

GLOBAL INDOOR HEALTH NETWORK

"WORKING TOGETHER FOR HEALTHY INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS"

<http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com>

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GIHN News

Information about Member Profiles

The member profiles are one way that our members get to know each other. Here's some basic information about the member profiles:

- Each member profile is written by the individual member. I am happy to help with editing, but each member writes their own story.
- I select members at random and ask if they would like to write their profile.
- The suggested length for profiles is 200 words. If they are longer, I have to use a smaller size font.
- Each person submits a photo. The photo can be of the member, their family, the family pet, favorite vacation spot, favorite sports team, etc.

If you would like to have your profile included in an upcoming edition of the Newsletter, please let me know.

Welcome New Members

We have six new members. Please join me in welcoming Rosanne, Laurie, Leslie, Adrean, Deborah and Kate.

Rosanne Averill lives in Danvers, Massachusetts. She experienced mold exposure in her home and had to sell her home after living in it for 30 years. She and her little granddaughter and the rest of her family were ill.

Laurie Gwinn is a Teacher in Helena, Oklahoma. She and her husband and their 3 young boys (ages 3, 5 and 8) are ill because of a mold problem in their home.

Leslie Haley is an Attorney in Midlothian, Virginia. She has been ill from exposure to biotoxins for 15 years.

Adrean Hayashi lives in Benicia, California. She has six children, and they are ill because of mold exposure three years ago.

Deborah Helregel lives in Lexington, Kentucky, and is ill because of mold exposure in a water-damaged building.

Kate Young lives in Eugene, Oregon. She and her husband and their five children are ill because of mold exposure in two homes.

Rosanne, Laurie, Leslie, Adrean, Deborah and Kate are joining our organization to help advance the education and awareness of this important public health issue.

*Welcome Rosanne, Laurie, Leslie,
Adrean, Deborah and Kate*

See *Dalton Employees Question Safety* on page 2

Dalton Employees Question Safety of City Courthouse

The following article is about the conditions in a courthouse in Dalton, Georgia.

Several city court employees have complained to multiple health agencies that constant roof leaks and mildew on walls and ceilings have made the municipal court building uninhabitable.

Last week, at least two city employees filed complaints about the conditions with federal and county agencies.

But city officials have known since October about the courthouse's conditions because they were given a report that contained a laundry list of problems with the building, according to documents obtained by the Times Free Press.

Employees say conditions at the Dalton Municipal Court -- formerly the Whitfield County Jail -- have been getting worse for months, but came to a head on Feb. 1 when a water pipe burst, flooding the entire two-story courthouse. A week later, court employees, who had moved to a city building with vacant offices, said they were told they had to return to the courthouse by City Judge Jim Wilbanks.

"When you walked into the door, you got smacked in the face with the mold and the mildew smell to the point where it literally suffocated you," said Corey Godzwa, the city's probation director, whose office is inside the courthouse. "But we were told it was in the people's best interest to be in the building."

"When you walked in the door, you got smacked in the face with the mold and mildew smell to the point where it literally suffocated you."



Picture of the ceiling in the Dalton Courthouse

Dalton Employees Question Safety of City Courthouse (cont'd)

Now Godzwa and probation officer Sebastian Salazar say they are "infuriated" they must work in such poor conditions and filed complaints first to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and then to the Whitfield County Environmental Health Department.

Inside the Dalton court building, the smell of mildew is strong and spots of mold can be seen along the ceiling and behind torn wallpaper. Above the entrance to the probation office, ceiling tiles are missing and air conditioning ducts and wiring are falling out.

When the pipe burst in the beginning of February, city officials said they didn't know of any other safety problems to the building. But now they admit the building wasn't fixed because the city might be making administrative changes that would eliminate city offices inside the courthouse.

After Godzwa and three other employees filed health complaints with OSHA on Friday, they were told that the federal department doesn't investigate county and state buildings. So, the complaints were given to the county health department to investigate.

[Dalton Employees Question Safety of City Courthouse](#)

See *HUD Will Intercede in Home Repairs* on page 3

HUD Will Intercede in Rochester Home Repairs

Representatives from the regional office of Housing and Urban Development say they will be investigating the complaints of a local couple regarding work done on their home through HUD's HOME program.

Foster's Sunday Citizen ran a story on the trials of Rochester homeowners Ruth and Jay Hill. The couple had work done on their home through HUD's HOME improvement program.

