

EPA grant will help area ID health hazards

A pastor at Scott United Methodist Church drew attention to pollution
Indiana's business journal 10/27/08

The project quickly hit a roadblock. The chemical microbeology had been discovered at a nearby business, and workers discovered it had traveled to the church property at 21st Street and Andrew J. Brown Avenue.

Martindale-Brightwood resident Eliza both Gore was president of the neighborhood's community development corporation at the time. The CDC had just entered a partnership to build new homes at 19th and Yandes streets, Martindale on the Monon. She realized the neighborhood would never be revitalized if residents didn't tackle its environmental problems.

"You're not going to get people to come when there's soil problems, and you're not going to be able to build new homes," she said.

Gore credits Wilkins, who has since moved, with the formation of the Martindale-Brightwood Environmental Justice Collaborative. She succeeded the pastor as chairwoman. "We're just not going to stop until we can make the quality of life better," she said.

Residents have shared the neighborhood with heavy industry for generations. Lead poisoning among Martindale-Brightwood children is 12 percent, a rate that's three times the Marion County average, and 12 times the national average.

This year, the environmental justice group enlisted the help of Janet McCabe, executive director of Indianapolis-based Improving Kids' Environment, to apply for a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The local proposal was one of 18 selected from a field of 189, McCabe said. The \$97,840 CARE grant is designed to help building neighborhood-based activists.

With the grant, McCabe said, residents will hire an expert to review the multitude of environmental studies done over the years, and help them zero in on the biggest threats. Martindale-Brightwood residents made an important discovery, she said. "Not only is it affecting people's health, but it's affecting our ability to grow economically."

Four years ago, the Rev. Kay Wilkins was applying for a loan to renovate Scott United Methodist Church's youth center in the blighted Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood.

Story behind the gift:

GIFT: \$97,840

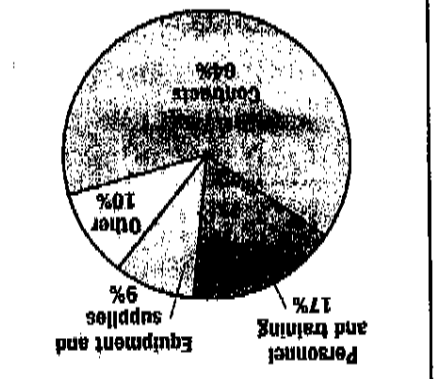
AWARDED BY: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

RECIPIENTS: Martindale-Brightwood Environmental Justice Collaborative and Improving Kids' Environment

PURPOSE: The Community Action for a Renewed Environment grant allows neighborhood groups to hire experts who can help them identify leading health hazards. Martindale Brightwood has several sources of pollution. A consultant will synthesize data collected over the years by federal, state and local agencies, and present it to residents.

