The Merging of Public Health and Social Justice: My Story of Evolution From Case Campus to Community Engagement

CWRU Provost Scholars Program

Kim Foreman, Interim Executive Director
Environmental Health Watch
December 4, 2014
Vision and Mission

• Vision: healthy homes, communities & climate
• Mission: help people to
  – protect themselves from serious environmental threats
  – influence corporate, government and personal actions to promote human health and sustain the natural environment
EHW Early accomplishments

• Household hazardous waste – model program adopted by County
• Cleveland Right-to-Know ordinance – leadership on passage & implementation
• Local Emergency Planning Committee – leadership on prevention & hazard reduction
• Midnight Dumping Campaign
Healthy Homes, Communities, & Climate

Overarching focus on greenhouse gas reduction

- Interrelated program areas
  - Healthy, Green, Affordable Housing
  - Community Environmental Health/Environmental Justice

- Information, assistance and advocacy

- Activities
  - education, training & direct service
  - research & demonstration
  - policy & advocacy
Overall strategy

- In partnership with community organizations
- We become the expert - maintain technical knowledge
- Assess and prioritize environmental health threats
- Devise, test, research, evaluate, demonstrate and promote model programs and policies
- Our partners implement best practices and sustain the work
Blueprint for a Healthy House

‘A Blueprint for a Healthy House’ brought together health, housing agencies and advocates to look at common issues. The healthy house model took on a life of its own. HUD adopted it as the blueprint for their newly created Office on Healthy Homes and has created a series of healthy-house grants.
Graduation
EHW Full Time
Health Educator

Travel
Meeting organizers
Excited for first time

2001 2002

EH Community Disconnect
Lead Statistics
Lead is a Social Ill
HUD Roach Project
Public Housing work

THH First National Project
Bridging Science and
Community Organizing
CEHRC Project Implementation

THH Resident engagement
Local Lead Ordinance
Lead Coalition Work
National Local Leadership Council

2003

2004-2005 2006

THH First National Project
Bridging Science and
Community Organizing
CEHRC Project Implementation

Travel
Meeting organizers
Excited for first time

2007

THH Resident engagement
Local Lead Ordinance
Lead Coalition Work
National Local Leadership Council

2009-Present

THH Resident engagement
Local Lead Ordinance
Lead Coalition Work
National Local Leadership Council

Travel
National Stage
Committee Work/Advisory Role
Environmental Justice Frame

2008

Thinking more broadly
Training Organizations
Sustainability Conversation
Community Disconnect

NLEH Grassroots Project
Place Matters Frame
Community Empowerment
New Relationships
Structural Racism Committee

2009-Present

Join the
GRASSROOTS
Movement
2002 Baltimore Training

• The Community Environmental Health Resource Center (CEHRC) in Washington, D.C., works with grassroots organizations engaged in the fight for social justice in low-income communities.

• The center's primary focus is empowering residents and increasing economic opportunities to address the environmental health hazards posed by substandard housing (including asthma, lead, carbon monoxide, and pesticides) that are faced by children and other vulnerable persons in low-income communities.
2003 Connecting the dots

Realizing that I can be the bridge:

• HUD Roach Project in Public Housing
• Lead poisoning is a broader community issue
• Resident empowerment-PD article
• Tenants rights/CTO work
2004 Tenants for Healthy Homes
Tenants for Healthy Homes

Alliance for Healthy Homes National Project

- Educated and trained tenant leaders in low-income multi-family buildings and community residents about healthy homes inspections, lead testing and asthma triggers.
  - Local lead Ordinance
  - CMHA and CTO influence
  - Multi-family buildings IPM policy
Tenants for Healthy Homes

• Cleveland Tenants Organization
  – First direct service project
  – EHW trained staff on healthy homes
  – CTO institutionalized HH as part of their work

• Multi-Family Impact
  – ABC Management, representing over 31 multi-family properties throughout Cleveland has integrated IPM into their managerial duties as a result of our training.
2006-2007 Branching Out

- Training for CMHA inspectors
- Advisor/Training for various organizations
- Policy Change
  - Pass Local Lead Ordinance-Residents testify
- Community Outreach
- Public Speaking
- Bioneers Planning Committee
2007 Sustainability Conversation

• Who defines sustainability?
• What does a sustainable community look like?
• If we don’t have a healthy community, how can we be sustainable?
• Often inequalities, health and social justice issues are after thoughts or not considered at all in the conversation
Email to Dr. Rhonda Williams
From: Kim Foreman <kmf820032003@yahoo.com>
Date: Thursday, May 1, 2008 11:26 am

Hello Dr. Williams,

First I want to thank you for your wisdom and getting students to think more broadly about the community and our place in society.