The couple continue to have troubles with their home including mold in their basement, a leaky roof, a furnace that currently costs the couple \$600 per month to heat the drafty house; an electrical system they say is inadequate for the needs of the house. Those problems persist, say the Hills, despite being done under the HOME program.

"HUD will investigate this story as if it's a written complaint," said Rhonda Siciliano, spokesperson for HUD.

HUD distributes HOME funds to states and local governments, where the funds are used to address local needs. In this case, HOME funds were distributed to New Hampshire Housing. NHH, in turn, distributed some of the HOME funds to the Community Action Agencies for homeowner rehabilitation projects.

[HUD Will Intercede in Rochester Home Repairs](#)



Hazardous household products



Ruth and Jay Hill seeking help from HUD

8 Known Carcinogens to Remove From Your Home

Second only to heart disease as a leading cause of death in the United States, cancer is responsible for close to 500,000 deaths per year. Many products we use in our homes contain ingredients linked to or suspected to cause cancer, not to mention other ingredients that can cause allergies, asthma, and other health problems. Poor government regulation in the face of so many chemical ingredients is to blame, but we can take charge once we know what to look for.

Luckily, it's fairly easy to replace many of these products with nontoxic options that work well and are often quite a bit cheaper. For example, you can swap out toxic cleaning products by creating a simple nontoxic cleaning kit --most of the ingredients you probably already have on hand.

Read the article to learn about these products.

- Air fresheners
- Art and craft materials
- Automotive supplies
- Dry cleaning
- Flea, tick and lice control
- Paints and varnishes
- Mothballs
- Cleaning products

[8 Known Carcinogens to Remove From Your Home](#)

See *Battling Mold Infestations* on page 4

Battling Mold Infestations

Toxic mold continues to be a problem in New York City. Last year the Department of Housing Preservation and Development issued 14,290 violations for mold in residential buildings.

It's not just older buildings that can be infested with the greenish-black mold called *Stachybotrys chartarum*, which, along with other molds, is linked with illness of the respiratory tract; some think it causes immunological and neurological problems, too. Of the roughly 500 mold cases in the city investigated each year by Microecologies, a company that identifies and seeks to resolve indoor environmental problems, one-fourth are in buildings less than five years old, where incorrectly installed plumbing or insulation has caused water damage.

"We're talking about multimillion-dollar condos," said Bill Sothorn, a certified industrial hygienist at Microecologies. "Brand-new!"

One defense against infestations is mold-resistant drywall, usually installed in places prone to water damage or leaks, like bathrooms and kitchens, or near heating and air-conditioning units. These products — trade names include DensArmor Plus from Georgia-Pacific, Gold Bond XP from National Gypsum and Fiberock from USG — typically include specially formulated paper or fiberglass coatings. They are not much more expensive than traditional drywall, which is paper-faced gypsum board. But using them during construction can save millions in remediation down the line.

The building industry may soon adopt mold-resistant drywall as a standard. Last year the Green Codes Task Force, an assemblage of architects, developers and other building experts, released a set of 111 guidelines for making New York's building codes more environmentally sound, one of which is a proposal to require mold-resistant gypsum board and cement board — even more unfriendly to mold — in areas prone to wetness. Thirteen of those guidelines have been enacted by the City Council; the mold proposal, also known as HT 7, is under consideration.

[Battling Mold Infestations](#)



Photo of a mold problem in housing in New York City

Allegations Arise of Threats Made by Top Fort Bliss Command

As KFOX has extensively reported, some soldiers and their families have had to live in deplorable conditions at Fort Bliss, dealing with black mold, lead paint and asbestos affecting the health of them and their children.

Now there are allegations of threats and intimidation by top commanders if soldiers and their families spoke out about the problems.

When Dave Hemmingsen's daughter and son-in-law moved to Fort Stewart, Ga., they moved into some of the worst housing the military has to offer.

"Their house was horrible. It had mold and mildew, it was rotting, the whole neighborhood looked horrible," said Hemmingsen.

Hemmingsen started a Facebook Web page about the problems, and on the discussion board there, he started hearing about similar issues at Fort Bliss.

"If they posted something, somebody showed up at their door within about an hour and told them to get it off of the Facebook page," Hemmingsen told KFOX.

Hemmingsen said several dozen families have moved out of sub-standard living conditions in the last few months at Fort Bliss, and he hoped that continues.

See Kane County Repairs Foreclosed Homes on page 5

Kane County Uses Stimulus Money to Repair Empty, Foreclosed Homes

With 3,900 foreclosures in the first six months of 2010, Kane County knew it had a problem.

