

Press Conference and Canvas Scheduled To “Get The Lead Out!” in East Hills Neighborhood

Event to Kick off April 21 at 3:00 PM at Cherry Park

The City of Grand Rapids Get The Lead Out program, the Kent County Health Department and the Healthy Homes Coalition will kick off a campaign to “*Get The Lead Out!*” in the East Hills neighborhood on Tuesday, April 21, 2009. A press conference will be held at 3:00 PM on Tuesday, April 21, 2009 at Cherry Park on the corner of Eastern and Cherry in Grand Rapids.

The event is schedule to alert parents to the hazards of lead-based paint for young children. Organizers are alerting residents and the community to test kids 1 & 2 years of age who reside in the city of Grand Rapids for lead, utilize lead-safe work practices while renovating any home or structure, and learn about investment programs to help homeowners and landlords pay to “*Get The Lead Out!*”

“We’re canvassing the East Hills neighborhood to highlight a recent study that showed the East Hills neighborhood had the highest incidence of childhood lead poisoning among children tested of any neighborhood in Grand Rapids.” said Paul Haan, Executive Director, Healthy Homes Coalition. “One in ten (9.9%) children 0-5 years of age tested in the East Hills neighborhood in 2007 had elevated blood lead levels (8 of 81 children).”

“East Hills also had some of the lowest testing rates among 1 & 2 year old children. In 2007, only 38.3% of East Hills 1 & 2 year olds were tested for lead.” continued Haan. “The Michigan Department of Community Health and the Kent County Health Department both recommend that 100% of 1 & 2 year olds in the City be tested each year.”

The Baxter Neighborhood used to be thought of as the epicenter of childhood lead poisoning in Grand Rapids. But since the inception of the Get the Lead Out! campaign, Baxter has slid into 9th place. Lead poisoning rates in Baxter were 4.5% in 2007, and 82.8% of Baxter children 1 & 2 years of age received blood lead tests in 2007.

Other neighborhoods with higher than average levels of lead poisoning in 2007 (see chart) included Oakdale (6.7%), Midtown (6.3%), John Ball Park (5.6%), Heritage Hill (5.6%), Madison (5.1%), and SEENA (4.8%). The city average in 2007 was 3.0%.

Canvassing the East Hills neighborhood will be Healthy Homes Coalition staff, Calvin College nursing students, and Kent County Health Department staff. They will help parents by answering questions and providing connections to Get The Lead Out!

Healthy Homes Coalition recommends families:

1. Test their children at 1 and 2 year well-child visits if they live in the City of GR, are on Medicaid, or live in pre-1978 housing.
2. Use lead-safe work practices when renovating pre-1978 housing. To learn more, call Healthy Homes at (616) 241-3300 or visit www.HealthyHomesCoalition.org
3. Apply for the City of Grand Rapids’ Lead Hazard Control program by calling (616) 456-3030 or visiting www.GetTheLeadOutGR.com. Landlords and homeowners are eligible.

For more information contact Paul Haan, Healthy Homes Coalition, (616) 241-3300.





2007 Lead Poisoning Rates for Children 0-5 Years of Age Grand Rapids, Michigan by Neighborhoods

Area	Population*	Children Tested**	% Tested*	Venous PbB ≥10 ug/dL**	% of children tested with Venous PbB ≥= 10
East Hills	385	81	21.0	8	9.9
Oakdale	189	75	39.7	5	6.7
Midtown	375	111	29.6	7	6.3
Heritage Hill	148	36	24.3	2	5.6
John Ball Park	423	108	25.5	6	5.6
Madison Area	415	138	33.3	7	5.1
South East End	1,174	207	17.6	10	4.8
Baxter	232	110	47.4	5	4.5
Roosevelt Park	676	398	58.9	16	4.0
Fulton Heights	174	51	29.3	2	3.9
South Hill	108	26	24.1	1	3.8
Creston	2,223	466	21.0	15	3.2
Belknap Lookout	447	159	35.6	5	3.1
Alger Heights	528	100	18.9	3	3.0
SECA	562	218	38.8	6	2.8
West Grand	1,608	621	38.6	16	2.6
Garfield Park	1,835	817	44.5	21	2.6
SWAN	680	200	29.4	5	2.5
West Side Connection	866	94	10.9	2	2.1
Black Hills	131	58	44.3	1	1.7
Easttown	311	66	21.2	1	1.5
Highland Park	330	81	24.5	1	1.2
North East Citizen Action	864	186	21.5	1	0.5
Fuller Avenue	177	36	20.3	0	0.0
Heartside	93	32	34.4	0	0.0
City of Grand Rapids	16,879	4,998	29.6	122	3.0

Source: Michigan Department of Community Health