

The ALPHA Files

American Lead Poisoning Help Association, Inc.

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Adorable yet Toxic: Lead in Toys

On October 26 during Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, the Burlington County Health Department (NJ) teamed up with the American Lead Poisoning Help Association, Inc. and NITON Thermo-Electric to sponsor a blood lead screening and toy testing event at the WIC clinic. Bill Radosevich, in his 5th state in as many days, tested toys, coffee mugs and other items for three hours with a state-of-the-art Thermo Scientific NITON XL3t X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF).

Items that tested positive for lead included: the **Webkinz** charm "Zingoz" – it was more than two times the allowable limit by the Consumer Product Safety



Baby Einstein Discover & Play Color Block

Commission, testing at 1219 parts per million; levels higher than 600 are considered hazardous. The yellow glaze tested positive for lead (pictured on page 2).

A pregnant mother brought in a set of Baby Einstein Discover & Play Color Blocks. The blue Baby Einstein Block was recalled by CPSC 10/4/07; however, the blue one we tested did not contain lead. The yellow one with the *quacking* vinyl ducky tested at 3871 parts per million, almost six and a half times the CPSC limit.

On 11/18/07, The Chicago Tribune published their findings on: "vinyl-like products that contained lead exceeding the state limit, including the yellow Baby Einstein block. An additional test done for the Tribune showed that lead on the block's duck could seep out if ingested by a child. That would trigger further review of the product by the federal safety commission..." <http://tinyurl.com/2pq6rp> The distributor, Kids II Inc., provided the Tribune one lab report, which the company said showed no hazard. The yellow blocks purchased by the Tribune, and the blocks that were tested in Mt Holly, NJ were not recalled items, yet... **Parents, be aware!**



Above: ALPHA Treasurer Marian Johnson, Thermo-Electric Scientist Bill Radosevich, ALPHA founder Leann Howell and Burlington County Lead Nurse Rebecca Lim-Chua 10/26/07 at the Burlington County WIC clinic toy testing event

Other non-recalled items that tested positive for lead included:

- Rubber mouthpieces for many scuba snorkels
- A new toddler's teething ring
- Imported pottery from France
- Several office coffee mugs
- Pumpkin pie plate from Kohl's
- Promotional vinyl baby bottle bag
- Hallmark Halloween votive candle holders

Wash your hands thoroughly after putting up holiday lights. One light strand tested positive at 3594 parts per million—read the warning labels on these products this year!



ALPHA Incorporation Updates

On October 12, 2007, the award-winning American Lead Poisoning Help Association filed for and received our Certificate of Incorporation in the state of New Jersey making ALPHA a national organization. ALPHA initially started in November 2005, has a Board of Trustees in place, and according to the bylaws, will maintain at least 50% of the

board as relatives of lead-poisoned children. ALPHA is filing for 501(c)3 with the IRS as tax-exempt in early 2008. www.alphalead.org/About_Us.htm

ALPHA is currently raising funds to defray start-up costs, and for a \$10 donation, plus \$2 shipping and handling, the donor will receive a 1st edition Today's New Lead: Sources You May Already Own® a slideshow presentation, com-

plete with color images of recalled items and on-line information from September 24, 2007 through June 2000. It is designed to be used at health fairs, waiting rooms or other outreach education opportunities; *This slideshow will be updated again in April 2008.* For more information: www.alphalead.org/recall_cd_info.htm

The Battle of the Mission Repository: No Small Potatoes

Lead issues have long plagued entire communities as a result of mining, smelting or other production of lead products. One of the worst locations for lead contamination is in the Coeur d'Alene (pronounced *Core-delay-n*) mining district (CDA), Idaho, our 43rd state. The Bunker Hill mine was one of the richest lead producing mines in the US. There are hundreds of mines in Shoshone County Idaho, most are inactive at this time but several that are still mining; this is one of the richest heavy metal mining areas in the world, and has produced billions in mining production.

