

## 2004 ECO/EPA Community Intern Program

### Applicant Organization Project Summaries

#### Region 1

##### **Project Basic, Inc. (Providence, RI)**

Project Basic is researching how state environmental agencies incorporate concerns of environmental justice into their decision-making process and into policies relating to the siting of schools on sites that have been impacted by hazardous materials. The research will be shared with stakeholder groups that will help develop environmental equity and school siting policies with the Department of Environmental Management. The associate will go into the community, and identify people interested in a stakeholder process to develop DEM policies. The associate will use the information to create brochures written in easily understandable language, which s/he will distribute at informal meetings arranged with interested community members. It is anticipated that the associate will be able to recruit up to six people willing to serve on the stakeholder groups. The associate will develop skills working with community people and presenting technical information to a general audience.

#### Region 2

##### **Citizen's Environmental Coalition (Buffalo, NY)**

The Citizen's Environmental Coalition *Bucket Brigade Community Monitoring Project* strengthens citizen's capacity to monitor aspects of the environment that affect their health – in this case the very air they breathe. The associate will work with three bucket brigades: Rochester – data released in January highlights the need for better air monitoring in neighborhoods near Kodak Park; Tonawanda – site of numerous chemical companies; Cheektowaga – a number of landfills coupled with abnormally high disease rates have prompted the project. Each brigade is at a different stage of development, and the associate will take air samples and train residents in proper procedures, and interact with members by phone, email, and in-person. They will gain experience in air monitoring and grassroots organizing, learn how to conduct a proper chain of custody and how to organize press events and community meetings. S/he will draft articles for the Coalition's newsletter, website, and local publications. Anticipated project results will be to strengthen public awareness of air pollution causes; help residents advocate for responsible party's accountability and protect public health at Tonawanda and Cheektowaga the strong results from the Rochester Bucket Brigade.

##### **Farmworker Health and Safety Institute (Glassboro, NJ)**

The Farmworker Health and Safety Institute will include the associate as part of a process to educate farmworkers and the general community. The associate will gain a better understanding of the relationship between pesticides, the environment, and human health. The associate will research pesticide issues, develop crop sheets, develop health and safety information on pesticides used in particular products, and assist research staff in administering a pesticide exposure and health impact survey to farmworkers. The associate will also assist in entering data into the survey database; conduct research in the office; and have the opportunity to visit farm labor camps.

**Ironbound Community Corporation (Newark, NJ)**

The Ironbound Community Corporation started in 1969 as a social service agency and has expanded its resources to include outreach and education on environmental justice issues for the predominantly immigrant community living in neighborhoods with high rates of cancer and asthma. ICC has developed a master plan to address zoning ordinances as they affect the placement of open space and new residential space in relation to existing industrial sites. The associate will work on an existing GIS map of the neighborhood. Currently the map has open spaces, schools and residential areas, and the associate will include information from the Toxic Release Inventory. This includes 20 industries with text on the type and quantity of emissions. The associate will also create a website with the GIS map and relevant links and conduct a needs assessment to address development of GIS maps for other areas in Newark.

**Massachusetts Avenue Project, Inc. (Buffalo, NY)**

The Massachusetts Avenue Project is focused on community revitalization. This includes *Growing Green*, an urban agriculture-training program for youth that fosters education about ecology, soil health and sustainable land use. The associate will assist in educating the community on soil toxicity and health. They will incorporate soil testing and the planting and maintenance of Indian Mustard Crop into the *Growing Green* curriculum. Under the direction of the associate, youth in the *Growing Green* program will be involved in project monitoring and data collection. The associate will also be involved in developing a pamphlet to educate community residents and gardeners about toxins in soil. The anticipated outcome of the internship is to: distribute the pamphlet to all of Buffalo's 60 community gardens and interested residents; complete the initial soil testing, including a heavy metal profile on two vacant lots; plant and harvest a crop of Indian Mustard, with follow-up soil testing; teach 25 youth about the importance and process of toxin remediation from soil.

**Pratt Area Community Council (Brooklyn, NY)**

The Pratt Area Community Council is dedicated to developing affordable, diverse, and environmentally safe communities. PACC has a comprehensive campaign to train a corps of high school students to conduct lead contamination tests, and to work with Bedford-Stuyvesant residents. The associate will join the PACC team in documenting lead hazards and conducting outreach and education to homeowners and tenants on lead hazards. The neighborhood faces a myriad of environmental health problems and the associate will conduct broad environmental health assessment interviews with community residents. This opportunity will provide the associate with the technical tools and organizing skills necessary to test for lead contamination. The associate will gain an understanding of the basics of community organizing, data analysis, technical writing and the fundamentals of lead poisoning.

