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www.kanehealth.com

Healthy Places Coalition earns two awards for radon awareness work

The Kane County Healthy Places Coalition recently has been recognized with two awards for its efforts in raising awareness of the dangers of radon.

One of the awards, presented June 18, is the Award of Merit from the Illinois Public Health Association, which is given to any individual, group of individuals or agency who have or has made an outstanding contribution of major significance to the public health movement. The other award, the Excellence in Radon Award, was presented earlier this year and comes from the Illinois Emergency Management Agency for education and outreach efforts about radon risks and prevention.

High levels of radon, which is a colorless, odorless, tasteless radioactive gas, have been found in more than 40 percent of homes tested for radon in Illinois. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), radon is the second-leading cause of lung cancer in the nation. However, for non-smokers, radon is the leading cause of lung cancer.

The following is a list of highlights of the activities of the Kane County Healthy Places Coalition that earned the awards:

- Developed and piloted an awareness kit for physicians to encourage their patients to test their homes for radon
- Established a free radon testing program for low income home owners that linked to remediation assistance if testing indicated the need.
- Developed radon test kit sales to the general public and promoted opportunities to purchase test kits at many local vendors.
- Established a Radon Speakers Bureau that offers radon presentations to the general public and to groups or organizations
- Collaborated with all the public libraries in Kane County during January, Radon Awareness Month, to offer an informational display to educate the public about radon and how to test their homes

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- Hosted a traveling Radon Display to be used at local health fairs and community events to educate the public about radon and how to test their homes
- Provided radon education and technical assistance to child care centers.
- Promoted radon awareness and need for testing homes by creating and distributing radon flyers, book marks, and stall street journals
- Featured radon at the Kane County Children’s Environmental Conference in October
- Created a webpage for the Healthy Places Coalition and Radon Information for the public, including local data

In collaboration with the AOK All Our Kids Early Childhood Coalition, the Making Kane County Fit for Kids Campaign, the US EPA, and the UIC School of Public Health, the Kane County Healthy Places Coalition also hosted the first Children’s Environmental Health Conference with over 200 people in attendance. The Coalition has completed a data matrix of environmental indicators with the assistance of the University of Illinois School of Public Health. The coalition also completed a two year partnership with the US EPA Second Largest City Initiative.

The Coalition is formed by participants from diverse aspects of the community, including the US Environmental Protection Agency, the Kane County health department, municipal governments, hospitals, fire departments, community advocacy groups, non-profits, private corporations, and many others. Meetings of the Coalition take place on the first Wednesdays of even months from 9 am-11 am at the Kane County Government Center Building A, Lower Level auditorium located at 719 S. Batavia Avenue Geneva IL 60134. The public is welcome to join us at our next meeting on August 7, 2013. More information about the Coalition is available by calling Terry Roman at 630-264-7653 or by visiting www.kanehealth.com/healthy_places.htm .

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