

Press Release

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Contact: Doug Wood, Associate Director, Grassroots (516) 883-0887

Long Island School Turf Managers Learn How To Do It Without Pesticides

*New state law bans pesticides on school grounds;
turf managers get free professional training*

(Port Washington) Grassroots Environmental Education, a non-profit environmental health organization based in Port Washington, will conduct a series of natural turf management courses for school personnel at eight locations around the State during the month of January, beginning with a program in Islip on January 13th.

"We're carrying through on a promise we made to New York State Legislators last spring," says Associate Director Doug Wood who helped design the training program with nationally-recognized turf expert Chip Osborne. "We told the legislators in Albany that if they passed a law prohibiting pesticides on school grounds, Grassroots would train school personnel in natural turf management for free. They did their part by passing the law; now it's our turn."

The full-day course covers all aspects of natural turf management and is designed to help schools develop and maintain beautiful, resilient playing fields without the use of chemical pesticides. Recent advances in microbiology and product technology, including compost tea, have brought the cost of natural turf management down below the cost of traditional chemical management.

New York's law banning turf pesticides was the first of its kind in the country, covering all school grounds, K-12 including day care centers. Connecticut has legislation for grades K-8, and Maine, New Hampshire and New Jersey are considering similar measures.

"This is a great example of government and the non-profit community working together for the benefit of the people of the State of New York," says Assemblyman Steve Englebright, one of the sponsors of the legislation. "I am very pleased to see Grassroots embarking on this important mission to help ensure the success of this legislation. By providing professional training to all

school systems in New York at no cost to taxpayers, Grassroots is providing an outstanding service."

"The new Child Safe Playing Fields law is an important step in protecting the health of the children of New York State," says Assemblyman Robert K. Sweeney, Chair of the Environmental Conservation Committee. "Exposure to chemical pesticides by children has been linked to a wide range of health problems ranging from skin and digestive tract irritation to heart palpitations and neurological ailments. Grassroots should be commended for offering training to any school district in New York State at no cost to taxpayers."

As with many environmental toxins, children are particularly at risk from exposure to pesticides. The legislation in New York was enacted just weeks after the President's Cancer Panel Report issued a statement saying *"the true burden of environmentally induced cancers has been grossly underestimated,"* and reflects a growing consensus among environmental health experts that chronic, low-level exposures to certain chemicals can have serious impacts on the health of children.

"It's not the dose that makes the poison anymore," says Dr. Leo Trasande, Assistant Director for the Center for Children's Health and the Environment at Mount Sinai School of Medicine. *"It's the exposure to a wide array of environmental chemicals, even at the lowest levels of exposure, that can harm children's health."*

Qualified personnel from every school district and private school in the state are eligible to take the course. For more information, contact Grassroots at (516) 883-0887 or visit the web site at www.Grassrootsinfo.org.

About Grassroots:

Grassroots Environmental Education is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization based in New York. Grassroots educates the public about the links between common environmental exposures and human health, and the seeks to empower individuals to act as catalysts for change within their own communities. Grassroots has been recognized by the U. S. EPA for several of its innovative programs, including The ChildSafe School, How Green Is My Town and the Grassroots Healthy Lawn Program. More information is available on the organization's web site, www.GrassrootsInfo.org.