

Fixing Lead Hazards Saves Home for Southeast Side Family

Tanesha Moore bought a house at a young age when she had no children to consider. Like many first-time home buyers, she didn't know much about what to look for, or perhaps, what to look out for. After purchasing the house on Watkins, she discovered it had a tree growing into the foundation, a drop ceiling concealing all manner of unsightly and unhealthy problems, plumbing in bad need of repair, outdated electrical wiring, and invisible lead hazards.

Working as a CNA at Clark Retirement Home she kept up on the house payments but the addition of her two wonderful children, Takiya and Tyler, left little extra money to keep up on repairs. She would scrape together money when she could to hire self-proclaimed fix-it men to make inexpensive repairs but the workmanship left much to be desired.

Earlier this year Tanesha finally reached her limit and she lost hope. "I felt like the house was crumbling around me." Tanesha was preparing to let the house go into foreclosure, save up some money, and find a small apartment with the utilities included.



Healthy Homes
Coalition of West Michigan

Summer 2010 Events

Lead-Safe Painting and Home Repair Classes

August 9, 6:00 - 7:30pm
October 18, 6:00 - 7:30pm
Home Repair Services
1100 South Division, Grand Rapids

Come learn how to paint or make repairs to your home and keep your children safe.

RSVP *required* at (616) 241-2601
or jjordan@homerepairservices.org

During this time she would see the *Get The Lead Out!* sign at Healthy Homes Coalition everyday on her way to work. One day she decided to make the call and ask for some help. Kelly Malinowski, a staff person at Healthy Homes, told Tanesha about the City of Grand Rapids program. Tanesha received the application in the mail and was overwhelmed by all the paperwork. She held on to it for a few weeks until Kelly came over and helped her sort through the application, find all the documentation needed, and send it in. When asked if it was worth all the hassle and paperwork Tanesha said "Oh yes! It's a blessing!"

Some of the work to be done includes fixing the roof, remodeling the bathroom and kitchen, moving the dryer to reduce a carbon monoxide hazard, replacing the windows and fixing the siding to remove lead hazards, and replacing the outdated wiring to remove fire and trip hazards created by overuse of extension cords.

Tanesha is not alone in her situation. Mounting bills and home in disrepair can overwhelm many people. There is help available. For more information call Healthy Homes and ask about the *Get The Lead Out!* program.

Thinking of her new home Tanesha said "It's going to be a relief. It's going to be a real home. It's going to be safe for my kids."



More Summer 2010 Events

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Building Healthy Homes Tour

July 14, noon
August 10, noon
September 15, noon

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

Renovate Right Training

July 17, 8:15 am-5:00 pm
July 20, 8:15 am-5:00 pm
July 21, 8:15 am-5:00 pm

Corrosion Control Consultants
4403 Donker Ct SE
Kentwood, MI 49512
Instructor: Richard TenHoor, Certified Lead Safe Work Practices Trainer with the Rental Property Owners Association
Call to Register: (800) 701-7762
Email: contactrpoa@rpoaonline.org

For other training dates and providers see www.healthyhomescoalition.org/news/108/86.

Building Healthy Futures

October 1, noon

Healthy Homes annual donor luncheon. Come be inspired!
RSVP to (616) 241-3300.

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Summer Time Pests

Now that summer has arrived, the pest problems many experience change. Gone, it seems, are the cupboard invading mice. The ants are on parade. Flies look for any chance they can to invade a kitchen. And of course, pets spend more time outside and can track in a variety of pests including fleas, ticks, and lice.

Keeping out ants seems like an almost impossible task for many. They seem to sneak in through invisible cracks and holes, coming in to wander around doorways and over kitchen counters. A simple solution of peppermint soap and water—sprayed around the foundation of a home, on thresholds, and along window sills—can help keep ants and some other crawly pests away. Mix one to two tablespoons of peppermint soap with four cups of water and put in a spray bottle. Spritz areas liberally and reapply weekly or after it rains.

Insects and other pests are abundant where children play outside. The essential oils of many herbs and flowers repel insects, including basil, lavender, thyme, and catnip. Rub the oils of these plants into the skin before going outside to help fight mosquitoes. If using a store-bought insect repellent, look for insect sprays that are safe for children and make sure to wash a child's hands before they eat. The most important thing to remember with any bug and insect spray is that it is an insecticide, so avoid or limit the use of it on children.