Bunker Hill is also a Superfund Site, which is a site where toxic wastes have been dumped and the EPA has designated them to be cleaned up. According to the EPA, the Coeur d'Alene-Spokane River Basin contains "significant measurable risks currently exist to humans". Due to over 100 years of mining impacting the area, lead contamination in surface water "as much as 90 times exceeds" EPA standards. 300,000 citizens live within a 1,500 square mile area beginning at the Montana border and extending into Washington State, with over 166 miles of CDA River corridor, downstream water bodies, fill areas, adjacent

floodplains and tributaries that are contaminated and "the most heavily impacted areas are devoid of aquatic life."

Now, knowing all this, imagine turning a National Historic Landmark into a toxic waste dump.

As a result of the contamination, children in this area have blood lead levels above the national CDC standards, and "one of every four children tested outside the 21 sq. mile "box" is found to have an elevated lead and are now lead poisoned. Numerous

children in the Bunker Hill site are also still being tested a routine began in about 1974 and are found with elevated lead levels.

Now, knowing all this, imagine turning a National Historic Landmark into a toxic waste dump. Unfortunately, such thoughts are becoming reality, as the future of the Old Mission Repository, officially known as the Mission of the Sacred Heart, is at stake. It was built by the Coeur d'Alene and Flathead Native American tribes and Jesuits Catholic in the late 1800s, and one of Idaho's gems. And it is also on the Environmental Protection Agency's list to hold more than 600,000 cubic yards of toxic mine waste at the site. The agencies estimated that

the pile will be more than 60 feet tall in 20-30 years, and that there will be additional health concerns, ranging from blowing dust to the location in a flood plain, or simply that only 30% of the plan is completed.

Lead is a daily nightmare in Idaho, and this is just another example of how seri-



Photo: Barbara Miller. Utility wires located 40 feet in height that may get raised to 60 feet because of a toxic waste dump in northern Idaho.

ous lead issues can be dismissed, despite the far-reaching effects of the problem. CDA is not the only smelter or mining community which deals with the daily effects of lead. For more information on Idaho's lead problem, visit www.silvervalleyaction.com or contact Barbara at paccrcco@imbris.com or 208-784-8891. Visit alphalead.org/Idaho.htm for complete article and citations.



Other items that tested positive for lead at the October 26 testing event included a set of dishes recently from France, Hallmark Halloween candle votives, ink on a promotional Frisbee, random pieces of Dora accessories. Also pictured are (2) promotional items, one for lead testing, one for babies, that tested positive. In the center is the NITON XRF.

Thanks for listening, I'm happy that finally I can speak to different parents about this. I don't know anyone else that has lead poisoning. LM



Dr. Herbert Needleman, M.D. Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the National Mid-Year Conference on Eliminating Childhood Lead Poisoning in Philadelphia October 4, 2007, pictured here with Leann and Dr. Bruce Lanphear, Professor of Pediatrics Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center.

Lead-Safe Holiday Gift Ideas

Lead has become quite the media item lately, with all the recent toy recalls becoming mind-numbing to those of us who have dealt with lead in our children. ***It is important to remember, however, that the greatest risk to children remains lead dust, created by the deterioration or removal of old paint.*** What toys are safe to buy children this year?

...the advantages of raising a child lead-safe, priceless.

Give them a ball, a Frisbee, hiking boots, a bike, skis, a sled; we need to get the children outside and playing in the fresh air

again. More activity would be great for this overweight and asthmatic generation of children.

Our children know how to operate our computers, cell phones and other gizmos and gadgets better than we do; CDs, DVDs, cameras or games might be good options. An annual magazine subscription for a child would last a lot longer, as would a family membership to the zoo, aquarium, theater, local park or YMCA. Savings bonds,

gift cards, books and cash are always safe gifts. Amish and other old world craftsmen are creating toxin-free toys that cost more than imports; however, the advantages of raising a child lead-safe, priceless.

Unfortunately, some of the most adorable imported toys tend to be the most toxic toys in small children's hands. There is no safe level of lead in the human body. It is impossible to identify lead in toys without additional testing. Ask your doctor to test your child for lead to be sure. Be lead smart!

www.ALPHALead.org

<http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/ALPHALEAD>

<http://groups.myspace.com/ALPHALEAD>

Other lead exposures, from Leadnet October 9, 2007

FYI -I do some work in glass myself, and my glass supplier has noted that there is a extremely high lead content in the professional-grade of PAINT that some folks use to enhance stained glass. If there are any crafters who are involved in restoring old church windows or are painting scenes on stained glass, they should look into this type of hobby-related exposure. This is not the same type of paint that hobbyists can buy in craft stores to decorate glass -- that's usually an acrylic.