I started to understand what you were teaching us about environmental justice and organizing when I took a full-time position at Environmental Health Watch as a Health Educator.

My focus is primarily on preventing lead poisoning (big social ill issues) and reducing asthma triggers through home visits, public speaking, and community education sessions. Sometimes I work on industry pollution. **I try to empower people and educate tenants about their rights, and educate landlords about responsibility, and other professional communities that need to know (for ex. Teachers). Currently I am working with NLI on involving our community in the green movement which includes green-collar jobs and what that means to us, helping to define sustainability and the green opportunities going on in our communities.**

I have been to Oberlin and CCC talking about these issues to students and would love to come back to Case when the time is right.

Thanks,
Kim Foreman, CWRU 01
Our web site: [www.ehw.org](http://www.ehw.org)
Look up FYI: green for all/Van Jones, [www.greencitybluelake.org](http://www.greencitybluelake.org), Sustainable South Bronx
2009 Environmental Justice

NEIGHBORHOOD LEADERSHIP FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

EHW's Kim Foreman Speaks about Sustainability in Cleveland

VIDEO: Sustainable Cleveland with Kim Foreman
NLEH Initiative Accomplishments

- EPA has significantly enforced the cleaned up in the forgotten triangle
- Green Bean Coffee House /Tire Recycling Business plans have been completed
- NLEH leadership team members have completed Neighborhood Leadership Cleveland-NLI
- No Incinerator/Clean Air community meetings and advocacy campaign
- Healthy Eating Took Kit developed
- Race, Food and Justice Conference 2013
- NLI REEL Talk Film Series

- Will Allen Workshops and Book signing
- Growing Power Conference in Milwaukee
- **Direct Service Projects**
  - Green Houses and Greenhouses Project
  - Easy Does It Cooking Classes
  - Community Block Party/tours- Rid-All Farm
  - Youth Farmers Leadership Program
  - Various events

**Projects 2014**
- Easy Does It Cooking Classes Part II
- Race, Food and Justice Conference
- Youth Farmers Leaders Program
- YouthBuild-Implement Action Plan Projects
- EJ Ordinance
Grassroots Engagement Programs

You Said It. We Heard It. Let's Do It Together!

Green Houses & Greenhouses
Grassroots Engagement Events

COMMUNITY BLOCK
Food. Music. Fun

We want to thank ALL of the residents who engage with us!

DJ and Live Music
Featuring live entertainment by Eddie “Jazz” Brown

Food provided by Dinity Catering, Favor Catering, Natural Effect Garden Bar, and Ven Scott’s Healthy You

Rid-All fresh tilapia will be available to taste!

This Event is Free
Open to the Public

For more information contact Kim
216-961-4846 x 106 kim.foresman@jwlr.org

Sponsored by Environmetal Health Watch, Rid-All Green Partnership

You are Invited!
Community Gathering Luncheon

Saturday, June 29, 2013
9:00 AM -12:30 PM
Neighborhood Leadership Institute
Inside United Methodist Church
5246 Broadway Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44127

You want to hear from you!
What are your thoughts on the top health priorities for Greater Cleveland?
Participate in our Community Conversation
Get updates about the NLD Initiative Action Plan

Will Allen
CEO, GROWING POWER
Named by Time Magazine as one of the 100 most influential people in the world in 2010

Awards 2008 MacArthur Genius Grant for his efforts to promote sustainable farming in low-income neighborhoods

Friday, March 15th 7 pm
Keynote Lecture
Cleveland Western Reserve University Ford Auditorium
Admission is free

