

Final Report – March 22, 2006

Recipient: LifeWise Community Projects, Inc.

Agreement Number: CH 83226201

Reporting Period: November 16, 2005 thru February 14, 2006

Agreement Project Period: 2/14/05 thru 10/31/06

Recipient Contact Person: Bruce A. Montville or Nancy J. Marden

Principal Investigator/Project Director: Bruce a. Montville

**Protecting the Health of Older Adults by Improving the Environment:
Training, Innovation, Outreach and Educational Projects**

Objective: Capacity Building

LifeWise is grateful to the U.S.EPA for funding a \$25,000.00 Assistance Grant, as a substantial part of our \$55,150.00 capacity building project - increasing the numbers of NH school students (elementary & middle school levels, grades 3 – 8) and public events, that our existing Future Water Guardians of NH program could reach and impact. All the Assistance Funds were fully dispersed as payroll expenses.

Our capacity growth was the result of **adding more safe drinking water environmental education teams to the program**. The key to the successful expansion was the creation of volunteer teams that were strategically located in different geographic sections of the state, to be able to access additional schools, which our present program had not been able to serve due to distance limitations.

Method Summary – Expansion: LifeWise identified 8 counties underserved by Future Water Guardians of NH. They are the counties of Coos, Grafton, Carroll, Sullivan, Merrimack, Belknap, Cheshire and Hillsborough. We created 3 new volunteer education teams. **These additional education teams expanded our team capability numbers to 5 and provided our Future Water Guardians of NH program a new statewide service capacity.** To build these teams, we engaged individual assistance from each of the UNH Cooperative Extension offices (they also provided the equipment) located in every county. For Older Adult volunteer recruiting, we concurrently engaged each regional office of the NH Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services, as they are in every county as well. Further recruiting outreach efforts were applied to local committees on aging, senior citizen clubs, senior publications and civic organizations.

The 3 new teams were made up of 15 newly recruited and trained volunteers. This concept is similar to that of the 2 teams previously assembled that serve Rockingham and Strafford Counties. Booking classroom presentations per team, per school, on a statewide basis took place from our offices in Hampton, NH. The ability to do this was boosted by official recognition of Future Water Guardians of NH by the NH Science Teachers Association.

Actual Work Completed

A final schedule of 86 (grant plan goal was 60) Water Guardians presentations were set and carried out, with 2 appearances scheduled beyond our project end. We have now reached 2389 students- statewide, exceeding our grant plan goal of 1380. *

* See 4th quarter report for presentation schedule attachment.

Curriculum/Content/Delivery/Measurement: Over time, our curriculum has matriculated to include: A 9 question Pre-test, designed by the NH Department of Environmental Services – this is given to each student prior to Future Water Guardians of NH presentations. It is repeated in a Post-test format following our presentations (same questions). Later, we compare the “before & after” results which always show a greatly improved knowledge-set per class. This information is entered into our database and is reported to our grant provider.* Additionally, we provide each teacher an evaluation form, which allows them to critique our presentations, make recommendations and to verify the grade level and numbers of students in attendance per presentation. Our teams generally are able to provide 2-4 free presentations per school visit.

* See 4th quarter report for test scoring attachment.

While our curriculum is designed (by Montville) for the third through eighth grade levels, we are often invited to high schools, technical colleges, public events and even Phillips Exeter Academy. We are able to deliver our program in 45 minutes per class, not including setup time. Our presentation sequence is: Introduction and explanation of the Water Cycle, interactive Watershed demonstrations using the EnviroScape Model with explanations on point and non-point source pollution, waste run-off. We quickly move to an interactive Groundwater Flow demonstration, using a water model manufactured by the University of Wisconsin. Dyes are injected into the model and the “pollution” is actually seen moving toward wells and a pond. Water is withdrawn from the wells as the dye approaches and the students quickly appreciate that groundwater moves and will carry pollution into our drinking water systems. We conclude our presentations by engaging the students in discussion on hazardous waste and disposal, along with ideas they may apply in their communities if they choose to become “Water Guardians.” Following our presentations, the teachers apply the Post-tests and return them to us.

Sustainability: LifeWise plans to continue this newly expanded program. We envision continued support from NH Dept. of Environmental Services, NH Coastal Program, DH&HS/BEAS, UNH Cooperative Extension locations and NH Science Teachers Association. Additionally we expect to gain new support from senior and civic organizations, as well as the public at large. With the new emphasis on utilizing Older Adult volunteers, it is also likely that the Federal Agency - Administration on Aging may decide to support our program. This expansion will enhance and grow the visibility and popularity of Future Water Guardians of NH, to the point that successful fundraising of many different kinds may occur.

Problems Encountered

We had hoped to increase our volunteer numbers to seven in each of our 3 new Safe Drinking Water Education Teams – having four volunteers going to each presentation, with three volunteers available as back up. Instead of engaging 21 new volunteers, we wound up with 15. However, we are optimistic for the future, as our program was new to many and as time passes, we expect our recruiting to be more successful.

Older Volunteers Benefit as Well

While many senior citizens were slow to step up as volunteers, those that did join our education teams now find themselves taking great pride in their renewed connections with communities and youth. They enjoy new bragging rights and feel the satisfaction of serving. Actually, our new senior volunteers have become our best recruiters. This program has proven to be of double value – building new self-esteem with the seniors and providing additional safe drinking water education at public events and to school students.

Conclusion: Word Has Already Spread

Interestingly, word of our Future Water Guardians of NH program has now begun to spread to many schools that we had not previously been invited to. We are starting to schedule these new schools and also inviting them to attend our workshop sponsored by the NH Science Teachers Annual Conference at Phillips Exeter Academy later this month. Our board is pleased with the results of the Assistance Grant from the EPA. LifeWise has been able to start a major capacity building program that is very much on the move.

Cordially,

Bruce A. Montville, President

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