

## Profiles: FY 2003 Environmental Justice Small Grants Finalists

### **Multi-Media Projects:**

#### **Title: Business and Community Environmental Justice Roundtable on Chelsea Creek**

Org: Neighborhood of Affordable Housing

Amt: \$15,000

Address: 22 Paris Street  
East Boston, MA 02128

Contact: Stacey Chacker  
617-569-0059 x13

#### Organization:

In 1997, East Boston and Chelsea residents, led by the Neighborhood for Affordable Housing (NOAH) and Chelsea Green Space and Recreation Committee (Green Space) formed the Chelsea Creek Action Group (CCAG). NOAH is a non-profit, multi-service community development corporation that has been serving East Boston since 1987. NOAH's mission is to extend the supply of quality affordable housing and foster economic growth, as well as to act as a catalyst for a variety of community initiatives. Green Space, a project of the Chelsea Human Services Collaborative, is a broad-based community committee now addressing some of the worst environmental issues in Greater Boston. The mission of CCAG is to build awareness, promote public access and transform the polluted Chelsea Creek into an environmental, recreational, educational and economic resource for the region.

#### Objectives:

The project will consist of three roundtable discussions that will bring together local businesses owners and citizens. The principle goals of the roundtables are: (1) Encourage business "buy-in" to the community's Chelsea Creek Vision Plan; (2) Foster business collaboration and investment in specific clean-up and Brownfield redevelopment projects; and (3) Find mutually agreeable ways to improve air and water quality. Specifically, the project will improve air quality by adding forest cover and green space along the creek. Water quality will be addressed by cleaning up waterfront Brownfield sites.

#### **Title: Springfield Housing Organization and Health Action Project**

Org: Pioneer Valley Project

Amt: \$15,000

Address: 235 Eastern Avenue  
Springfield, MA 01109

Contact: Fred Rose  
413-827-0781

#### Organization:

The Pioneer Valley Project (PVP) is a coalition of church, labor and community groups working for social change. PVC is a member of the InterValley Project and the Organizing and Leadership Training regional networks that help leaders of religious, labor, tenant and immigrant

groups address the environmental, economic and social justice issues that affect low-income members of their communities.

**Objectives:**

The Springfield Housing Organizing and Health Action Project aims to reduce the incidence of lead poisoning and asthma-related hospitalizations from target neighborhoods by 10 percent within a year. In order to successfully meet of this goal, PVP will: (1) Facilitate information exchange, resource sharing and collaboration between partners to address disproportionate exposure of residents to indoor environmental hazards in the target area; (2) Build on Springfield's extensive network of community organizers, family advocates and community health workers to identify housing bearing disproportionate burdens and help engage members of the target audience in problem-solving and health education; (3) Interpret environmental data using GIS and other tools to assist the general public in understanding the impact of indoor environmental hazards.

**Title: Building Awareness and Providing Alternatives to Household Toxics in Worcester's Low-income and Minority Neighborhoods**

Org: Regional Environmental Council

Amt: \$15,000

Address: P.O. Box 255  
Worcester, MA 01613

Contact: Peggy Middaugh  
508-799-9139

**Organization:**

Founded in 1971 as a private non-profit, membership-based advocacy organization, the Regional Environmental Council (REC) provides environmental education to Worcester residents. REC builds public awareness of local environmental issues through research and education. Programs focus on inner-city neighborhoods with many minority and/or low-income residents who have traditionally been excluded from the environmental decision-making process. REC also spearheads local and regional environmental advocacy, especially for parks, trails, open and green space, Brownfields redevelopment, recycling, environmental justice and water protection.

**Objectives:**

The Building Awareness and Providing Alternatives to Household Toxics project strives to: (1) Improve the health of Worcester residents in low-income neighborhoods by building awareness of toxic chemicals in and around the home, and teaching residents to avoid exposure by purchasing less toxic alternatives; (2) Build stronger links among community groups, churches, REC, health care providers, students and city agencies; and (3) Train community leaders on how to access and interpret health and environmental data.

