

NEWS RELEASE

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Environmental Groups Challenge Disney to Go Green. Company that Protects Animals with Green Cleaning Products at Animal Kingdom is Urged to Care for Children and Stop Using Toxic Cleaning at Disney World Parks and Hotels.

(Orlando, Florida) Several of Snow White's Dwarves joined the Center for Health, Environment and Justice (CHEJ) today to challenge Disney World to use certified green cleaning products and practices. The groups noted that Disney avoids the use of toxic cleaning chemicals at Animal Kingdom to protect animals; however they continue to use toxic products around children in their many parks, hotels and restaurants.

CHEJ and Florida groups had an official launch of the national Disney Go Green Campaign, while kicking off a 2007 Florida Environmental Health and Organizing Conference which brings together activists from across the state.

"Green Chemistry has made toxic chemicals in cleaning products unnecessary and a thing of the past," says Lois Marie Gibbs, Executive Director of CHEJ. In 1978 Gibbs discovered that her neighborhood was sitting next to 20,000 tons of toxic chemicals in Love Canal, NY. Gibbs made a commitment, after the evacuation of over 800 families, to stop all unnecessary exposure of children to toxic chemicals. "Today it's against the law in New York to use toxic cleaners in schools. Disney should offer the same protections to all children. Disney can use its influence and leadership to protect visiting children as much as they do their animals, by switching all of their hotels and parks to certified green cleaning products and procedures."

About 4.8 million American children under 18 have asthma, a chronic disease that is thought to be caused by environmental factors. Many cleaners used in schools contain VOCs, pesticides and fragrances, all of which may trigger asthma attacks and contribute to the development of the disease.

Dwarves shared the stage with CHEJ Child Proofing Our Communities Campaign Coordinator Stacey Gonzalez. Gonzalez said, "Children nationwide suffer from severe health impacts caused by unnecessary toxic chemicals in their environments. Switching to least toxic cleaning products and practices is one of the simplest approaches to reducing environmental pollutants in a child's environment, as school districts across the country have demonstrated. Today, we ask Disney to take this single step to protect our nation's most vulnerable, our children."

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Doc, Sneezzy, Dopey and *Happy*, played by environmental health activists and experts from Florida, were also on hand to share their perspectives on green cleaning. “I just learned that many of the products that Walt Disney World uses to clean its parks, hotels and restaurants contain unnecessary toxic ingredients that pose health risks to children, pregnant women and workers,” stated *Doc*, played by Sally Aikin, of Healthy Home Environmental Services, LLC.

Chemicals in toxic cleaning products are largely unregulated and are pervasive in commercial goods, in spite of the fact that many contain known carcinogens, hormone disrupters, respiratory irritants and can cause illnesses and fatalities. Because of these concerns New York State schools and state buildings, and school districts across the country have switched to certified green cleaning products and procedures, and have found that purchasing and using certified green cleaners is cost effective and simple.

CHEJ has issued several requests to meet with Disney leadership and discuss green cleaning, but as of today have not been granted an appointment. As Florida legislators debate a green cleaning bill in the House and the Senate, and schools in New York State and across the country switch to certified green cleaners, it is the right time for Disney to make this switch. Kimpton Hotel Group, Fairmont Hotels, and a few of Disney’s very own hotels have already gone green with their cleaners.

“Indoor air quality affects everyone, those healthy and those with sensitivities,” says Denise Robinette, who founded the HealthyLiving Foundation to help educate families about airborne pollutants that affect kids with asthma, like her own. “Disney is all about safety. Go green and be the leader Walt envisioned – for our kids’ future.”

See: http://www.chej.org/disney/disney_media.htm for additional information on the Disney campaign.

Additional information on the health impacts of toxic cleaning products can be found here: <http://www.childproofing.org/greencleaning.htm>

House Bill 399:

<http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Bills/billsdetail.aspx?BillId=34964>

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