

WELCOME STUDENT ACTIVISTS FOR A HEALTHIER ENVIRONMENT!

Thank you for your interest in the Green Flag Program, an environmental leadership program for students. Through an investigative process, your Green Flag Team will work together to locate your school's existing policies on specific environmental issues, identify ways to improve upon them, and promote policy changes that will positively impact the environment on a local and global scale. The program will provide you with the groundwork. Your team will use the tools, do the work, and propose policy changes. Empower yourself, your Green Flag Team, and your school through investigation, organization, and leadership with the Green Flag Program.

The Green Flag Program for Environmental Leadership

is a project of the Child Proofing Our Communities Campaign, which is coordinated by the Center for Health, Environment and Justice (CHEJ). Through the Green Flag Program, CHEJ extends its long tradition of community organizing assistance to individual schools. We connect local, statewide and national groups to school communities to create effective environmental programs in schools and educate those communities about advocacy and problem solving in the process.

This packet is a helpful tool for your team to use as you work your way through the program. Use it as a guidebook, reference, or a resource to help you get through the different stages of the program. The packet progresses sequentially, offering helpful suggestions that your team can use along the way. Remember, the Green Flag Program is flexible. It provides you with a framework and offers time-tested suggestions for success, but leaves it up to you and your team to put your creativity, leadership and problem-solving skills to work to make a positive change. Here's how to get started on becoming an environmental leader in your school.

To get started, obtain permission from your school, teachers or administrators before moving forward with any of the steps in this packet. Your Green Flag Team needs to work together with the administrative and facilities departments to make a positive change in your school. Don't put a strain on that relationship by acting without proper permission. The administration, teachers and staff will be valuable partners in your work. Begin by building a good relationship with them.

Note the tips (★) throughout the packet. They tell you which activities can be submitted to the Green Flag Office towards completion of the program.

ABOUT CHEJ

Lois Gibbs, community leader at Love Canal, founded the Center for Health, Environment and Justice (CHEJ) in 1981, as the Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste (CCHW). CHEJ believes people have the right to a clean and healthy environment, and that the most effective way to achieve change is through community organizing and empowerment.

Since 1981, CHEJ has coordinated several important national campaigns that have shaped the grassroots environmental health movement and contributed to numerous grassroots victories. Today, along with the BE SAFE Campaign, CHEJ coordinates the Child Proofing Our Communities Campaign, which focuses entirely on raising awareness of children's environmental health issues and promoting better environmental policies and programs. For more information see: <http://www.chej.org/>

ABOUT THE CHILD PROOFING OUR COMMUNITIES CAMPAIGN

CHEJ launched the Child Proofing Campaign in 2000 in response to the increasing requests for assistance by community groups, parents, teachers, school administrators and activists alarmed by toxics in school buildings or on school grounds. Since that time, the campaign has coordinated the work of dozens of community, state and national groups to release four reports, testify before the Senate's Environment and Public Works committee and raise awareness of environmental health issues. The Child Proofing Campaign advocates for improved environmental laws, regulations, policies and practices to prevent schools from being built on or near contaminated sites and eliminate children's and school personnel's exposure to mold, toxic chemicals and other health hazards in schools.

The Child Proofing Campaign also responds directly to the requests of individual parents, teachers and community groups that are facing exposure to environmental health hazards in schools. We receive hundreds of calls and emails each year asking for information, support and organizing assistance. For more information see <http://www.childproofing.org/>

The Green Flag Program was created through the dedication and hard work of the following individuals:

EDUCATIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Rebecca Bell—Maryland State Dept. of Education
Angelo Bellomo—Office of Environmental Health and Safety, Los Angeles Unified School District
Cindy Craig—Youth Count
Amanda Fisher—Teachers College at Columbia University
Steve Heacock—Maryland Governor's Green School Program
Sheila Lewis—Girl Scouts USA
Maria Minno—Florida PTA

INDOOR AIR QUALITY

Jessica Coleman & Nsedu Obot—Children's Environmental Health Network
Cindy Craig—Youth Count
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Sue Hughes—Lockport, NY
Louella Hung—Illinois Healthy Schools Campaign
Jane Laping—Mothers for Clean Air
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Denise Robinette—Healthy Living Foundation
Athena Thompson—Homes that Heal

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REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLING

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