March 16, 2013 9:30 am -1:00 pm
Aging Services & Vulnerability Workshop
Admission is free

Rid-All Green Partnership/Growing Power
Training Center
5246 Broadway Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44127

Admission is free

Combined tickets for the Friday keynote and Saturday workshop are $10.
To register and for more information please call 216-201-2131 x 106

These events are presented by Rid-All Green Partnership
Neighborhood Leadership Institute, Environmental Health Watch

Sponsors of the Keynote Forum are the CWRU Social Justice Institute, Policy Bridge and JP Morgan Chase Bank Foundation
Grassroots Engagement

Lessons Learned - research, outreach, resources, time

- Authenticity is worth gold
- Do your homework about the community
- Understand what barriers exist (not the focus)
- No cookie cutter approach
- Value the people
- Leverage existing resources in the community
- Find out who is already there doing the work
- Takes a lot of time and flexibility
Environmental Justice Work

NLEH

• EPA has significantly enforced the cleaned up in the forgotten triangle
• Environmental Crimes Task Force established in 2014
• No Incinerator/Clean Air community meetings and advocacy campaign
• Race, Food and Justice Conference 2013-2014
Analyzing the Urban Food Movement Through a Social Justice Lens
Environmental Justice Work
Food Justice

• Food Justice Collaborative/Network (TBD)
  – Organized & grassroots, lead by impacted communities, collaborative and strategic
  – Economic, policy and education strategies developed by community leaders in the movement
  – Build capacity within the community to sustain and do the necessary work
  – Youth Farmers Leadership Project
  – Conference 2015 pending - regional RFJ
Environmental Justice Work

Air Quality

• Plan EJ 2014 calls upon EPA to consider environmental justice concerns during the permitting process
  – Enhance the ability of overburdened communities to participate fully and meaningfully in the permitting process
  – Assist permitting authorities to meaningfully address environmental justice issues in permitting decisions to the greatest extent practicable.
  – Cuyahoga County Office of Sustainability established
Advisory, Board and Committee Work

• City of Cleveland Climate Action Advisory Committee
• Cuyahoga County Place Matters
• NEORSD Green Infrastructure External Advisory Committee
• Cleveland Neighborhood Progress Economic Opportunity Advisory Committee
• ESRASDH HIP-Cuyahoga Committee
• Rid-All Green Partnership Board President
• Common Good Ohio (just resigned)
Public Health + Social Justice

• Equity and Place Matters
• Health, Sustainability and Environmental Justice
• Social Determinants of Health
• Structural Racism Committee
Social Determinants of Health

• Research indicates much of disparity is associated with: social and environmental issues such as stress of poverty, racism, violence, discrimination in health services, food insecurity.
Health Inequities

Social Inequities

- Segregation
- Income & Employment
- Education
- Housing
- Transportation
- Air Quality
- Food Access & Liquor Stores
- Physical Activity & Neighborhood Conditions
- Criminal Justice
- Access to Healthcare
- Social Relationships & Community Capacity
Structural Racism
Place matters work-ESRASDH Committee

**Perspective Transformation** – Seeing things differently in order to do things differently.

- Racism – a system of structuring opportunity and value based on RACE which unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities and unfairly advantages other individuals and communities (Camara Jones, PhD)
- Key strategy is to assure **perspective transformation** by **eliminating racism as a root cause of poor health and economic inequity**.
- The threads of racism are deeply woven in our society, extending into the fabric of our founding principles. Examining race reveals how benefits and burdens in our society have been distributed in such a way as to allow race to play a significant role in predicting the types of privilege, disadvantage, and health outcomes that people might expect to experience.
- **4 levels of Racism** – Internalized, Interpersonal, Institutionalized, Structural
What Do You Know?

- What are the affects of lead poisoning? What age group does it affect?
- What are some asthma triggers?
- Where can the main sources of lead and asthma triggers be found?
- What is environmental justice?
- How is housing related to climate change?
- What are the health issues related to climate?
- How is food and nutrition related to the environment?
QUESTIONS?
Thank You!

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