When county officials took a closer look, they realized the problem wasn't just people losing their homes. Once lost, those homes were sitting untended for months at a time.

Lawns grew into jungles. Moisture festered into black mold so thick it looked like the insides of some of the homes had caught on fire.

Rot became ruin. Homes that families had once cried over losing had now become structures no one wanted to buy, much less live in.

In a neighborhood with a house no one wants, other homes suffer both in their value and in their ability to be redeveloped or sold.

In Kane County, leaders decided to tap into federal funds to bite off a chunk of the foreclosed homes in the area proving to be the biggest stumbling block to revitalization after the housing bubble burst.

That's where the federal stimulus plan came into play. Part of the stimulus was \$2 billion for a "Neighborhood Stabilization Program."

Kane County applied for some of the money. It received about \$2.6 million to purchase and repair foreclosed, vacant housing and get it back on the market.

Berger said the beauty of the program is the extra caution taken to ensure the rehabbed homes don't end up in the vast foreclosure pool a second time. All potential buyers must qualify as a middle-income family to be eligible to purchase the homes. That equals a household income of about \$90,000 for a family of four. But that family must also attend a four-part, eight-hour homebuyer course to fully understand the financial obligations and paths to help if needed.

Kane County's foreclosure remodeling projects

All the homes listed below were once foreclosed properties in such bad condition even private contractors looking to turn a quick profit didn't want to touch them. Now they are either remodeled and for sale or soon will be.

Carpentersville

- Del Rio Road
- Cherokee Road
- Ash Street
- Plymouth Circle
- Madera Circle
- Berkley Street
- Evergreen Lane

South Elgin

- East Harvard
- East Plum Street
- Spring Street

St. Charles

- Moore Avenue

North Aurora

- East Arrowhead

Aurora Township

- South Kendall Street

Source: Kane County



Kane County Uses Stimulus Money to Repair Empty, Foreclosed Homes (cont'd)

To sweeten the deal, the county is offering qualified homebuyers a \$20,000 no-interest loan to help with the purchase. The loan is only repaid when the purchaser leaves and sells the home to a new buyer.

And, just like that, homes that neither buyer nor developer would once touch will soon become hot items on the real estate market, Berger said.

"This work brightened up so many people," Lindgren said. "It really gave us hope in our community."

[Kane County Uses Stimulus Money to Repair Empty, Foreclosed Homes](#)

Indoor Air Pollutants Cause 50% of Illnesses Globally

Mr. Ebenezer Fiahagbe, a Senior Programme Officer of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), has said indoor pollution has been among the top five environmental risks to public health which also contributes to an annual 8.5 million deaths globally.

He said this at a seminar organized by the Environmental Science Student's Association (ENSSA) of the University of Cape Coast, as part of its annual week celebration on the theme "Our Environment, Our Life, Our Responsibility".

Mr. Fiahagbe said some indoor pollutants like carpets, detergent, asbestos ceiling, lead paints, stoves, disinfectants, dust and mites causes lung related illnesses like asthma, bronchitis, coughing, respiratory infections and cancer.

He said an individual's time spent is usually indoors which exposes everybody to the risk of suffering from convulsion, coma and unconsciousness due to indoor pollutant like the presence of lead in paints, drinking water, roofing sheets and carbon oxide from stoves, heater and chimneys.

Others include indoor pollutants like radon gases in walls and formaldehyde-based plywood and concrete walls also causes cancer, unconsciousness, cardiovascular diseases, headache, dizziness, burning sensation in eyes and throat, muscle spasms and vertigo.

Mr. Fiahagbe said the World Health Organization (WHO) stated in a recent report that over 300,000 lung-related deaths are recorded annually with indoor pollutants like smoke from tobacco, pesticides, mold, mildew and dust mites which have been identified as a major cause.

[Indoor Air Pollutants Cause 50% of Illnesses Globally](#)

Next Newsletter: Friday, March 11, 2011

"Indoor air pollution has been among the top five environmental risks to public health which also contributes to an annual 8.5 million deaths globally."

GIHN on Facebook

GIHN is now on Facebook. Michael Roland Williams created a Facebook page for our organization.

Please check it out and let me know if you have ideas for other things we can add to our Facebook page. And, please invite your friends to check it out.



Quick Links

Website: <http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com>

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Health Effects:
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Research Committee:
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Working Together for Healthy Indoor Environments