Not to forget our four legged friends, there are natural ways to keep them protected from fleas, ticks, and lice. Lemon, lavender, and peppermint are natural flea repellents, and some pet-lovers recommend feeding dogs a garlic pill once a day to help reduce fleas. Lavender and lemon grass help keep away ticks. The simplest way to keep pet pests away, however, is to keep your pet generally clean and healthy. To make a simple flea spray, boil a pot of water. Remove it from the heat, then add one or two sliced lemons and let it steep over night. Strain the mixture into a spray bottle, and then spritz it over a freshly cleaned pet.

While keeping out the summer pests is a main concern for most families, summer is also the perfect time to prevent winter pests like mice. While the foundation of a home is visible, holes and cracks can be filled with copper mesh and spray foam to keep pests out. Windows, doors, and siding are easier to caulk and repair in warm months when temperatures are warm enough to allow sealants to set. And don't forget to trim bushes and other vegetation along the foundation that provide mice places to hide from natural predators like the neighborhood cats.

If you have questions or need more help getting rid of the pests in your home, call Jenn at (616) 241-3300.



Super Landlord to Clean-up Three Homes on One Block!

Keith Parney is fixing lead hazards in three different homes on the 1200 block of Third Street on the City's northwest side with help from the City of Grand Rapids *Get the Lead Out!* Program. Mr. Parney first inquired about the program for a rental property he owns on Third Street. After learning more about the requirements for the program, he decided that another of his rental properties as well as his personal residence would also qualify. All of the homes are on the same block.

Keith owns a fourth property on the next block over and plans to get the lead out at this property as well after the current tenants move out. To qualify for the *Get the Lead Out!* program, rental property must either be vacant or have children under 6 years old living in the home. Homes must also be located in the city of Grand Rapids and the occupants must be low or moderate income.

The applications for Mr. Parney's three Third Street homes are currently in the later stages of processing at City Hall. Mr. Parney is eagerly awaiting the beginning of construction on these homes. Thanks to the City of Grand Rapids *Get the Lead Out!* program, and one neighbor's decision to take action, the 1200 block of Third Street will see some very positive changes this summer. And three families will gain the peace of mind knowing that their homes are lead-safe.

For more information or to receive an application, contact Kelly Malinowski at (616) 241-3300.

www.GetTheLeadOutGR.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!

  **Get the Lead Out!**



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

Healthy Homes is *Building Healthy Futures!*

Friday, October 1 is the date for Healthy Homes' annual *Building Healthy Futures* event. At this event, supporters come together to celebrate the organization's work to make sure all children are protected from environmental harm due to unsafe housing conditions. This year's event will be held at noon at the Prince Conference Center at Calvin College.

You are invited to come join hundreds of others supporters for a light lunch and to hear about the successes Healthy Homes has achieved during the past twelve months. Learn about what we do and what the families we serve have to say about our work.

To reserve your space, call (616) 241-3300. Healthy Homes is still seeking a few more underwriters to ensure the success of this event. If your company would like to help underwrite, contact Paul Haan.

**Special thanks to our
Building Healthy Futures
Underwriting Early Birds!**

Fifth Third Bank
Anonymous donor

Healthy Homes Advocates for Sound Housing Policy

Along with serving families one-on-one, the Healthy Homes Coalition is also working on systems-level solutions that protect children's health. Recently, Healthy Homes and others successfully advocated to preserve four key housing inspections positions in the City of Grand Rapids budget for fiscal year 2011.

Healthy Homes is also active with a local coalition that is working to develop long-term solutions to modernize local housing codes to better reflect the needs of a post-boom housing market. If you would like to view the coalitions *June 2010 Strategy Statement*, view the document online at www.HealthyHomesCoalition.org/uploads/PDFs/June2010Strat.pdf, or call Healthy Homes at (616) 241-3300 and request a copy.



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

Checks should be made payable to:
Healthy Homes Coalition
742 Franklin SE
Grand Rapids MI 49507
or made online at
www.HealthyHomesCoalition.org

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.



Getting Started with Mold

We've all heard the stories about mold by now. Horrific stories have made the news and are regularly featured by the hour-long prime time news shows. So what's a parent or homeowner to do when they find mold in their home?

