmental awareness in the Arab American community and promote community involvement in addressing environmental issues that affect the community's health and quality of life.

In partnership with the University of Michigan School of Public Health, ACCESS is conducting a community-based participatory research project examining environmental impacts on Arab Americans in Metro Detroit. ACCESS is currently tracking and responding to developments related to the proposed DIFT. In 2003, ACCESS launched Building Capacity Through Diversity, a

ACCESS Environmental Program
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program designed to explore the intersection of race, culture, and the environment.

ACCESS' newest environmental effort is the Nature in Our Neighborhood program. This program works with Arab American youth and families to foster appreciation of the natural world, healthier lifestyles, and academic achievement through outdoor activities. Contact ACCESS to find out more about these and other programs.

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