



# **Children's Environmental Health Network (CEHN)**

***The Voice in Washington  
for Children's  
Environmental Health***

## **2008 Annual Report**

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## From the Board Chair and Executive Director

2008 has been an exciting year of growth and opportunity for the Children's Environmental Health Network! We were thrilled to welcome two additional Board members, Brenda Afzal, R.N., M.S., and Joel Hunter, M.Div., D. Min. Ms. Afzal brings an innovative nursing perspective as Director of Health Programs at the Environmental Health Education Center at the University of Maryland School of Nursing. Ms. Afzal has experience in environmental health education, advocacy and leadership development. Dr. Joel Hunter's work in partnership with the scientific community to call attention to human-caused threats to the environment has made Dr. Hunter a nationally-known religious environmental leader. Dr. Hunter has served as Senior Pastor at Northland Church in central Florida since 1985.



*E. Ramona Trovato,  
Board Chair*

We have also been very pleased for the addition of Ms. Laura Hepting, Program Associate, to the CEHN team in September. Ms. Hepting's dedication, passion, and drive to promote CEHN's mission to protect all children from environmental hazards has added greatly to the amount of progress that has been



*Nsedu Obot Witherspoon, MPH  
Executive Director*

made this year. This increased capacity for program development, and strategic planning has been extremely helpful in allowing CEHN to remain the voice of children's environmental health in the nation's capital. This year we witnessed concerns around lead poisoning in children's toys from China, Bisphenol A in some plastic consumer items such as baby bottles, increased need for our next Administration to address energy and global climate change as a whole and a serious economic crisis. There is a great amount of pressure and anxiety facing the general public these days making our role very important. We invite you to look through our following report and witness the advances CEHN is making within the child care arena with our Healthy Environments for Child Care and Preschools Program (HECCP), with health care professionals and addressing health disparities, and a

variety of collaborative projects underway. CEHN's focus on advocating for protective policies continued with work focused in chemicals safe policy, global climate change, pesticides, and lead poisoning.

CEHN held two successful fundraising receptions, launched a media listserve, and created the "Children's Environmental Health Article of the Month." Our warm thanks to all of our supporters and contributors as we all work to protect our most vulnerable population....our children!

## Healthy Environments for Child Care and Preschools (HECCP)

Although most U.S. children under age six spend up to 40 hours a week in child care settings, little has been done to protect young children from environmental health hazards in child care and preschools. CEHN identified preschools and child care settings as a missed opportunity to address children's environmental health. The assessment and training program we developed enables child care providers and administrators to:

1. Understand children's vulnerabilities to environmental health exposures
2. Identify environmental health hazards in and around child care facilities
3. Determine methods to alleviate and remove environmental health hazards
4. Develop communication and identification strategies for parents to reduce environmental health risks at home
5. Obtain up-to-date information answering questions about environmental health safety in their facilities from local, state, and national organizations and additional resources.

The core of the training curriculum include 15 modules on topics such as safer cleaning, air quality, pesticides, lead, mercury, plastics, and indoor mold.

### Collaborating on a National Scale

The peer-reviewed curriculum for the HECCP was awarded Continuing Education Unit (CEU) accreditation by the Centers for Disease Control in 2008. This new status allows CEHN the flexibility to take the HECCP program around the country and offer CEUs to child care professionals nation-wide.

In 2008, CEHN began work on a plan to expand the HECCP Program to the national scale. Our goal is to build the leading and trusted program offering environmental health education, training, and assessment in child care facilities, promoting healthy and safe environments for our young children. CEHN also began to serve as an advisor to the Oregon Environmental Council's Eco-Healthy Childcare program, a program working to facilitate the development and implementation of a national framework for distributing and running a national child care program focused on environmental education and training.

To date, CEHN has trained 415 child care professionals in 74 facilities around the nation, and is poised for further expansion of HECCP in 2009. Initially, the HECCP will expand into Texas.



## Atlanta, GA

After a successful program in Alameda and Contra Costa counties in California, collaboration began in 2006 to expand the program to Atlanta, GA. Trainings began during the winter of 2008, serving over 290 participants. An additional module on plastics was drafted this year adding to the existing curriculum as a result of growing public concerns.

This program is made possible by the collaborative efforts of CEHN, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Radon Program, EPA's Region IV Indoor Air Quality Office, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), Association of Environmental Health Clinics (AOEC), Southeast Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit, Georgia Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, and University of Georgia Radon Education Program.