**St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corporation (Brooklyn, NY)**

St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corporation is a non-profit organization which supports thousands of residents of low- and moderate-income housing and works to revitalize commercial and industrial districts to ensure infrastructure exists to support citizens. There are 16 land-based solid waste transfer stations (WTS) sited in Brooklyn's Community Board 1, an ethnically diverse neighborhood of working families. The stations process 44% of the city's garbage, creating an environmental issue. St. Nicholas convened a meeting on the issue and over two dozen community groups joined a coalition to address the issue of garbage disposal. The associate will gain experience in statistical analysis, graphic computer skills and increase his/her leadership and team building skills through the work with this coalition. The associate will compile the raw data gathered (including charts, graphs and photos) into a published final report. The report will be used to assist in the planning of the new 20-year Solid Waste Management Plan, which will be released in October 2004.

### **Sustainable Long Island (Huntington, NY)**

Sustainable Long Island is a non-profit organization that promotes sustainable development through advocacy and technical assistance. Brownfields redevelopment is at the heart of revitalizing Long Island's economy and town centers, protecting its sole source aquifer and generating local tax revenues. Sustainable Long Island has identified over 500 potential Brownfields redevelopment sites and researched property-specific information on close to 40% of the properties. This is the only comprehensive Brownfields inventory on Long Island, and the information is used to coordinate redevelopment projects throughout the region. The associate will: participate in windshield surveys to identify abandoned properties, research property characteristics on public databases and assess redevelopment potential. The associate will prepare informational Brownfields presentations for community meetings, attend community Brownfields task force meetings and draft briefing materials. The associate will gain a valuable perspective on the role of non-profits in Brownfields redevelopment, how to create a shared vision for community revitalization, and how environmental policy translates into economic development. Through this project the associate will gain experience in community-based environmental initiatives with broad and meaningful stakeholder participation.

### **Region 3**

#### **Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment (Arlington, VA)**

The Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment research project focuses on engaging residents in neighborhood-based watershed education. Volunteers will be trained to involve their neighbors in taking actions that help reduce non-point source pollution. The associate will perform research to estimate non-point source pollution and run-off in an urban environment. The associate will research demographics for Arlington County and the Four Mile Run watershed to develop a large-scale model for creating neighborhood-based teams. The associate will estimate pollutant load from an urban residence, estimate run-off from an urban residence, and model pollution and run-off reductions resulting from residents completing various actions. The associate will track reductions from seven neighborhood teams participating in the program. The associate will have the opportunity to work with community non-profits and local governments. The associate will be involved in the creation of a new model for non-point source pollution forecasting that links behavior changes and pollution reduction, participation in a pilot program that quantifies behavior change in an education program and a projected plan and timeline for engaging a cross-section of the entire community.

### **Region 4**

#### **Coosa River Basin Initiative (Rome, GA)**

The Coosa River Basin Initiative (CRBI) mission is to inform and empower citizens so that they may become involved in the process of creating a cleaner, healthier, economically viable Coosa River Basin. CRBI works toward this goal through advocacy, education, restoration, and volunteer water monitoring programs. Previous and current industrial operations have resulted in PCB and mercury contamination of local waters and there is concern that certain segments of the population, such as subsistence fishermen, could be at risk for exposure to fish from these waters. The associate will compile information on areas of toxic contamination that may pose a threat to human health and the environment, and organize this information into a format the general public can access and understand - such as a brochure and web page. The associate will learn about federal and state cleanup regulations and operations, grassroots organizing, non-profit work, rural communities, and issues of water quality while creating a valuable resource for the community.

**Environmental Awareness Foundation (Atlanta, GA)**

The Environmental Awareness Foundation seeks to conduct Environmental Household Health Issues Workshops on Lead Poison Prevention, Asthma Control, Radon Reduction and Mold and Mildew. This will give low-income communities access, in a centralized location, to questions and answers on environmental household health issues. The associate will educate community members on how to identify and prevent household health issues. The associate will also collect data from the community, learn to interact and work as a team with local communities and learn about environmental justice issues. An anticipated project outcome is residents being able to participate in decisions on proposed activities that affect their environment and health.

