

Community Involvement Influences Policy Decisions: *Victories of a CBPR Partnership*

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Overview

- ◆ Identification of the problem
- ◆ Formation of partnership
- ◆ Capacity Building Aspects
- ◆ How government policy was changed

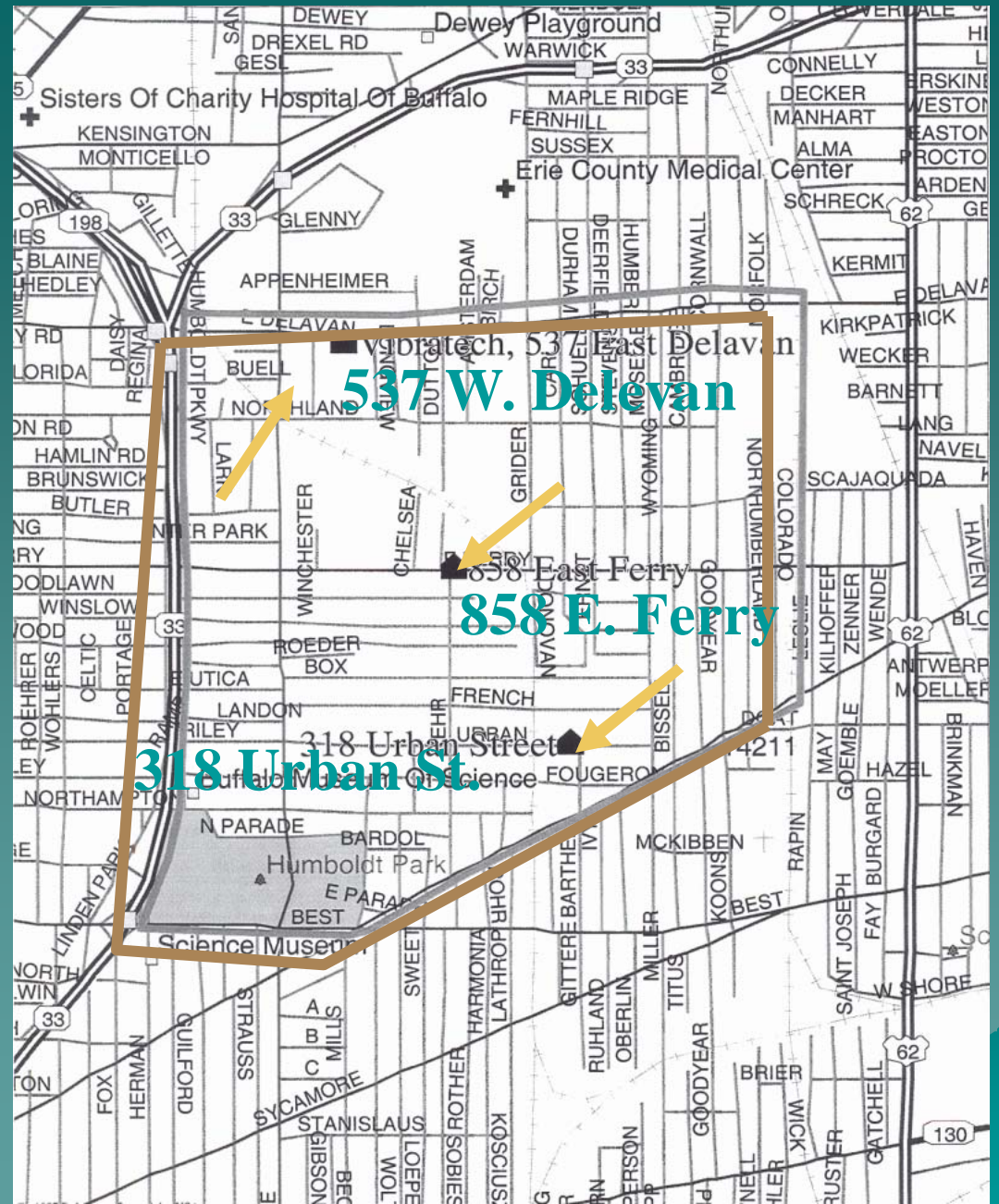
Identification of the problem

- ◆ Community identified a lupus cluster
 - Original cluster of 17 grew to a total of 68 in the two studied zip codes, 14211 & 14215