HECCP Training – Rome, GA



HECCP Training – Dalton, GA



## Washington, DC

We further expanded the HECCP program into Washington, DC in the fall of 2007. Child care facilities serving lower income and minority communities that are disproportionately impacted by environmental pollutants receive priority. The Washington, DC HECCP program provides the opportunity to conduct site assessments and provide tailored recommendations for each enrolled child care center through Action Plans. Twenty child care facilities were enrolled in 2008 and child care site visits and trainings began during the summer.

This program is made possible by the collaborative efforts of CEHN, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), George Washington University's Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment (MACCHE), DC Department of Health, DC Head Start, DC Department of Human Services' Early Care and Education Administration, DC Department of the Environment, Bright Beginnings, River Park Friends, United Planning Organization, Washington Child Development Council, and Zero to Three.



M A C C H E





## Health Professionals and Environmental Justice

In August 2006, CEHN launched a three-year project to educate leaders in three key communities - pediatric and other health professions, environmental justice, and public health - about the impact of environmental hazard exposures on the health and welfare of children, and to encourage leaders in these communities to promote awareness of the issues of children's environmental health.

During the spring and summer of 2007, CEHN researched and set priorities for the key organizations in each of these communities to target for outreach in this effort. CEHN submitted abstracts for presentations to targeted health professional conferences, beginning in fall 2006.

In partnership with the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF), CEHN made presentations at conferences around the country, such as the 11th National Hispanic Medical Association Conference (March 2007); the Environmental Justice in America Conference (March 2007), the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual National Association of School Nurses Conference (June 2007). In addition, Ms. Witherspoon presented at the Eastern Queens Alliance Symposium (May 2007). The program is advised by a Task Force of professionals representing the three targeted communities and membership for this group began in 2007.

CEHN and NEEF have begun scheduling meetings with leaders in the National Hispanic Medical Association, the National Association of School Nurses, the National Association of Hispanic Nurses, and the National Black Nurses Association. The goal of stage two of this project is to further engage these organizations and their members and to assist them in incorporating children's environmental health issues into their current work.

The National Hispanic Medical Association represents 36,000 licensed Hispanic physicians and the National Medical Association represents over 30,000 African American physicians. The National Association of Black Nurses represents an estimated 150,000 African American nurses in the U.S., Caribbean, and Africa while the National Association of School Nurses represent 17,000 school nurses (one-third of all school nurses) in the country. The opportunities that this project has to reach key advocates is very important to the protective health and well-being of our children. A unique network is developing that will bring together these organizations under the umbrella of protecting children's environmental health and serving as key advocates in the field.



# Advocating for Child Protective Policies

## Chemicals Policy Project

The primary U.S. law that regulates the thousands of industrial chemicals in our environments, the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), is outdated. Adopted by Congress in 1976, TSCA's core statute has never been reauthorized or amended, and little has been accomplished under this ineffective law.

The Kids Safe Chemicals Act (S. 3040/H.R. 6100) was introduced by Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), Rep. Hilda Solis (D-CA) and Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA) to assure Federal chemicals policy protects human health, especially the health of children. CEHN developed a detailed analysis of this legislation and joined with other organizations in calling for adoption of this reform measure.

One chemicals policy change made in this Congress was a partial ban on phthalates, a category of chemicals used to soften plastics and which have been linked to harmful health effects. This provision was included in legislation protecting children from lead in toys and other products which was signed into law in August 2008.

CEHN continued to educate key stakeholders and partners about the need to reform TSCA and provided technical assistance to Congressional staff drafting reform legislation.

## Global Climate Change

Children are likely to suffer disproportionately due to both direct and indirect health effects from climate change. Children already disadvantaged will suffer more. In the U.S. and beyond, children of color, Indigenous Peoples, and those living in poorer communities will suffer the most from climate change.

CEHN is developing guiding principles for decision-makers who are creating and implementing policies and responses to global climate change to assure that children are protected.

CEHN plans to identify partners and secure resources to advance the knowledge and awareness of the impact of global climate change on children's environmental health. For example, CEHN joined with the American Public Health Association (APHA) during National Public Health Week when APHA emphasized that climate change is a public health issue.

## Lead in Children's Environments

Lead, a neurotoxicant of particular risk to children, made headlines as the metal was found in a stunning variety of children's toys, jewelry and other products, leading to the recall of millions of items.

