

## Roaches, Lead and Asthma Challenge Family

The last thing Ramon Casanova expected when his son Akdel was born was that one day Ramon would have to fight housing conditions to keep Akdel safe. But that is exactly what was happening when Healthy Homes Coalition CLEARCorps member Jenn Petersen first met Ramon.

Ramon and his wife Griselda had moved their 3-person family into a single bedroom in Wyoming, sharing the kitchen and communal space with two other families. Unfortunately, the other thing they shared was the home's cockroach infestation. The Casanovas tried everything to keep the roaches from triggering five year-old Akdel's asthma.

Ramon contacted Healthy Homes for help with the roaches. However, while Ramon and Griselda were more than willing to do anything to stop the problem, others living in the home were not as cooperative. Understanding that completely eliminating the roaches was not an option, the family focused their efforts on keeping the roaches away from Akdel while the family searched for other housing.

After a month, Ramon called to say that he and his family had found a new home. Healthy Homes visited to help with preventative measures for the roaches and to see if other hazards were present. While there was no evidence of a roach infestation in the new home, the family needed to take care to control any roaches and roach eggs that might get moved to the new home along with their belongings.

While there, lead-conscious Jenn noticed the peeling paint falling from the ceiling in the bathroom and hallway. She taught Ramon and Griselda how to take lead dust samples to get an idea of the potential hazards and Jenn provided them with advice about how they or the landlord could safely remove the peeling paint without creating lead dust.

Now, Ramon, Griselda and Akdel have a lead-safe and roach-free apartment. They have learned to control lead hazards and are keeping Akdel safe. The smiles on their faces show how happy they are to have a healthy and safe home!



### Spring 2010 Events

#### Building Healthy Homes Tours

April 9, noon

April 27, 4:00pm

May 20, noon

June 8, 4:00pm

Come learn more about the Healthy Homes Coalition! Tours and talks throughout the Spring and Summer at the Healthy Homes offices, 742 Franklin St SE. Light lunch will be provided. *RSVP* (616) 241-3300.





## More Spring 2010 Events

*continued from page 1*

**Kindergarten Here I Come**  
March 9, 5:30-7:30pm  
Grand Rapids Public Museum  
272 Pearl St NW

Meet and talk with a representative from your neighborhood elementary school and have all of your questions answered about the Grand Rapids Public Schools' Kindergarten program. A free night at the Public Museum!

Questions: Call Lesley at  
(616) 819-2111

**Health Professionals Asthma & Lead Training**  
March 12, 8:00am-4:00pm  
Prince Conference Center  
Calvin College  
1800 East Beltline Ave SE

Come learn current best practices from experts in the field. Hands-on learning!

For more information, call  
(616) 241-3300

**Integrated Pest Management Classes**  
April 3, 10:00am-12:00pm (English),  
April 3, 12:30-2:30pm (Spanish)  
Home Repair Services  
1100 South Division Avenue

A class on getting rid of roaches and rodents in a kid-safe way! Free. Call (616) 241-2601 to sign up.

*More Spring Events on page 5*

## Carbon Monoxide: Deadlier Than Rat Poison

**Get one... Only 300 left!**

Do you know that carbon monoxide is the number-one cause of poisoning deaths in the U.S.?

The early symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning may be mistaken for the flu, and exposure may result in severe and permanent health problems. Children are especially susceptible to the effects of this colorless, odorless and tasteless gas.

An easy way to find out if a home has high levels of carbon monoxide is to install a carbon monoxide alarm. These alarms work in a similar fashion to smoke alarms and beep as a warning for residents to evacuate the home when dangerous levels are present.

The Healthy Homes Coalition offers a program to install free carbon monoxide alarms to families with young children (0 – 5 years of age) in the Grand Rapids area. As a bonus, Healthy Homes will also install free smoke alarms as needed. However, there are only 300 left, and after June the program will end. Call now to receive a free alarm, worth \$40 retail, before supplies run out! **(616) 241-3300**.

### Give one... Save a life!

Are you looking for a way to serve your community?