The first step is to realize that mold is really just a symptom for an underlying moisture problem. Until the source of water or dampness is addressed, nothing else will get rid of the mold. At Healthy Homes, we start with three of the Seven Healthy Homes Principles—keep it dry, keep it ventilated, and keep it maintained. Think roof leaks, plumbing leaks, and damp basements. But don't forget inoperable ventilation systems, which are often the source of the problem!

Once the source of the water is addressed, then the mold clean-up can begin. The EPA suggests that mold issues covering less than ten square feet can be addressed by do-it-yourselfers. For more good information about how to clean-up mold yourself, see the EPA publication *A Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture, and Your Home* (epa.gov/mold/moldguide.html). Here are some other tips we have learned from experience.

- ✓ *Moisture problems need to be cleaned up within 24-48 hours!* Don't wait to get things dried out. If it got wet, either dry it out or dispose of it in 48 hours.
- ✓ Porous materials with mold should be disposed, including cloth, carpeting, furniture and drywall. Cleaning is not recommended for porous materials.
- ✓ Just painting over mold, even with Kilz®, is not effective. Clean it up first.
- ✓ A dehumidifier is a good investment for those who wrestle with damp basements in the summertime. Be sure to go Energy Star to save some money on your electric bill! Air conditioners may also help with damp living spaces. Invest in an inexpensive hygrometer to make sure humidity stays between 30% and 50%.
- ✓ Test your bathroom fan to make sure it's working. Hold a square of toilet paper up to the fan in the palm of your hand. Does it hold in place? If not, the fan is not drawing enough air.
- ✓ Use your kitchen and bathroom fans. Run them five minutes before needed to get airflow moving and leaving them running 15 minutes afterwards to clear the air.

If you need more help dealing with mold, give us a call at (616) 241-3300.

Free Carbon Monoxide Alarms Running Out!

The Healthy Homes Coalition has been installing carbon monoxide (CO) alarms and smoke detectors since late 2008. Since then, we have served more than 521 households and have installed 500 CO alarms and 1081 smoke detectors.

Year one of the program was a partnership with the Kent County Health Department. Year two was funded directly by FEMA and ends this summer. Healthy Homes is seeking renewal funding.

If you or someone you know could use a carbon monoxide or smoke alarm, be sure to call Healthy Homes before current supplies run out! To be eligible, the home must be in the city of Grand Rapids, Kentwood or Wyoming and must have a resident child under six years of age. Call (616) 241-3300.

www.HealthyHomesCoalition.org

More Summer 2010 Events

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Healthy Homes Coalition Annual Meeting

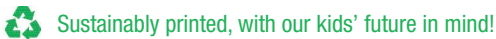
August 5, 4:30 - 6:00 pm

Annual awards, food, fun, more!
Healthy Homes Coalition offices
742 Franklin Street SE

Pest Management Training

August 10, 12:30 - 1:00 pm

Home Repair Services
1100 South Division Ave
Grand Rapids, MI 49507
RSVP to (616) 241-2601.



Lead Poisoning on the Rise

Every year during the summer months, cases of lead poisoning increase across the state of Michigan. This is not surprising considering the most prevalent sources of lead poisoning—lead-based paint, lead dust, and lead in soil.

Children can easily get into all of these sources of lead during the summer months. Parents and others use the warmer weather and longer days to make home repairs, children play outside, and the hot summer sun dries out lead-laden soils so that lead dust can be tracked into the home.

Then there are the windows. It is well understood that windows are the one area where lead-based paint was used with great frequency in older homes. Most pre-1950 windows in Grand Rapids have been painted with lead-based paint at some time. And those windows are “friction surfaces,” meaning they grind the old paint into invisible dust that then blows into the home where it can be ingested by children.

Healthy Homes can help parents living in older homes control lead hazards. We also strongly encourage parents to make sure their children are being tested as recommended by the Michigan Department of Community Health and the American Academy of Pediatrics. See the box to the right to see if your child should be tested.

When Should Children be Tested for Lead?

Children should be tested at both one year of age and again at two years of age if the answer to ANY of the following is “yes.”

- ✓ Does the child live in a high-risk community? (City of Grand Rapids, Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, Benton Harbor, Kalamazoo, Battle Creek).
- ✓ Is the child on Medicaid?
- ✓ Does the child live in older housing with lead hazards, older housing that is being renovated, or live with a parent whose job or hobby involves lead?