CEHN joined with other organizations urging Congress to strengthen the lead reduction requirements in the CPSC Reform Act of 2007 (S. 2045/ H.R. 4040).

## Advocating for Child Protective Policies (continued)

CEHN also analyzed the Federal activities and Congressional bills addressing lead in children's toys, such as Consumer Product Safety Commission authority, funding, and decisions; and H.R. 3691, the SAFE Consumer Product Act, introduced by Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro (D-CT).

In August 2008, the President signed S. 2045/ H.R. 4040 into law, improving safety standards for products intended for children less than 12 years old and dramatically cutting the amount of lead that is allowed in toys and other children's products.

Though lead in toys made the news, children continue to remain at risk from environmental sources of lead, such as paint and air pollution. CEHN opposed an EPA proposal to revoke the national air quality standards for lead, instead urging a new, lower standard based on current scientific understanding.

### Pesticide Regulation

Pesticides are poisonous chemicals by design, and even low levels of exposure to some pesticides can affect children's health.

CEHN urged the EPA to protect children from two especially potent pesticides undergoing review by the Agency. CEHN urged the Agency to limit, if not cancel, the uses of endosulfan, an organochlorine pesticide that harms the nervous system and for which effects are seen at very low levels. CEHN also commended the EPA for proposing to cancel all uses of the pesticide carbofuran, a neurotoxicant placed in Toxicity Category I, the most toxic category. By submitting docket comments on specific pesticides, CEHN also encourages the on-going embrace of basic children's environmental health principles in all Agency decisions.

### Other Activities

CEHN frequently spoke out in support of policies protecting children, such as:

- Supporting full funding for the National Children's Study;
- Supporting significantly increased funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program and to enhance the Environmental Health Laboratory's biomonitoring capacity;
- Continuing to challenge the EPA to significantly reform the deeply flawed Voluntary Children's Chemical Evaluation Program (VCCEP) or, absent such reforms, to halt the program and redirect the resources used;
- Opposing EPA rule changes to the Federal Toxic Release Inventory That restrict the public's right-to-know about harmful chemicals released from thousands of facilities in states and communities across the country;
- Joining other organizations in urging the relevant Federal health agencies to address the scientific uncertainties about long-term exposures to electromagnetic radiation emanating from cell phones and antenna base stations, wireless internet, TV and FM broadcast towers, radar and power lines, through an improved research strategy; and
- Urging the EPA to withdraw recent changes to the Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS). Their new policy, issued without opportunity for public notice and comment, will prolong the public's exposure to unsafe levels of toxic chemicals and hinder the ability of government agencies to establish health-protective standards for drinking water, air pollution, and cleanup of toxic waste sites.



# Advocating for Child Protective Policies (continued)

## Spreading the Word

CEHN representatives brought the message of children's environmental health to a variety of interested audiences, from a Webinar presentation to members of the Healthy Schools Network about TSCA reform to outlining policy opportunities in children's environmental health for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Catholic Social Ministry Gathering.

CEHN Board Chair, Ramona Trovato, represented CEHN in the Maryland legislature, educating lawmakers about children's unique vulnerabilities and susceptibilities to environmental hazards during consideration of legislation which would limit phthalates and Bisphenol A in children's toys and products.

Alongside activities to increase awareness and action to protect children from environmental toxins and promote a healthy environment, our staff researched and answered questions from reporters, partner groups, federal and state legislators, and others.

## Collaborating With Partners

Partnerships are key to leveraging resources for CEHN. Here are some examples of the productive collaborations that have helped us to protect children.

### Mobilizing Housing and Health Communities to Prevent Radon Exposure

In October 2006, CEHN and the Alliance for Healthy Homes (AFHH) partnered on an outreach education project to reduce exposure to radon in residential properties by equipping key leaders and institutions with relevant tools and information to increase radon testing, radon mitigation in existing homes, and radon-resistant new construction. This project is supported by the EPA Office of Air and Radiation. Through this project, CEHN worked to increase engagement of public health and health care professional communities by raising public awareness of the health effects of radon exposure and promoting preventative actions by patients, owner-occupants, renters, and public agencies.