Carol Kawecki

The National Indoor Environmental Health & Technologies Conference returns to Charleston, SC April 1-4, 2008. ALPHA would like to have a strong parent presence; if there is any way possible for you to attend, please plan to go. Let Leann know as soon as possible.

The American Lead Poisoning Help Association, Inc. will have our 501(c)3 application filed with the IRS by the beginning of 2008, which means that donations will be tax deductible.

Please consider sponsoring a parent to attend the Charleston conference.

The ALPHA Files

Is a quarterly publication for families addressing lead poisoning.

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Please feel free to make copies and distribute this newsletter within your communities.

For more information, contact
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You are not alone anymore ...

ALPHA—Incorporated at Last! *Continued from page 1*

The mission of the American Lead Poisoning Help Association, Inc. is to raise awareness about lead poisoning, and to provide a national support network for families affected by lead. ALPHA currently has 22 involved through the MySpace group site, 55 on the Yahoo group site, and has contacts in 28 different states.

Upcoming ALPHA enhancements will include:

- a link on the site for on-line donations, and
- an 800 number to help reach more families who need support.

There are support networks for just about everything but lead poisoned families. The need exists, unfortunately, and families are reaching out for help, and need to know that they are not alone anymore...



Lead dust from old paint is the primary source for exposures, especially during renovations.

Thanks so much for all your help! It is sooo great to not feel so alone in all this. We were completely blindsided by this. I will take all the advice I can get. This at times seems so overwhelming! Thanks so



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Lead Parents in the News and on the 'net

Lead is rapidly getting more attention with every recall, or flood of recalls, and parents are frequently interviewed to provide realism to the stories. The following is a list of articles recently in the news involving parents of lead poisoned children:

<http://leadsafety.angieslist.com/media/leadfeatureangieslist.pdf> Angie's List October 2007 "Lead's Painful Legacy." Interviews with Tamara Rubin, Shannell Wim-bush, Margaret Bentley and Leann Howell on lead paint renovation nightmares.

www.usatoday.com/news/health/2007-10-28-lead-illinois_N.htm Amanda's Story. Sarah Taylor is an inspiration for us all to follow and guide. Amanda's venous level was **136 mcg/dl** last year. And to quote Sarah, "No, that is not a typo."

<http://tinyurl.com/2kz553>—Sarah and Amanda on local news Halloween night following up the USA Today story

<http://tinyurl.com/2wyn1a>—slideshow that Sarah developed after Amanda's diagnosis. Turn up the volume and grab the Kleenex.

<http://tinyurl.com/3dg7gf> - Journal Gazette Times-Courier article on Sarah and Amanda July 21, 2007.

<http://tinyurl.com/2zkjy2> - "The Truth About Lead." www.babble.com Lead parent/writer Miriam Axel-Lute provides

her perspective on learning about lead in her daughter.

www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/newborn/lead_transcript.shtml - NJ Dept of Health and Senior Services DVD "Renovating? Look out for Lead" with Leann.

<http://tinyurl.com/yo7o6r> - The Parent Paper.com "Is there Danger in that Toy" by Donna Nitzberg. Interviews with Zakia Shabazz and Leann.

www.goodhousekeeping.com/family/safety/poisonous-lead-toys-0907—Good Housekeeping September 2007. "Poisonous Lead Toys." Interviews with Juana Graham, Kara and Joe La Russa, and Kara Burkhart.

www.usatoday.com/news/health/2007-08-28-lead-paint_N.htm - USA Today August 28, 2007. "It's banned but not Gone: Lead Paint is still a Danger." Interview with Tamara Rubin.

<http://tinyurl.com/2yy92m>: Mike Martin on lead & education AZ

<http://tinyurl.com/yvjv5u>—Bill Radosevich testing in OH 11/12

<http://tinyurl.com/266trj>—Bill testing in Minneapolis 11/15

www.sierraclub.org/lead—"Happy HoLEADays" Check out the cartoon video, sign up to try and change the Consumer Product Safety Commission.