

Toxic Legacy: Cleveland's Lead Crisis and the Individuals Working to Solve It

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Project Objectives

The objective and purpose of this documentary project is to raise awareness for the issue of lead poisoning in a way that is local, comprehensive, and informative. It has an aim to showcase collaboration between citizens, local government, coalitions, and non-profit organizations in Cleveland in their advocacy for victims of lead poisoning and systematic change. I hope to engage my audience in comprehending the intersections of environmental injustice, specifically within the lens of the issue of lead poisoning and to garner compassion and support for victims and action.

Current Contributors

Howard Schott, hschott@laurelschool.org, Director of the Capstone Program at Laurel School

Angela Yeager, ayeager@laurelschool.org, Director of the Environmental Justice Semester at Laurel School

Moe Taylor, moe.taylor.director@braindaggerfilms.com, Founder of Brain Dagger Films

Robin Brown, projectinfo216@gmail.com, Director of CCOAL

Chris Maurer, chris@redhousestudio.net, Founder of Redhouse Architecture Studio

Krista Afumbom, +1 (952)-356-4684, mother of a victim

Rachel Dissell, rachel@signalcleveland.org, Reporter for Signal Cleveland, author of the *Toxic Neglect* series

David Margolius, DMargolius@clevelandohio.gov, Director of Public Health for Cleveland

Kim Foreman, kim@ehw.org, Director of the Environmental Health Watch, Founder of LeadSafeCle

Rachel Maurer, rmaurer@clevelandcitycouncil.org, Cleveland City Councilwoman - Ward 12, former lawyer for CLASH (Cleveland Lead Advocates for Safe Housing)

Project Timeline

Winter 2024: After finishing a semester at Laurel's first Environmental Justice program, I felt a desire to continue learning about environmental injustice within Cleveland and the networks of change and

advocacy that have worked for decades to combat these systemic inequities. I began reading about lead poisoning in Cleveland and attempting to understand its legacy in an intersectional lens. I researched and began making a list of key characters of my understanding of sustainable development and lead poisoning remediation in Cleveland.

Spring 2024: I reached out to Robin Brown of CCOAL as well as Chris Maurer of Redhouse Architecture Studio both of whom I met in my time at the semester. In this time, I completed interviews and footage with Robin and Chris and began editing their footage. I partnered with Moe Taylor of Brain Dagger Films, a pro-bono film studio. He continues to mentor me in the filming and editing logistics of the documentary process. In this time, I also reached out to Kim Foreman, the CEO of the Environmental Health Watch, and Krista Afumbom, a nurse and mother of a child who had been lead poisoned in Lakewood.

Summer 2024: I completed interviews with Krista Afumbom and Kim Foreman. Kim Foreman directed me to David Margolius, the public director of Cleveland, and Rachel Dissell, a reporter credited with bringing attention to the issue of lead poisoning in Cleveland in 2016. David Margolius introduced me to Rebecca Maurer, who worked as a lawyer to convince the city to address the issue of lead poisoning and now serves as a City Councilwoman who continues to work on this issue. I wrapped filming on the documentary at the end of August.

Winter/Spring 2024-25: I plan to have the documentary finalized by May 1st, 2025 and show it to my school community.

Potential Showings

CCOAL event

City Club event

Laurel School