Map of the Area

- ◆ 858 E. Ferry has been designated a Level 2 site
- ◆ Issues: Fencing, signage, proximity to a church & school
- ◆ Contaminants include lead, PCBs, VOCs, incinerator ash



Scientists Invited, Partnership Formed

- ◆ Coalition approach scientists for expert advice
- ◆ University wrote collaborative research grant
- ◆ MOU with community coalition
- ◆ Received funding for 5 years of community participatory research

Contaminants Identified by DEC

- ◆ PCB contamination limited to an area of 750 square feet caused by historical spill or dumping.
- ◆ Lead contamination significant
 - Surface 149 – 11500 ppm
 - Subsurface 110 – 46700 ppm

Toxin Migration Concerns



Soil Sampling

- ◆ Community members sample soil around the Superfund site to confirm migration off site.



Sampling Results

- ◆ Mercury and Arsenic levels not high enough for remediation concern.
- ◆ The results should be discussed.
- ◆ Lead levels very low on BMHA site
- ◆ Lead levels typical for Carl Street sites, not of concern although some simple cleanup can be done
- ◆ **Lead levels on street side quite high; this area needs to be considered for remediation**

Proximity to toxic waste Superfund site



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Capacity Building

- ◆ Through Community education on:
 - Toxic Waste
 - Health impact
 - Research participation
 - DEC procedures
 - Environmental Justice Issues

DEC Public Meeting Community Suggests Alternate Plan



5 Remediation Options Offered

- ◆ No Action at a cost of \$0 = remain hazardous with no use
- ◆ Soil Excavation & removal to a landfill with a cap on site = industrial use. \$35 million
- ◆ Partial excavation and consolidation on site = Cap waste on site with some beneficial use. \$1.6 million
- ◆ On-site soil washing technology (effectiveness of technology uncertain) = Unrestricted use of on & off site. \$50 million
- ◆ Excavation of soils from off-site, partial consolidation on-site and partial disposal = on site with cap for industrial use and some beneficial use. \$16 million

Community Recommendation Chosen

- ◆ Remove contaminated soil from the site to achieve a clean up goal used for unrestricted future use and remove contaminated soils from off-site properties to achieve a clean up goal used for industrial/commercial use as it is currently zoned.

Rod Amendment
March 2005

Design Start in
April 2005

Design end by
September 2005

Excavation
Began April
2006

Scheduled
Completion
November 2007



The Buffalo Public Schools' African/African American Program recently held a successful Community Day at the beautiful School 17 where Barbara Clark is principal. Dolores L. Bolden-Milan is the coordinator of the African/African American Program for the school district. Pictured left to right: principal, Mrs. Clark (center) with Mrs. Julia Bolden and Jim Anderson; Mrs. Milan, Legislator Demone Smith, Mr. Anderson and Mrs. Bolden; Kris Drew, School 72, Ms. Milan, Olga Bula, School 72, and Rose McKeller, School 44.

Lead Poisoning Screening Cut from County Budget-Community Outraged

The Toxic Waste Lupus Coalition recently held a press conference at True Bethel Baptist Church, 907 E. Ferry, to send a strong message to the Erie County Legislature that the health of our children should take priority over parks, golf courses and libraries. Although those services are important, childhood lead poisoning

is a crisis in Erie County. On June 9 a letter signed by 20 organizations was sent to Chairman George A. Holt Jr. and the Legislature encouraging them to put the funding for lead poisoning screening back into the budget.