**Florida Institute for Community Studies, Inc. (Tampa, FL)**

The Florida Institute for Community Studies (FICS) is conducting a research and demonstration program called *Live Better: Know the Dangers*, in response to several non-scientific community dialogues which indicated that local farm workers have not received adequate education on the handling of pesticides or chemicals. The associate will assist FICS with this program by conducting research, community education, public awareness and evaluation. The associate will produce a report summarizing findings and recommendations for intervention, and present this to the farm worker community and to the farm managers and staff. In the process, s/he will gain interviewing, research/evaluation, and presentation skills.

**Kingsport Citizens for a Cleaner Environment (Kingsport, TN)**

Kingsport Citizens for a Cleaner Environment's mission is to protect, preserve and improve the region in which people work, play and live. We are particularly concerned about low-income and minority communities most at risk from environmental contaminants in the air, land and water. Through the *Discovering Our Communities* project the associate will work with community health surveyors to: research records on prior land usage; identify what, if any, contaminants are in the soil upon which residents' homes sit and identify possible effects the chemicals may have on the people living there now. The associate will also build relationships with community members and participate in a process to empower residents to build relationships with industry, health leaders and local government in caring for the community and enhancing economic development.

**Region 5****Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (Dearborn, MI)**

The Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) is a non-profit organization serving the Arab American community in Southeastern Michigan, the largest Arab population in North America. Since 1995 ACCESS has been working on environmental issues that impact the low-income Arab American immigrant community and other disproportionately affected communities in Metro Detroit. The associate will gather, analyze and summarize data on local environmental indicators, hazards and the health effects on the community, including diesel exhaust and air emissions. The associate will gain experience in conducting community-based research, environmental health and justice, air quality, transportation, land use and community planning. The associate will assist in gathering and analyzing data on potential health impacts to residents in SW Detroit and South Dearborn neighborhoods from a proposed truck-rail freight terminal project. Based on the research, the associate will help develop bilingual educational materials including newsletters, reports and brochures.

## Region 6

### **Community Networking Resources, Inc. (Albuquerque, NM)**

The Community Networking Resources, Inc., is a non-profit organization with affiliate members throughout the Southwest. This project focuses on water quality and quantity within the state of New Mexico. The associate will conduct research on the quantity and quality of water available to local low-income and people of color communities in New Mexico. The associate, along with working group members from the Southwest Network New Mexico Water Working Group, will identify a specific area of focus and select potential case studies. They will then conduct surveys, research the history of water in the state of New Mexico and participate in water sampling and monitoring training. The preliminary research will be compiled and the working group will make recommendations regarding water usage issues. The information and recommendations will be shared with the community. Through this research project, the capacity of the community will have increased with the ability to monitor water quality and the opportunity to utilize the information to participate in policy dialogue.

### **Freedmen's Town Association, Inc. (Houston, TX)**

The Freedmen's Town Association is dedicated to preserving and restoring Freedmen's Town, Houston's oldest Black neighborhood. The associate will assess problems/needs; write reports; and dialogue with residents, homeowners and small businesses in the Freedman's Town neighborhood. The associate will prepare a list of brownfields; water, air and food pollution; and study the short- and long-term effects of lead-based paint on people of all ages, including the effect on children's performance in school. The associate will learn how to communicate effectively with the public and how to assess environmental issues and resolve them. The associate will also encourage youth to become involved with the program.

### **Good Neighbor Settlement House, Inc. (Brownsville, TX)**

The Good Neighbor Settlement House is a non-profit affiliate of the Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church. Its purpose is to help people help themselves. The purpose of the project is to undertake a feasibility study to determine the need for a regional tire-recycling center by identifying whether a scrap tire problem exists along the US-Mexico border and developing a solution. A by-product of a recycling facility is a product called crumb rubber which can be blended with asphalt to produce asphalt rubber. The study will include the feasibility of using this by-product for road paving. The associate will provide an analysis of tire-recycling technology, provide an assessment of existing waste tire stockpiles, estimate the amount of waste tires generated annually within the same geographic area and assess how local scrap tire management programs would be incorporated into the development and operation of the regional tire-recycling facility. The associate will also identify detailed cost estimates for facility construction and operating costs, and identify potential revenue sources from local scrap tire management programs and funding sources. The associate will learn how non-profit organizations, in partnership with environmental departments, can work together to improve the environment and provide jobs for local citizens.

### **Louisiana Bucket Brigade (New Orleans, LA)**

The Louisiana Bucket Brigade is a non-profit organization in New Orleans which focuses on facilitating public access to monitoring results and advising citizens about the effects of pollution on people. The associate will work with people that live 30 feet from a petrochemical plant, conduct analysis of the environmental data gathered with the buckets, research existing records and data, and maintain the archive and monitoring results databases. The expected outcome of the project is to produce a database with monitoring results from 2000 to the present for easy access by local community residents and others.