MORE INFORMATION: www.ikecoalition.org

GRANT BUDGET: \$97,840



Source: Improving Kids' Environment



By Photo/Staff

Recorder

Friday, October 17, 2008

EPA awards local groups major grants

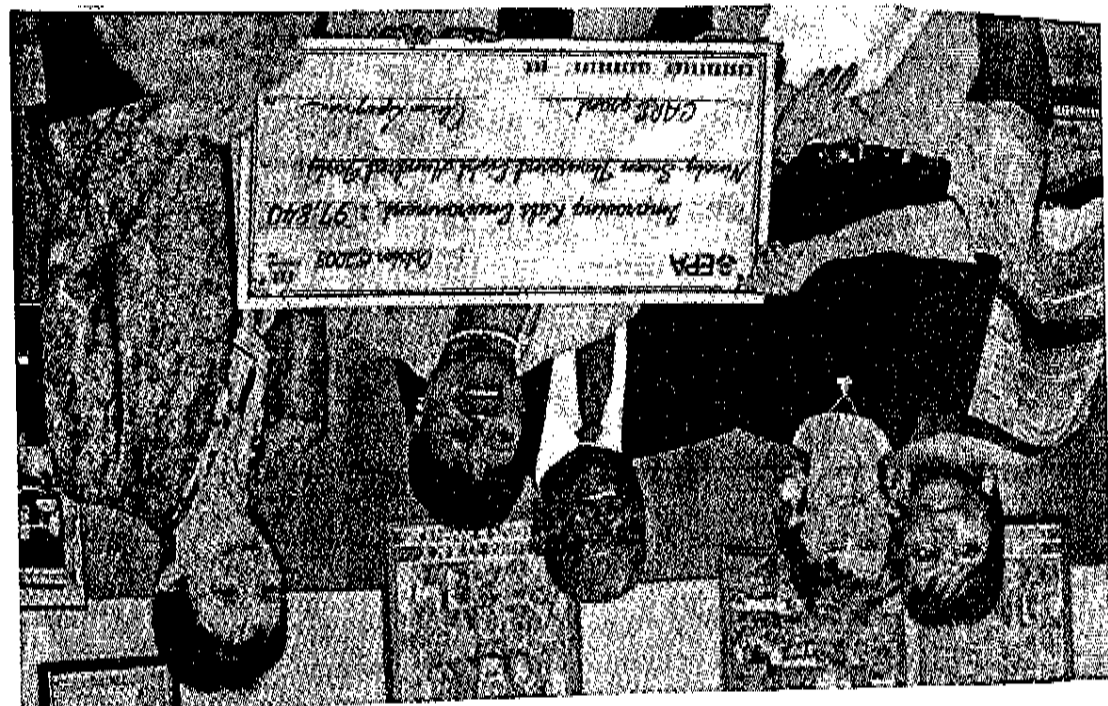
of environmental hazards they may face, es- We want people in our community to be aware and quality of life in Martindale-Brightwood.

"We are committed to improving our health experts in environmental issues. The knowledge necessary to become their own will provide a forum for participants to gain Conference in March 2009. The conference to sponsor a statewide Environmental Justice from the United Methodist Church Federation The MBEJC also received a \$27,000 grant

for children's environmental health. Indianapolis-based organization that advo- occurs. Improving Kids' Environment is an the neighborhood and ensuring remediation responsible for causing health hazards in environmental racism and identify parties has been working since 2004 to address environmental health hazards. The MBEJC bring \$97,840 into the community to identify largest grant in the MBEJC's history and will for a Renewed Environment grant. This is the recipients of a U.S. EPA Community Action proving kids' Environment have been named tal Justice Collaborative (MBEJC) and Im-

The Martindale-Brightwood Environmen- Caroline Ave, Indianapolis 46218. for the Martindale-Brightwood area, 1970 N. Christian Center, the neighborhood center ment. The event was held at the Edna Martin Collaborative and Improving Kids' Environ- tndale-Brightwood Environmental Justice Wednesday to award \$97,840 to the Mar- Protection Agency were in Indianapolis Officials from the U.S. Environmental

Elissa Speizman (right), senior policy advisor for the United States Environmen- tal Protection Agency, presents a check for \$97,840 to members of Martindale- Brightwood Environmental Justice Collaborative (MBEJC) and Improving Kids' Environment at the Edna Martin Christian Center. The funds will be used to iden- tify health hazards on the near Northeast side. (Photo/J. Hurst)



- The U.S. EPA grant will be used for the following:
- Compile and analyze environmental data
 - Hold workshops for the community on environmental health topics
 - Build organizational capacity to effectively address environmental issues
 - Prioritize the most critical environmental health issues

The MBEJC has worked collaboratively with the Marion County Health Department, City of Indianapolis Brownfield program, and other organizations to bring attention to environmental hazards in the community, including lead contamination from years of industrial activity. MBEJC and IKE will be partners on the grant that is earmarked for the Martindale-Brightwood community. "Knowledge is power," said Janet McCabe, Executive Director of Improving Kids' Envi- ronment. "This grant will empower the resi- dents of Martindale-Brightwood to identify the most critical local environmental health problems and give them the tools to really make a difference."