## **CERCLA Projects:**

### **Title: Research for Environmental Equity in School Siting in Rhode Island**

Org: Rhode Island Legal Services, Inc.

Amt: \$20,000

Address:

56 Pine Street 4<sup>th</sup> floor  
Providence, RI 02903

Contact:

Robert M. Barge  
401-274-2652 x121

Organization:

The Rhode Island Legal Services, Inc, (RILS) is a non-profit law firm incorporated in 1969 to ensure equal access to the civil justice system for low-income Rhode Islanders who would otherwise be unable to afford an attorney. RILS provides legal advice, advocacy and representation to clients in the many diverse areas including environmental justice. RILS also provides legal and technical assistance to a number of community-based organizations throughout Rhode Island.

Objectives:

RILS will conduct a research project that will result in the development of two new policy documents for RIDEM affecting two major environmental justice issues of the siting of schools on sites contaminated by hazardous substances and RIDEM's evaluation of issues of environmental equity for low-income and minority persons when reviewing clean-up proposals. Documents will be developed by two stakeholder groups set up by RIDEM. RILS's goal is to strengthen low-income and minority involvement in the stakeholder process.

### **Title: Tissue/Toxicity Research of 5 Saltwater Species in Cobscook Bay and Passamaquoddy Bay**

Org: Passamaquoddy Tribe Sipayik

Amt: \$19,986

Address:

P.O. Box 343  
Perry, ME 04667

Contact:

April Francis  
207-853-2600 x233

Organization:

The Passamaquoddy Tribe is an indigenous Native American Tribe on eastern Maine and Maritime Canada. Culturally, the Passamaquoddy are one of several tribes of the Abanaki group. Pleasant Point Reservation is located in the easternmost region of the United States, on a narrow peninsula between the towns of Perry and Eastport. The Reservation consists of 100 acres originally deeded to the Tribe by the state plus 210 acres of annexed land adjacent to the original parcel in the towns of Perry, Pembroke and Robbinston. Another reservation, Indian Township,

is located 50 miles inland.

**Objectives:**

The project will test collected tissue samples from five marine species typically consumed by the Tribe for dioxin and several heavy metals. It will build on a study done in 1998. Tissue results from the new project will be compared with those of the previous study. The additional testing will provide sufficient data for the Tribe to conduct a risk assessment. Results of the risk assessment will be discussed at several public meetings, which will also allow for residents to voice their concerns.

**Title: Environmental Data Transfer Project**

Org: UMass Dartmouth

Amt: \$20,000

**Address:**

285 Old Westport Road  
North Dartmouth, MA 02747

**Contact:**

Deborah Marisi  
508-993-4918

**Organization:**

The University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth (UMass Dartmouth) is a state institution of higher learning. The UMass Dartmouth Lead Poisoning Prevention Program operates under a variety of state and federal statutes and acts, including the Massachusetts Lead Law, the EPA Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act, and the Department of Housing of Urban Development (HUD) Lead Safe Housing Rule. The UMass Dartmouth Lead Program offers comprehensive lead poisoning prevention services to residents of southeastern Massachusetts. Services include: screening, family counseling, lead inspections/legal enforcement, education, and financial assistance for deleading.

**Objectives:**

The purpose of this project is to transfer environmental activities data that UMass Dartmouth's Lead Prevention program has collected on 2,000 cases of childhood lead poisoning in three of the poorest cities in southeastern Massachusetts - New Bedford, Fall River and Brockton. The case file data includes information such as lead paint inspection dates and results, legal enforcement court activities, deleading contractor and lead abatement methods used, cost information, dates of completion, etc. The data will be evaluated and transferred into the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program's (MACLPPP) statewide Environmental Record database. A major objective of this project is to improve state and federal research efforts in the study of lead abatement and the effect of various abatement strategies on childhood lead poisoning. Currently this data is largely unavailable to families with small children looking for lead-safe homes, property owners, and public health researchers.