Through this project, CEHN developed and began to disseminate a Radon Tool Kit for Health Care Professionals. The Tool Kit was peer-reviewed by the Medical Directors of three Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units (PEHSUs) associated with Emory University, The George Washington University, and Mount Sinai Hospital. Information in the Tool Kit consists of 1) a cover letter that briefly introduces the kit; 2) a factsheet on radon describing what providers can do to inform their patients; 3) a list of Frequently Asked Questions and Answers on radon for providers to review and share with their patients; and 4) radon information cards that providers can place in their offices and send home with patients. The Tool Kit is available through CEHN's website at

[http://www.cehn.org/cehn/education/radon\\_toolkit.html](http://www.cehn.org/cehn/education/radon_toolkit.html)

ALLIANCE FOR HEALTHY HOMES

## Collaborating With Partners (continued)

### Global Climate Change

CEHN began working with the Institute for Children's Environmental Health (ICEH) on a climate change and children's environmental health brochure. The brochure will be distributed widely within a few months.

### Leadership in the Field

- Ms. Witherspoon continued Coordination of the Public Interest Partners for the National Institute for Environmental Health (NIEHS)
- Ms. Witherspoon served as Chair-Elect for the Intersection Council of the American Public Health Association (APHA).
- Ms. Witherspoon began service on the Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Ms. Witherspoon began service on the National Advisory Environmental Health Sciences Council
- Ms. Witherspoon's chapter on children's environmental health and climate change included in book edited by Mike Wallace titled *The Way We Will Be 50 Years From Today*.

### District of Columbia Involvement

CEHN contributes to the following activities in the District of Columbia.

- DC Control Asthma Now (DC CAN) Asthma Collaborative
- DC Environmental Health Collaborative
- DC Lead Poisoning Elimination and Healthy Housing Advisory Committee
- Early Childhood Obesity Collaborative

## Communicating Science

### Children's Environmental Health Article of the Month

Understanding the science that supports the field of children's environmental health can be daunting to lay people. The emerging scientific papers are usually highly technical. Judging the priority and translating the results of the growing number and wide variety of articles is confusing. But understanding the science is also key to adopting effective and protective practices and policies.

To help journalists, policy makers and the general public better understand the outcomes of pediatric environmental health research outcomes, CEHN's Science Committee has launched the Children's Environmental Health Article of the Month. The Article of the Month covers a broad range of current children's environmental health topics hand-picked by the Committee; its findings and importance are summarized in plain English. The Article of the Month is disseminated via our listservs and on the CEHN web site at:

[http://www.cehn.org/science\\_aom.htm](http://www.cehn.org/science_aom.htm)

Efforts such as these increase communication about children's environmental health to broader audiences, promote the field within the science world and highlight the science-base of current issues with stakeholders.

## Events

In 2006, CEHN began a campaign to develop and cultivate a broader range of supporters for our programs and overall work. The Board and staff received training in development and launched the Children's Environmental Health Advocate Award Reception. The purpose of the award program is to raise awareness of the effects of environmental hazards to children's health, to acknowledge effective children's environmental health advocates, and to raise support for our important programs. CEHN has benefited from the kind generosity of individual and organizational contributions each year since.

### CEHN's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Children's Environmental Health Advocate Award Reception

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Children's Environmental Health Advocate Award Reception took place in October 2007, during Children's Health Month. Guests included distinguished health professionals, public health advocates, researchers, and community-based leaders within the field of children's environmental health. The event highlighted not only the history and work of CEHN but also children's unique vulnerabilities and susceptibilities when they are exposed to environmental toxicants. The first award was presented to the Honorable John Edward Porter, former U.S. Representative from Illinois who was honored for his years of valuable contributions to the health, well-being, and safety of children within all environments. In particular, Mr. Porter has continued to be a great supporter of the National Children's Study and child protective legislation efforts. The second award was presented to Dr. Lynn Goldman, past Chair of CEHN and Board member, for her tireless dedication to the organization and the field for years. The third award was presented to Mr. Peter Robertson, a great friend of CEHN and pro bono attorney. Mr. Robertson's devotion to the field of children's environmental health and passion to see CEHN thrive was acknowledged with great thanks. The event was hosted at Nortel Corporation in Washington, D.C. CEHN is very thankful for the great support provided by the host, friends, and partners. The Third Annual Children's Environmental Child Health Advocate Reception will occur in October 2008.



