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## Good Neighbor Iowa: Progress Report to the Ceres Trust on Accomplishments 2017

University of Northern Iowa. Center for Energy & Environmental Education.

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# Progress Report to the Ceres Trust on Accomplishments of Good Neighbor Iowa

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## **Overall Goal:**

Launch a statewide public education campaign to significantly reduce and eliminate pesticide use in schools, parks, childcare centers, churches, businesses, and all other large expanses of turf in communities throughout Iowa.

## **Iowa Statewide Partners Assisting Our Work:**

Backyard Abundance  
New Pioneer Food Co-op  
Iowa Master Gardeners  
Iowa Stormwater Education Partnership  
100 Granny's in Iowa City  
Interfaith Green Coalition  
Iowa4Cs Community Coordinated Child Care  
National Program for Playground Safety  
Des Moines Water Works  
Des Moines' Blank Park Zoo  
Iowa Department of Natural Resources  
UNI Tallgrass Prairie Center  
Beyond Pesticides  
Midwest Pesticide Action Center  
Pesticide Action Network North America

## **Formal Endorsements from Iowa Entities:**

Iowa Public Health Association  
Black Hawk County Board of Health  
Iowa Organic Association  
Iowa Rivers Revival

## Major Accomplishments in 2017:

- Planned and officially launched Good Neighbor Iowa on April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2017 in cedar Falls, Iowa with a few hundred people in attendance
- Launched Good Neighbor Iowa website <https://goodneighbor Iowa.org/> featuring stories of success as well as resources useful to entities we are trying to reach
- **3** Iowa school districts (total of 33 schools) committed to manage 232 acres of their lawns pesticide-free. As a result a total of 16,011 students in these schools are not exposed to lawn herbicides.
- **29** childcare centers, serving 1,698 children committed to manage their lawns without pesticides.
- **29** Iowa institutions (such as the Blank Park Zoo in Des Moines, and other businesses) committed to manage some 75 acres of turf pesticide-free.
- **154** city, county and state parks mowed areas, a total of 4,430 acres, have been committed to pesticide-free management.
- A total **254** locations have committed **4,857 acres** of lawn to pesticide-free management.
- Based on 2017 commitments of lawn acres managed without pesticides, we estimate 4,095 pounds of 2,4-D, 1003 pounds of MCP, and 211 pounds of dicamba, **a total of 5,300 pounds of active ingredients of pesticides** not applied to Iowa's urban watersheds.
- **12** University Northern Iowa students were offered Conservation Corps fellowships to work on Good Neighbor Iowa. **53** students in **3** classes learned about and delivered Good Neighbor Iowa outreach to communities.
- Worked to build local leadership in **5** community across Iowa.
- Program staff and students attended and presented at **39** events reaching **31,175** Iowans.
- In December 2017, hired Audrey Tran Lam, MPH to manage Good Neighbor Iowa.

## In the works for 2018:

Below are both short- and long-term goals for 2018 and beyond. Priority areas include increasing both statewide *outreach* and *visibility*, further *develop program networks and partnerships*, and *translating the public health science*.

### Intensify Outreach to Schools and Childcare Facilities

- Hone focus on schools, addressing not only on-site spraying policies, but also agricultural drift:
  - From foundational work from our partners in ScienceInTheMedia.org, Good Neighbor Iowa recognizes that schools are particularly vulnerable. A

significant majority (90%) of Iowa school buildings are located within 2000ft of agricultural fields—the pesticide drift “danger zone.”

- Construct ready-to-implement toolkits for schools and childcare centers for both indoor and outdoor pesticide reduction. The goal is for these kits to include signs, boilerplate pesticide application and use policy, lawn care guide, information on money saved/children not exposed, and possibly turf-to-prairie conversion statistics (detailing soil health, water holding capacity, pollinator/habitat support, education on resiliency, etc.)
- Utilize the existing relationship between Iowa county health departments and schools to enhance programmatic partnerships and networks.

### **Increase Program Visibility to Iowans**

- Develop a strong media communication plan and campaign (based on database of evidence and the Precautionary Principle) that draws analogies to past public health and ecological health triumphs and champions. (Second-hand smoking, DDT, etc.). Continue work with ScienceInTheMedia.org.
- Empowering community champions to secure Good Neighbor Iowa commitments in many communities. Act as a broker between school and community groups.
- Highlight and recognize the accomplishments of committed entities and partners (parent groups, watersheds, institutions, schools, etc.) by drawing up letters of support, and presenting awards given by University of Iowa’s Center for Energy and Environmental Education.
- Generate resources for positive attributes and qualities of a diverse lawn, including pollinator habitat and cost savings.
- Provide hands-on, community-centered learning opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students at UNI.

### **Strengthen Statewide Network of those Working on Pesticides Research and Pesticide Alternatives**

- Continue building a strong network of statewide partners, including, but not limited to, environmental and conservation groups, public health departments, concerned parent coalitions, victims of drift and other afflicted parties, etc.
- Distinguish Good Neighbor Iowa as a hub for pesticide reduction collaboration; host meetings between scientists, partners, grounds keepers, etc. to increase transparency in research and to facilitate translation into communities.

- Host several workshops for school grounds staff and park officials on pesticide-free turf management with a specific focus on athletic fields; distribute research and describe positive attributes and qualities of a diverse lawn, including pollinator habitat, environmental impact and carbon sequestration, and cost savings.
- Establish Good Neighbor Iowa as an objective resource for Iowans. Every step to reduce pesticide application and childhood exposure is a success.

### **Communicate Public Health Science on Pesticides and Child Health with Policy Makers, Parents, and Other Influential Parties**

- Continue to develop a solid database of public health evidence; quantify childhood and in utero exposure, and describe exposure effects on health throughout the life course.
- Create literature (factsheets, and other handouts) with jargon and information specific to target entities: schools, childcare centers, parks, pediatricians, and other institutions.