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MEDIA RELEASE

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Local Group is One of Thirty to Receive EPA Environmental Justice Cooperative Agreements

Mothers for Clean Air has received a \$100,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to help understand a Southeast Houston community's perception of environmental health risk and to engage the residents in working with policy makers to change their environment. The project, called Improving Environmental Quality through Cooperation, will begin this summer and take three years to complete.

Last week EPA awarded cooperative agreements to 30 community-based organizations across the country to launch projects that address local environmental and public health issues using a collaborative problem-solving approach. In Houston, Jane Laping, Executive Director of Mothers for Clean Air said, "This grant will allow us to work with the affected community, enhance their skills, and put them in direct contact with the people who can make a difference."

The Southeast Houston project will include local governments, universities, citizen organizations, elected officials and industries working together to reduce exposure of residents to air pollution. Southeast Houston residents will participate in a community-based air sampling program to identify pollutants of concern and to aid regulatory agencies to enforce the law. Other U.S. projects will focus on lead-based paint, recycling, pesticide use, toxic dust and improper solid waste disposal.

"These agreements are excellent examples of using a collaborative process to break down barriers among various stakeholders and to find solutions. These projects bring together communities and other stakeholders who understand that environmental justice issues and concerns can be best addressed through balanced, open and inclusive approaches at the local level," said Barry E. Hill, Director of EPA's Office of Environmental Justice. "Collaborative approaches often result in greater satisfaction among all stakeholders and ensure better long-term stakeholder involvement in addressing the local environmental and/or public health issues."

More information about the Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program and the 30 cooperative agreements is available at: <http://www.epa.gov/ej/grants/ej-cps-grants.html> Click on CPS Projects 2003-2004 and scroll down to page 27 to read more about the Mothers for Clean Air project or for a direct link, click on <http://epa.gov/compliance/resources/publications/ej/grants/cps-project-abstracts-031004.pdf>

For information about Mothers for Clean Air see www.mothersforcleanair.org.

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