The Toxic Waste Lupus Coalition, a five-year old grassroots organization has been working with the University at Buffalo, Department of Social and Preventive Medicine Department, Environmental Health Division, and community health workers to identify and quickly remove lead based paint from the toxic waste dump site at 188 E. Ferry Street that has plagued our community for several decades and to identify and obtain services for those who are suffering health complications as a result of exposures to high concentrations of lead, mercury, arsenic and other contaminants found at the site.

Lead poisoning continues to take a toll on the most vulnerable populations, the African American children of East Buffalo. Three zip codes in Buffalo have the highest rates in New York State of lead incidence in children between 1996 and 1999. Those zip codes are 14208, 14209, 14211 and 14212.

Health officials have considerable information on the effects of lead on children. For more than a century, pediatricians and child welfare workers have studied and documented cases of childhood lead poisoning. These studies reveal a huge health problem for young children usually six and under who live and play in environments contaminated by flaking and peeling lead based paint. Lead is at the top of the list in terms of developmental toxicants and known or suspected carcinogens.

Childhood lead poisoning is a totally preventable public health problem. Lead can accumulate in the human body, harming the repro-

ductive system and causing nervous system damage in fetuses and small children, which can lead to problems with their physical and mental development. It can also cause cancer. Higher childhood blood lead levels are associated with lower IQ, poor maintained mental health and learning difficulties.

As a result of the county budget crisis, the Health Department no longer tests for lead poisoning, anemia, sickle cell anemia or advanced syphilis. At a time when communities must rely on public health departments in the identification and eradication of public health threats, the Health Department had laid off 45 percent of its staff, including 100 nurses, most in the school nurse programs where many of these problems are first identified. The most widely used program to be eliminated screened for lead poisoning in the inner city, where children live and play among decades-old houses containing lead based paint. Public health officials themselves decry these cutbacks because they know about the effects of such losses. The continuing problem with lead poisoning of children in Buffalo is at crisis levels.

According to Dr. Scott Zimmerman, director of Erie County public health laboratories, 5,500 children were tested by the County in 2004. New York State law states that children must be tested twice before they enter school. The County program provided free collection kits to pediatrician's offices. Funding for these Public health services must be replaced or our whole community will suffer the consequence.

The Press Conference featured experts in childhood lead poisoning and its effects from medicine, research, education, law, and other areas.

Peoples Appointed Chair of New State Subcommittee

Assemblywoman Peoples announced the chair of the newly created subcommittee on Minority and Women Business (MWBE), under the jurisdiction of the Standing Committee on Governmental Operations.

Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver announced the strengthening of an Assembly subcommittee structure to provide individual members a greater role in researching, analyzing and debating various legislative issues.

Assemblywoman Peoples stated the subcommittee will heighten the focus on Minority and Women Business Enterprise issues.

"Article 15-A is an invaluable resource for minority and women businesses because it gives them access to government contracts. Enforcement of Article 15-A and protecting the rights guaranteed under this law is not an option. It is a priceless wealth-building tool for communities of color. I am extremely pleased with my appointment by Speaker Silver to chair this subcommittee and I'm deeply committed to its success," she said.

Green Party Endorses James Payne

The Green Party of Erie County (GPEC) has endorsed James Payne

Jefferson Avenue Festival
Accepting Applications

County in Budget Crisis

Highest in New York State

- ◆ Three zip codes in Buffalo have the highest rates in new York State of lead incidence in children between 1996 and 1999. Those zip codes are: 14208, 14209, *14211 and 14212.
 - *location of the Site

Community Engagement



Press Conference

Voices Big and Small Speak Out



Church Takes Action

- ◆ On Sunday morning from the pulpit Pastor Darius Pridgen asked his congregation to call their County Legislators and request the funding for childhood lead screening be restored. Over 1000 calls were made to the legislature.



County Legislators Announce Resolution to restore Funding



How government policy was changed

- ◆ DEC policy & procedures
 - Community education workshops and information sharing built capacity
- ◆ County health policy
 - Informing & mobilizing the community
- ◆ Political process
 - Understanding laws & rights, facts to substantiate and working with elected officials and the press.

