

Community Outreach & Education Program



for the NIEHS Center for Ecogenetics and Environmental Health and
the University of Washington Superfund Basic Research Program

In the Community

COEP Overview

This fact sheet highlights the current outreach and education activities of two related research programs at the University of Washington (UW). **The UW Superfund Basic Research Program (UW SBRP)** seeks to develop new knowledge and technologies to help clean up our nation's Superfund sites. **The UW Center for Ecogenetics and Environmental Health (CEEH)** strives to understand and communicate how genetic factors influence human susceptibility to environmental health risks. CEEH scientists do basic research on the ways that genetic and environmental factors combine to affect susceptibility to diseases and disorders such as asthma, birth defects, cancer, and Parkinson's Disease. Both programs are funded by **the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)**.

Both the UW SBRP and the CEEH have a long-established history of reaching out beyond the walls of the university to engage community members in their research activities. In order to do this outreach work effectively, they share a **Community Outreach and Education Program (COEP)**. Some of the work COEP does is specifically aimed at educating young people about the core concepts of environmental health. These K-12 outreach activities include developing curricula, hosting teacher workshops, and bringing young people to the research labs for tours. Other COEP activities are focused on developing close ties with specific communities that have environmental health concerns related to center research areas.

If you would like more information about any of the activities or projects described here, please feel free to contact the COEP staff (see other side for contact information).

EJ Network in Action

The goal of **the Environmental Justice Network in Action (EJNA)** project is to determine what environmental health concerns are most relevant to recent immigrants and refugee populations in the greater Seattle area. The project uses focus groups and interviews to understand the environmental health concerns of various underserved communities. This approach ensures that agencies correctly identify what information and services are desired and usable, and helps determine the best ways to deliver potential solutions. COEP's primary role in the EJNA has been to provide environmental health training and lab tours to youth volunteers in order to better prepare them to conduct in-home environmental assessments and interviews of community members.

Other Partnerships

In addition to the community-based activities described above, COEP staff also help train Seattle area youth to conduct seafood safety community presentations, serve on various regional environmental health advisory committees, support local tribal nations with environmental health education activities, and maintain an environmental health and justice listserv. **For more information about any of the community partnerships described above, please contact Chetana Acharya.**

COEP develops environmental health curricula, hosts teacher workshops, and works directly with communities that have environmental health concerns.



Cleveland High School HEAL Academy students visit the UW for a Job Shadow Day.

Integrated Environmental Health Middle School Project (IEHMSP)

The IEHMSP trains middle school teachers in Washington and New Mexico in environmental health, giving them the expertise to help students identify and research environmental health issues in their communities. Teachers from a variety of subjects such as social studies, language arts, mathematics and science come together to build an integrated program that involves their community while satisfying state and national academic standards. Classroom materials created for the project include **the Environmental Health Fact Files on Lead and Asthma** and **the Quicksilver Question Web Module** about the hazards of mercury contamination. **(Contact: Katie Frevert or visit <http://www.iehms.com>)**

Health and Safety for Working Teens

The Health and Safety Awareness for Working Teens program strives to reduce workplace injuries and illnesses and their consequences by educating students about workplace health and safety and by promoting an attitude of occupational injury and illness prevention. A **Health and Safety for Working Teens** curriculum is available for grades 8-12, as well as a **Wood Shop Health and Safety Web Module**. This program is supported by the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries. **(Contact: Darren Linker or visit <http://www.uwworksafe.com>)**

Youth Network for Healthy Communities (YNHC)

YNHC is a videoconference series hosted by CEEH outreach staff. These events give middle and high school teachers in Washington state the opportunity to work with students on environmental health issues in their communities. Students prepare projects and present their findings to experts via the statewide K20 videoconference network. **(Contact: Dianne Botta or visit <http://whs.wsd.wednet.edu/Faculty/Young/YNHC/ynhchome.htm>)**

The Health Environment and Life (HEAL) Academy

Cleveland High School is the first high school in the Seattle Public Schools to convert to a school-wide academy model. One of the new "small schools" created there is the Health and Environment and Life (HEAL) Academy that allows students to focus on environmental health and justice issues. COEP staff are supporting the academy by participating on the advisory committee and providing curricular materials and training to the teachers. **(Contact: Chetana Acharya)**

Essentials of Cell Biology: Toxicology in Action (CD-ROM)

Our dynamic CD-ROM curriculum uses an interactive approach to teach the basics of toxicology and cell biology. Developed by university scientists, the program engages learners in the study of basic science by demonstrating how cell biology relates to the real world concerns of a working toxicologist. The CD is designed for use in high school and undergraduate college courses and is available free of charge. **(Order online at <http://depts.washington.edu/ceeh/Outreach/ecb.html>)**

CEEH Lab Tours

Tours of the CEEH research labs are offered on a limited basis to interested K-12 teachers and their students. A short overview of environmental health and toxicology is followed by guided tours of the labs. The tours are relevant for all levels of science classes and also provide students with first hand experience of a variety of careers. **(Contact: Dianne Botta)**

Tox-in-a-Box™

The Tox-in-a-Box™ resource kit is designed for toxicologists and other environmental and public health professionals to use in outreach efforts to K-12 students and teachers. The four grade levels covered are K-3, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12. The kit includes activities, slides, demonstrations, a script of instructions and tips for the presenter, and a Teacher's Resource Manual. All experiment supplies can be replenished with easily accessible materials. **(Contact: Chetana Acharya)**

COEP Contact Information

Thomas Burbacher, COEP Director

206.685.7674, tmb@u.washington.edu

Chetana Acharya, COEP Manager

206.616.2643, cacharya@u.washington.edu

Kristen Bergsman, Curriculum Developer

206.685.5378, crowtalk@u.washington.edu

Dianne Botta, Research Scientist

206.616.2645, diann@u.washington.edu

Katie Frevert, IEHMSP Manager

206.685-5379, kfrevert@u.washington.edu

Darren Linker, HSAWT Manager

206.616.7566, dlinker@u.washington.edu

Lyle Rudensey, IEHMSP Teacher

206.616.1878, lylecroc@u.washington.edu

Jon Sharpe, IEHMSP Coordinator

206.685.5333, jsharp@u.washington.edu

Community Outreach & Education Program

4225 Roosevelt Way NE, Suite 100
Seattle, WA 98105

On the Web:

<http://depts.washington.edu/ceeh/>

<http://depts.washington.edu/sfund/superfund.html>

Updated April 2006