



# The Fishing Line



Spring, 2005

Volume I, No. 1

## A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR:



Susan Schantz  
Center Director

**G**reetings! Welcome to the first issue of our newsletter, where we will tell you about the FRIENDS Center and upcoming events that we will be sponsoring.

The FRIENDS Center is a research program funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). It is one of eleven centers around the United States. The purpose of these centers is to support research into how the environment affects children's health.

FRIENDS stand for the Fox River Environment and Diet Study. We began this project in 1999 because of concerns about chemicals in the Fox River and other lakes and rivers near Green Bay. These chemicals, called PCBs and mercury, build up in the fat of fish that live in contaminated lakes and rivers. People who eat this fish can also have PCBs and mercury in their bodies.

The goal of the FRIENDS project is to find out how much locally caught fish Hmong and Lao families eat, and whether people who eat fish with PCBs and mercury have more health problems than people who don't eat this fish.

If you are interested in learning more about the FRIENDS Center, please contact Mai Nou Lor-Vang at the FRIENDS Center office.

See you soon!

*Dr. Susan Schantz is the Director of the FRIENDS Center. She grew up in Green Bay, where her father was a schoolteacher. Dr. Schantz has been studying the health effects of PCBs since she was a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. She is now a professor of Toxicology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.*

FRIENDS Children's Environmental Health Center  
101 N Webster tel: 432-0015  
Green Bay, WI 54301 mainou@friendscenter.us

*Editors: Mai Nou Lor-Vang, Karen Decker*

## Upcoming FRIENDS Events

### **March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2005: Fishing license raffle**

The State fishing licenses are going on sale, and so we are holding our annual fishing license raffle! Someone from the FRIENDS office will be contacting you soon to ask you if you would like to enter the drawing. Six lucky participants will win a cash prize equal to the cost of a 2005 fishing license.

If you are one of the winners, we will call you that day and you can stop by the FRIENDS Center office for your prize!

### **March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2005: FRIENDS Open House**

Invite your family and friends to our Annual Open House! The researchers and staff involved with the project will be there to introduce themselves, talk about their research, and provide additional information about the FRIENDS Center. There will be refreshments, games for the kids, fish cleaning demonstrations, door prizes, and a raffle! Come and join us!

The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Open House will be from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm at:

Neng Yee's Performance Center  
1119 N Military Rd., Green Bay

---

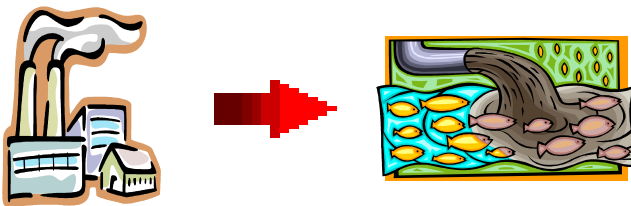
## THE QUESTION CORNER

The best way to learn is to ask! We enjoy answering your questions about PCBs and mercury, so please ask! Here are a couple of questions we come across from our participants.

### *What are PCBs and mercury?*

PCBs are man-made chemicals called polychlorinated biphenyls. Years ago they were used in many different industries, including the paper industry.

About 30 years ago, scientists discovered that Lake Michigan and many nearby lakes and rivers were polluted with PCBs. Chemical companies stopped making PCBs in 1978, and since then the levels of PCBs have gone down. But there are some lakes and rivers that still have high levels of PCBs, including the Fox River and Green Bay.



Mercury is a metal that occurs naturally in the environment. It can also be released into the environment by power plants and other industries. Once mercury makes its way into lakes and rivers, it is converted to a chemical called methyl mercury, which can be harmful to animals and humans.

The amount of PCBs and mercury you can get from eating fish won't make you feel sick, but women with PCBs in their body may have more trouble getting pregnant, or carrying a baby to term, and children exposed to PCBs or mercury in the womb or as babies are more likely to have learning problems.

### *What can I do if I have PCBs or mercury in my body?*

There is no treatment to remove these chemicals from a person's body. They leave the body over time, but it takes many years, especially for PCBs. The only thing you can do is to limit the amount of chemicals that get into your body. You can do this by following the fishing advisories published by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

From the advisory, you can learn which rivers and lakes are safe to fish in, what kind of fish is safe to eat from each river or lake, and how to clean and prepare the fish you catch to reduce the amount of PCBs in them. The FRIENDS project has translated into Hmong and Lao the sections of the fishing advisory that relate to bodies of water in Northeastern Wisconsin. You can get a copy of this advisory by contacting the project office.

We would be happy to hear from you. Submit your questions to [mainou@friendscenter.us](mailto:mainou@friendscenter.us) or write to FRIENDS Center.

---

## RADIO ANNOUNCEMENTS

The FRIENDS Center airs announcements twice a month on Hmong Radio. The Hmong radio program is on Saturdays, from 5:00 –7:00 p.m. on 88.1 FM, Wisconsin Public Radio. Listen for these upcoming announcements:

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| March 12 | Fishing License Announcement and Open House information   |
| March 26 | Fishing License reminder and information on minor fishing |
| April 9  | Medication Safety   |
| April 23 | Immunization Week   |
| May 7    | Women's Health Week                                       |
| May 21   | Home Safety   |



**Look for the next issue of  
*The Fishing Line* this May!**

If you have any questions about this newsletter or the FRIENDS Center you can call our office at 920-432-0015.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION

### Carbon Monoxide: a silent danger

Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas that you cannot see or smell. It can come from anything that burns fuel, including gas furnaces and water heaters, wood or gas stoves, kerosene heaters, and cars. If carbon monoxide builds up indoors, it can make you feel sick. It can cause headaches or make you feel tired, dizzy or sick to your stomach. Here are some ways you can protect your family from carbon monoxide:



- ✓ Have your heating system inspected by a professional each year. The inspector should check and clean the furnace, chimney, and flue.
- ✓ If you use a fireplace, make sure the flue is open when you burn wood.
- ✓ Charcoal should only be burned outdoors, never inside the home, garage or tent.
- ✓ Do not use appliances like ovens, stoves, or clothes driers to heat your home.
- ✓ Do not run any gasoline-powered motor indoors. Do not leave your car running inside a garage, even with the doors open.
- ✓ Most importantly, it's a good idea to buy a carbon monoxide alarm for your home. These make a loud noise if carbon monoxide levels get too high.
- ✓ If you think carbon monoxide is making you feel sick, go outside right away to get some fresh air and call the fire department.



## MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND BOOTH

Sat. May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2005

**Location:** Brown County Fairgrounds, Green Bay, WI

The FRIENDS Children's Environmental Health Center will be holding an information booth at the Annual Sports Soccer/Volleyball tournament on Saturday, May 28<sup>th</sup>.

The researchers and staff involved with the Center will be there to answer questions about their research, the FRIENDS Center, and how to catch fish that is healthier for your family.

Stop by our booth and pick up a fishing advisory or water bottle. We will have games and balloons for the kids!



FRIENDS Information booth, Memorial weekend, 2004

Moving? Let us know:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Old Address and phone:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

New address and phone:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Detach and mail to the FRIENDS Center, 101 N Webster, Green Bay, WI 54301



FRIENDS Children's Environmental Health Center  
Michigan State University Department of Epidemiology  
B627 West Fee Hall  
East Lansing, MI 48824

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
E. Lansing, Mi.  
Permit No. 21

NAME  
ADDRESS  
CITY, STATE ZIP

Return service requested