## Region 7

### **Proteus, Inc. (Des Moines, IA)**

The Proteus, Inc. is a non-profit organization to provide support to farmworkers, immigrants, and others with a variety of services that improve their health, education, and economic opportunities. The associate will develop a community-based survey to assess the level of understanding among migrant farm workers regarding the potential risk of adverse health outcomes from exposure to farm chemicals and precautions to avoid the negative health outcomes. The Proteus associate will conduct interviews of approximately 200 migrant farm workers in eastern Iowa during June-September 2004. The associate will tabulate the information and develop a report. As part of the experience, the associate will interview growers, tour workplace settings and visit migrant health clinics to better assess the potential risk of adverse health outcomes. The experience will enhance the associate's knowledge of multicultural research and contribute to identifying needed improvements in the curriculum used by Proteus, Inc., to train migrant farm workers on environmental and workplace risks and safety.

## Region 8

### **Utah Federation for Youth (Salt Lake City, UT)**

The Utah Federation for Youth is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting safe, healthy youth, and communities. This project will focus on identifying what hazardous substances are being transported over a newly reopened rail line. The associate will identify substances being carried on the rail line through visual and video recordings of placards on trains and through contact with Union Pacific representatives. The associate will also research the effects of a spill or accident involving each substance and enter the findings into a database. Results will be published in a bound report. This project will encourage the associate to become a part of the community process which will connect them to issues important in the community.

## Region 9

### **Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (Riverside, CA)**

The Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice is a non-profit organization with over 25 years of experience. The Center creates partnerships with organizations that are working on issues related to environmental justice, social justice, and economic development. The associate will work on a program entitled, *Wrong Side of the Tracks: Local Impacts of Global Trade*, which is concerned about air quality in the Southern California area, specifically emissions from trucks and rails. The associate will: participate in policy research on guidelines and regulations concerning rail facilities and inter-modal transport; help to form and train community groups to participate in community-based research activities, including schools adjacent to rail lines and railroad yards; search for and share existing research reports related to rail distribution; compile a report on existing regulations and identify policies related to health protection. The associate will experience a grassroots, community-driven environmental campaign on the direct effects of air quality and the human health impacts associated with rail distribution.

### **Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (Los Angeles, CA)**

The Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE) is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to building power for working class people in Los Angeles. The Healthy Homes Project is one example of a holistic strategy to prevent childhood lead poisoning and other environmental hazards existing that exist in low-income housing in the Figueroa Corridor in Los Angeles' urban core. The associate will join the Healthy Homes Project team to help identify buildings with high levels of lead exposure, mold and mildew, as well as rat and roach infestation. Specifically, the associate will collect information; research effective solutions that other cities use to address repeated violations by landlords and management companies; provide concise memos summarizing research including recommendations for specific tactics; and write a report on the research including recommendations and timelines for follow-up activities. The associate will benefit by being exposed to the important played by non-profit organizations in addressing public health issues.

### **Tides Center (Oakland, CA)**

The Tides Center is a non-profit organization which offers unique opportunities for emerging and existing charitable activities. The project that the associate will be responsible for includes educating community members to build neighborhood farms to increase access to food. The associate will assist in establishing a soil testing capability and to develop a guide to soil testing and soil mitigation that is culturally relevant. Other activities will include: interviewing organizations and community members with existing farms; conducting soil analysis of toxins and soil quality on newly developing farm sites; researching and presenting information about soil mitigation practices; assisting with the design and establishment of a community-based testing center; and assisting with the development of a curriculum to teach community members how to conduct the tests. The student will benefit through experiences and direct interaction with community residents and community-based development projects, as well as involvement in a real life, real-time project.

## Region 10

### **Maniilaq Association, (Kotzebue, AK)**

The Maniilaq Association is a non-profit organization located in the Northwest Arctic Region of Alaska. The organization oversees environmental projects with 11 surrounding villages including indoor pollution, air pollution, solid waste reduction, and water projects. The associate will learn about Northwest Arctic Native communities and their unique, challenging environmental issues by researching the various pollutants and their toxic effects on community health and ecosystems. The associate's research assignments will include developing research and gathering information through community outreach and surveys, setting up air monitoring stations, and collecting and analyzing data. The associate will get gain knowledge about the Arctic Native communities and learn about reduction and remediation programs that include alternative energies.