The Healthy Homes Coalition is currently seeking volunteers to help with carbon monoxide and smoke alarm installations. Installations are provided on an on-going basis and Healthy Homes needs help to keep up with all of the requests from the community. Anyone that knows how to use a cordless drill is encouraged to sign up. Anyone that doesn't know how to use a cordless drill will learn! Healthy Homes provides training to all skill levels.

Volunteer a couple of hours a month and help save a life. Call the Healthy Homes Coalition at **(616) 241-3300** to find out more.

## Healthy Homes for Every One

Every couple of weeks, the Healthy Homes Coalition hosts office tours to help people learn about our organization. Those who attend come from all walks of life—young, old, rich, poor, empty-nesters and those raising families.

At a recent tour, the topic of smoke detectors and fire safety came up. None of the dozen folks attending the tour confidently knew how many smoke alarms are recommended for their own home (for answer, see p. 6). This reminded me of how many healthy homes issues are equal-opportunity hazards, impacting young and old, rich and poor alike. At the end of the day, all of us need a healthy home.



## Renovate Right Coming in April 2010

Beginning April 22, 2010, the new Renovation, Repair and Painting Rule (RRP) will go into effect. This rule requires that all contractors working in pre-1978 child-occupied facilities and homes be certified and use lead-safe work practices. The rule also pertains to landlords who do the work themselves.

The RRP rule, which has been more than ten years in the making, will help decrease the number of children poisoned by lead dust created by renovation activity. A recent review of Michigan Department of Community Health data revealed that 41% of children identified with elevated blood lead levels in Michigan during a 12-month period lived in homes that had undergone renovation in the previous 12 months.

The first step towards compliance with the RRP rule is to get contractors and landlords trained and certified. An eight-hour training course is required for those with no previous lead-safe work practices training. In some cases, persons with experience may be able to take a four-hour refresher course.

Healthy Homes has a listing of training sessions being conducted in west Michigan on its website at [www.healthyhomescoalition.org/news/108/86](http://www.healthyhomescoalition.org/news/108/86).

For more information about the RRP rule, go to [www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/renovation.htm](http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/renovation.htm).



www.GetTheLeadOutOR.org

# Picture Your Home With All New Windows!

Loans and grants available. Low payments. You can afford this.  
Start by calling 616-456-3030 today!

Healthy Homes

**Get the Lead Out!**

A City of Grand Rapids home repair program to make your home lead-safe.

# Grand Rapids Community Foundation Helps Fight Pests

Support from the Grand Rapids Community Foundation (GRCF) will help the Healthy Homes Coalition serve more families by eliminating pests. For many families, like the Casanovias on page 1, pests are a very real threat to human health. Mice, cockroaches, and other pests are known to be significant asthma triggers, and they carry plenty of other germs.

As Healthy Homes broadens and builds its capacity, a logical next step is to offer integrated pest management (IPM), an approach that uses little to no toxic pesticides. GRCF support will allow the Healthy Homes Coalition to serve 25 families with comprehensive, 12-month IPM services. Focusing upon the families with children with asthma, Healthy Homes will continue to partner with the Kent County Health Department for pest management. Healthy Homes will also offer community education on pest management. If your organization would like to help organize and host training for your constituents, call Jenn at Healthy Homes at (616) 241-3300.

## Get the Lead Out and Increase Energy Efficiency!

As of January 2010, energy efficiency options have been added to the City of Grand Rapids *Get the Lead Out!* Program – some at no additional cost. Owners who have owned and occupied their home for at least a year may qualify for these energy-saving upgrades.

Energy upgrades include a 95 % efficient furnace, Energy-Star windows and more. Save energy, save the environment, and save money in your wallet! Apply for the *Get the Lead Out!* program today to take advantage of these amazing energy saving options. For more information, call Kelly at (616) 2410-3300.



**Yes!** I'd like to help children grow up strong, smart, and healthy by protecting them from environmental hazards in their homes and becoming a member of Healthy Homes Coalition!