*Awardee Peter Robertson*



*Some CEHN Board and Staff*





*Dr. Philip Landrigan and Awardee John E. Porter*



*Awardee Dr. Lynn Goldman with Board Chair, E. Ramona Trovato*

## CEHN Winter Reception

In January, CEHN's Board Member, Brenda Afzal, her husband Muhammad Afzal, and long-standing CEHN advocate, Dr. Barbara Sattler along with her husband Chris O'Neill hosted a successful reception in Maryland. For the first time a silent auction was held. Attendees ranged from those that know CEHN well to those just meeting Board members and staff for the first time. A wonderful time was had by all!



*Guests at Winter Reception*



*Silent Auction*

# Circle of Children's Health Champions

## *Thank You to Our Donors: 2008 Honor Roll List*

Sandra and David Abramoff  
 Brenda and Muhammad Afzal  
 David Afzal  
 Scott Afzal  
 Air Chek, Inc.  
 Allergy & Asthma Network Mothers of  
 Asthmatics  
 Alliance for Healthy Homes  
 American Academy of Pediatrics  
 American Association on Intellectual and  
 Developmental Disabilities  
 American Public Health  
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 David Mallino  
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 Merck Childhood Asthma Network, Inc.  
 Elise Miller  
 Louise Mitchell  
 Rebecca Morley  
 John Peterson Myers  
 National Association of  
 School Nurses  
 National Center for Healthy  
 Housing  
 Tom Neltner  
 Janice Nodvin  
 Nortel Corporation  
 Organic Valley Family Farms  
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 Jerome Paulson  
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 Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP  
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 West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc.  
 Erik Winters  
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*Director, Center for Bioenvironmental  
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**Ann Umemoto, M.P.H.**

*Associate Director, Office of the Medical  
Director, March of Dimes Birth Defects  
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**Carol Stroebe - Consultant**

*Health Policy Specialist  
Children's Environmental Health Network*

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**Babasaheb Sonawane, Ph.D.**

*Chief, Effects Identification and Characterization Group Environmental Protection Agency*

**William A. Suk, Ph.D., M.P.H.**

*Chief, Chemical Exposures and Molecular Biology Branch, Division of Extramural Research and Training, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences*

## Staff and Consultants

### Staff

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*Program Associate*

### Consultant

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*Health Policy Specialist*

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**Julia De Sevo**  
**Wendy Korrick**  
**Ashley Morsell**  
**Laurel Murphy**  
**Kittu Rao**  
**Sophie Sembajwe**  
**Justine Uhlenbrock**  
**Malissa Winograd**  
**Angie Wong**

## Financial Statement

### Income

Grants	
Government/Federal	\$193,584.10
Foundation	\$ 51,000.00
Contributions	\$ 4,911.13
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$260,864.74</b>

### Expenses

Personnel/Labor	
Personnel	\$116,632.17
Professional/Consultant Fees	\$ 38,424.66
Contract Labor	\$ 15,453.25
Program Expense	\$ 16,255.42
Travel	\$ 12,364.92
Insurance	\$ 4,228.34
Rent	\$ 19,279.88
Utilities	\$ 1,031.79
Phone	\$ 4,795.38
Postage and Delivery	\$ 1,436.95
Computer/Web Services	\$ 3,473.98
Office Supplies	\$ 1,846.26
Misc. (please see our 990 for full disclosure)	\$ 8,811.24
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$244,034.24</b>

**Net Income** **\$ 16,830.50**

## Linking Science and Advocacy

CEHN maintains three listservs:

- The *CEHN Community List* provides discussion for general advocacy within the field of children's environmental health.
- The *CEHN Science List* holds discussions around the current research and science for pediatric environmental health professionals.
- A *Media Announcement List* for members of the media and interested individuals.

To subscribe, send a blank message to:

[Cehncommunity-on@cehn.org](mailto:Cehncommunity-on@cehn.org)

[Cehnsience-on@cehn.org](mailto:Cehnsience-on@cehn.org)

[Cehnmedia-on@cehn.org](mailto:Cehnmedia-on@cehn.org)

## Children's Environmental Health Network: About Us

The Children's Environmental Health Network is a 501(c)3 national organization with a multidisciplinary mission that involves protecting the fetus and children from environmental health hazards and promoting a healthy environment. To achieve this mission, CEHN's goals are to:

- Promote the development of a sound public health and child-focused national policy; with an emphasis on children most at risk;
- Elevate public awareness of environmental hazards to children;
- Educate health professionals, policy makers, and community members in preventive strategies; and
- Stimulate prevention-oriented research



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