

Press Release

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Connecticut School Turf Managers Learn How To Do It Without Pesticides

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

Grassroots Environmental Education, a national environmental health non-profit organization, announced today that it will conduct a series of professional turf training programs for school turf managers in Connecticut to help them comply with the state's new law prohibiting the use of chemical pesticides on school playing fields for grades K-8 and daycare centers. The law, "*An Act Banning Pesticide Use on School Grounds*," went into effect July 1st.

"Some turf managers still believe that you have to use pesticides to maintain great sports fields, but that's old thinking," says Doug Wood, Associate Director of Grassroots. "Once they come to our training and learn about the recent advances in soil science and microbiology, they understand how it's possible to have beautiful, drought- and pest-resistant fields without using toxic pesticides that can seriously impact children's health and the environment."

Connecticut's law banning turf pesticides was the first of its kind in the country. New York State followed, banning them on all school grounds, K-12 including day care centers. Other states are considering similar measures. Grassroots is conducting training programs in both New York and Connecticut to help ensure the success of the new laws.

"We're here in Connecticut working with other environmental and health groups to make sure this historic, child-protective legislation really works," says Lauren Hughes, Policy Director for Grassroots. "Many schools in the Northeast have already made the switch to organic playing fields. We're here to help make that happen for schools in Connecticut."

The full-day professional training programs, conducted by nationally-recognized natural turf expert Charles ("Chip") Osborne, will all take place between September 21 and September 30th at six different locations around the state:

Greenwich, Litchfield, New London, Hartford, Branford and Pomfret. Dates and times of the training programs, as well as a promo video and course description, are available at www.grassrootsinfo.org/ghlpcttraining.html. Registration is free for one person from each school or district in the State.

There is mounting evidence that exposure to pesticides is linked to an increased risk of cancer, neurological problems, birth defects and asthma. As with many environmental toxins, children are particularly at risk. The new legislation in Connecticut went into effect 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."

Funds for the Grassroots training programs are being provided by foundations and individuals that support the work of Grassroots.

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.