**Healthy Homes**  
Coalition of West Michigan

Names(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### Sponsorship Amount

- \$25.00 Basic Member
- \$50.00 Regular Member
- \$100.00 Supporting Member
- \$200.00 Sustaining Member

Join our **Giving Circle** by pledging a special gift over the next five years.

- Healthy Futures Conservator \$1,000 per year for five years.
- Healthy Futures Builder \$500 per year for five years.
- Healthy Futures Friend \$250 per year for five years.



Checks should be made payable to:  
*Healthy Homes Coalition*  
742 Franklin SE  
Grand Rapids MI 49507  
or made online at  
[www.HealthyHomesCoalition.org](http://www.HealthyHomesCoalition.org)

## The New Look of CLEARCorps

The Healthy Homes Coalition rolls into a new year with a new team of CLEARCorps members. Returning members from last year are Jenn Petersen, Office Coordinator and IPM Specialist, and Mitch Robertson, Outreach Coordinator. Since joining the team in 2009, Jenn has taken on the battle against pests as if it were her own personal vendetta. Whereas, Mitch can often be found out in the neighborhoods rallying on behalf of Healthy Homes and ensuring a continuous presence within the community.

New to the office this year are James Ayers, Hazard Control Specialist and Bonnie Cline, Family Education Coordinator. James comes to Healthy Homes with a very diverse work experience, from driving cab to serving as a member of the original, old-school CLEARCorps team way back in 2002. Bonnie joins the team after more than twenty years of experience as a social worker. She decided to move to Michigan from Ohio to join the ranks of CLEARCorps to be closer to her daughter and grandchildren.



The CLEARCorps team works with low-to-moderate income families with young children that live in older housing. They use a holistic, family-centered approach to identify and help families address housing hazards that affect children's health. These include lead, radon, carbon monoxide and pests. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call Healthy Homes at (616) 241-3300.

## Kelly Malinowski Connects Parents with Resources

Kelly Malinowski joined the Healthy Homes team late last year and has been busy ever since connecting parents with resources to protect their children from lead poisoning. Kelly's specific charge it to make sure that parents get the support they need to successfully participate in the *Get the Lead Out!* Home Repair program offered by the City of Grand Rapids. Since she started three short months ago, Kelly has already made hundreds of contacts and worked with dozens of families on applications.

Before coming to Healthy Homes, Kelly spent several months abroad in Paris and developed an undying love of French culture. In the past she has organized for environmental and social justice issues and loves working with the community. When she is not connecting with neighbors about the Get the Lead Out! program, Kelly is busy teaching dance to children.

### More Spring 2010 Events

*continued from page 2*

#### Laws for Landlords Seminar

April 22, 6:00-8:30pm


DeVos Place

A seminar covering the new federal Renovation, Repair and Painting Rule. For more information, call Richard at (616) 454-3385 x226

#### Renovate Right Training

March & April

Training in lead safe work practices for renovators, remodelers, painters and landlords. For dates and locations, see: [www.healthyhomescoalition.org/news/108/86](http://www.healthyhomescoalition.org/news/108/86).

 Sustainably printed, with our kids' future in mind!

## Bucket Brigade Hits Neighborhoods

The Healthy Homes Coalition is partnering with early childhood and neighborhood groups to inform parents about low and no-cost ways to protect children from lead dust. Healthy Homes is offering a 90-minute class entitled Lead Safe Cleaning Practices. Participants go home with more than \$25 worth of tools (double buckets, mops, spray bottles) and partnering organizations are rewarded with a finder's fee for each household that shows up.



Since October 2009, eighty-two parents have been trained in partnership with groups like Head Start, NOBL, Eastown Community Association, and the Midtown Neighborhood Association. For more information, call Courtney at (616) 241-3300.

### How Many Smoke Alarms Should You Have?

Do you know how many smoke alarms you should have in your home? Fire experts, including the Grand Rapids Fire Department, recommend the following:

- 1) one in **each** bedroom.
- 2) one in **each** common area outside of the bedroom(s).
- 3) one on **each** floor of the home, including the basement.

...So the typical three-bedroom, two story home should have six smoke alarms!