A Message from the President

The Healthy Homes Coalition uses three key strategies to protect children from environmental health hazards in the home—home visits, education, and advocacy. We learn so much from our home visits that it’s not enough to just fix the home. At Healthy Homes, we then take that knowledge to warn and educate the wider community. We also use knowledge to advocate for policies that protect children. It’s the firsthand knowledge from these home visits that has us partnering with hospitals to design new ways to keep kids out of the emergency room. It’s this knowledge that has us partnering with preschool programs to eliminate hazards that would otherwise keep kids from succeeding in school and life.

To get this work done, we are thankful for the broad support that we continue to receive. In 2014, the Dyer-Ives Foundation helped us reach out to more than 60 community leaders, a project that has us crafting a wider, more collaborative approach to healthier housing for kids. The United Way, the Sebastian Foundation, Steelcase Foundation, and PNC Foundation continue to support our work in children’s homes, and they have been joined by Spectrum Healthier Communities. FEMA has renewed their support, and we continue to contract with the City of Grand Rapids to make more homes lead-safe. The Nokomis Foundation has helped with a capacity building grant as well. Perhaps the most rewarding has been the nearly 200 individuals and businesses that have financially supported Healthy Homes.

Then there is the hard work of the families we serve. It’s the help of moms, dads, grandparents, foster parents and many others that help us complete the job of keeping our community’s children safe. To all those working along side of Healthy Homes, we say “Thank you.”

Gail Gunst-Heffner, PhD
Board President

Our Impact

Healthy Homes for Healthy Kids

- 121 Assessments for lead hazards, indoor air quality, mold and moisture problems, access to household chemicals, and hazards such as slips, trips, falls and burns.
- 103 Family-Centered Action Plans created to map out steps to be taken to address hazards in homes. These plans also identify resources to support improvements.
- 71 Families Received Pest Management Assistance. Pests like cockroaches and mice contribute to asthma and allergy-related breathing problems.
- 96% of Families Increased Their Awareness of hazards in the home and how to better protect their child.

Alarms and Safety

- 307 carbon monoxide alarms installed.
- 987 smoke alarms installed.
- 238 families received alarms.

Community Outreach & Education

- 28 community outreach events.
- 15 classes for parents and the public with an even 200 people attending.
- 186 people assisted with application to the Get the Lead Out! lead hazard control program.

Policy & Advocacy

- $500,000 increase in State of Michigan funding for lead safe home due in part to Healthy Homes’ continued work with the Michigan Alliance for Lead Safe Housing, for a total of $1.75 million.

Financials

For the fiscal year July 1, 2013 through June 20, 2014, the Healthy Homes Coalition raised $295,280 in revenue. Expenses totaled $287,338. Assets at the end of the year totaled $37,318.

Foundation support constituted 48% of revenue, followed by government contracts at 22%, private contracts at 16%, and private and corporate donations at 13%. Only 4% of the organization’s budget was spent on fundraising.

The Healthy Homes Coalition has a broad base of support. Last year, 199 individuals and corporations made contributions to Healthy Homes, exclusive of grants.

All children should have the opportunity to grow up in a healthy home that is free from environmental hazards.
One Family’s Story

In April, Elvia Parada contacted the Healthy Homes Coalition with concerns about potential lead hazards in her home. She and her family own an older home on the southeast side of Grand Rapids. Having a 4-month-old son who would soon be crawling, she wanted to take early action to protect him from the dangers of lead poisoning.

Elvia was referred to Healthy Homes by her nurse at the Kent County Health Department. Jennifer Spiller and Kyle Shutz, Community Health Educators with the Healthy Homes Coalition, visited her home to conduct a visual assessment and to teach her how to sample the dust in her home for lead.

In addition to visual evidence of lead hazards such as older windows and chipping paint, other hazards such as a mouse infestation were found. Elvia continued to work with Jenn to learn how to safely clean toxic lead dust and to make a plan for addressing the other health risks in the home.

Elvia, being very proactive, has already applied to the Get The Lead Out! program in order to make her home lead-safe for her children.

Who We Serve

The Healthy Homes Coalition serves a representative cross-section of the greater Grand Rapids Community with an emphasis upon low-income families. Here's a snapshot of our family partners:

- Black or African American 29.3%
- Hispanic or Latino 36.8%
- White, non-Hispanic 25.2%
- Multiracial 6.2%
- All others 2.5%

- 29% are households where Spanish is the primary language spoke in the home.
- 49% are homeowners.
- 85% qualify for state assistance (Medicaid, WIC, or food assistance).
- The median income is $16,805/year.
- Average family size is 4.6 people.

Red = Decrease from 2012-2013
Green = Increase from 2012-2013

Fight for Healthy Homes

In 2014, the Healthy Homes Coalition launched the Fight for Healthy Homes campaign. This effort has staff and volunteers meeting with community leaders to promote healthier housing for children.

One immediate outcome of these meetings has been the creation of a document called “Reframing Our Approach to Healthier Housing for Children.” This document is a road map for how the Healthy Homes Coalition will lead the community in developing stronger collaborative relationships to increase impact.

- Connecting health professionals to agencies who can quickly address hazards in the home to prevent recurrence.
- Partnering with preschool programs to identify the children most at risk, offer services, and ensure that hazards in the home are not compromising children’s ability to learn.
- Collaborating with early childhood home visitation programs to make sure hazards are addressed early on.

For more information, visit healthyhomescoalition.org/fight.