

Mothers for Clean Air Annual Report

June 2001 – May 2002

Summary

Mothers for Clean Air (MfCA) experienced several positive changes through a major grant from Houston Endowment Inc. In December, MfCA moved to a larger office in the Houston Environmental Center with space for an intern and volunteers and a second computer. The grant also gave us the opportunity to hire Jane Laping as our first executive director.

Since November, when Ms. Laping took the full-time executive director position, MfCA published two issues of our newsletter, Clearing the Air, and mailed it to 1000 members and stakeholders. We also instituted twice weekly e-mail notices of upcoming events and possible actions to 250 of our members. MfCA recruited and placed 20 volunteers including a graphic designer, who designed a new logo for us, and a web master who improves our site and keeps it updated.

MfCA encouraged children to learn about air quality by coordinating hands-on children's activities at twelve fairs and festivals and four school-sponsored events. We also presented three special awards at the Science Engineering Fair of Houston.

MfCA educated the public about air quality at our annual tours of the Houston Ship Channel on the M.V. Sam Houston, and Reliant Energy's Parish Power Plant in Fort Bend County. We also co-sponsored a screening of the film, Save our Land, Save our Towns with the Houston Sierra Club. Our executive director, Ms. Laping, spoke about Mothers for Clean Air and Houston area air pollution three times to local organizations, four times on radio, and once on TV. She also wrote an 800-word article on our organization that appeared in Emerging Lifestyles magazine.

MfCA worked to prevent air pollution by giving its support to the enhanced vehicle inspection program and reduced emissions from power plants at three press conferences. We sent letters opposing expansion of the Katy Freeway to 22+ lanes and against building the Bayport Container Terminal.

MfCA hired and directed our first college intern in the summer of 2001, who researched and selected environmental educational materials on air pollution and posted the references to our web site. Beginning in the fall, we have secured a public policy intern from the Texas Public Interest Research Group for 9 months.

Our community organizer, Linda Block, continued her project educating and organizing residents of our fourth chapter in Southeast Houston. The Southeast Houston Chapter sponsored a bus tour of community pollution sources, an environmental justice workshop, Internet training, and a teen photography project that resulted in a community photo calendar and a report to the community. Ms. Block also played a lead role in organizing and conducting the first Houston-Galveston Citizen Air Monitoring Project (H-GCAMP) training where citizens learned to take air samples in their communities for analysis by EPA. Unfortunately, funding for Ms. Block's position was depleted and she chose to seek employment outside of the Houston area.

Our Fifth Ward Chapter was given a boost with receipt of a Technical Assistance Grant from the EPA. This three-year grant will pay for a consultant to communicate the meaning of technical documents regarding the MDI Superfund site and provide advice to the community on how to respond. Pris Weeks, of the Environmental Institute of Houston at the University of Houston, Clear Lake, has graciously agreed to be the project manager for this grant and is also guiding the chapter as it becomes more active.

The Barrett Station Chapter continues to be active in air quality issues affecting the community and has participated in several opportunities to take community air samples and have them analyzed. The Woodland Acres Chapter remains inactive as MfCA searches for funding to revive interest through a chapter network that will include training workshops and opportunities for sharing with and supporting other chapters.

As MfCA looks toward the future, we continue to build long-term donors through our annual direct mail campaign to 750 supporters. MfCA also prepared proposals and applied for funding to 7 foundations and government agencies for operating costs and special projects. MfCA recruited two new members to our six member Board of Directors and started the process of identifying and recruiting an Advisory Board. We have scheduled our second board retreat for November when we will decide on priorities for 2003.