

# Reaching Out

TRAIL  
HEALTH &  
ENVIRONMENT  
COMMITTEE



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## ALMOST THERE!

### Children's Blood Lead Goals Within Reach

This year's annual testing of children showed that we're close – close to the long-term goal set by the Trail Lead Task Force for blood lead levels. We're just not quite there yet.

Children from 6 months to 5 years of age living in the Trail area were invited to be tested this fall. The results revealed an average blood lead level of 5.5 (blood lead is measured in  $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$  – micrograms per decilitre).

The average blood lead level in 2004 (the last year with regular smelter operations through the summer) was 5.1  $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ , which is not significantly different from this year's result, given the limitations of laboratory analysis and population

**"...over the past 15 years, children's blood lead levels in the Trail area have improved dramatically."**

sampling. The key point is that we did not see any further decline in blood lead levels over the past two years.

Our goal is to have 90% of children with blood lead levels under 10  $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$  and 99% of children with blood lead under 15  $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ . This year's results showed that 83% of children had blood lead levels under 10  $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$  and 93% were under 15  $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ .

So, not quite. Still, over the past 15 years, children's blood lead levels in the Trail area have improved dramatically. Trail is at the forefront of smelter communities in terms of low lead emissions and blood lead levels. The table below shows average blood lead levels at some other operating smelter sites in the Western World for comparison. Blood lead levels

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City/Region	Country	Nature of site	Age of kids tested	Average Blood Lead Level ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ )
Port Pirie	Australia	Primary lead smelter	9 mos – 4 yrs	10.6
Hoboken	Belgium	Secondary lead smelter	2.5 yrs – 6 yrs	9.7
Trail	Canada	Primary lead smelter	6 mos – 5 yrs	5.6
Rouyn-Noranda	Canada	Primary copper smelter	6 mos – 5 yrs	5.2
Nation-wide	U.S.A.	Urban/rural national average	1 yr – 5 yrs	1.7

in communities around smelters in developing countries are substantially higher than anything shown in this table.

The annual fall testing tracks our progress towards the goal and helps determine whether we should continue testing children over three years of age. It also allows us to compare Trail with other smelter towns in the world.

Why the concern with lead? Studies of large numbers of children around the world have found that those with higher blood lead levels have tended, on average, to score slightly lower on developmental tests. The current level of concern for blood lead levels in children is 10 µg/dL. Some recent studies have found that even lower levels of lead

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exposure can be associated with lower test scores.

Families with children who have blood lead levels above 10 µg/dL will continue to receive home visits from Valerie, the Trail Lead Health Services Coordinator, to help find

ways to reduce lead exposure. Children from 6 months to 5 years will be tested again in 2007 to measure whether the goals have finally been reached.

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The Trail Health and Environment Committee would like to thank all the families and their children who participated in the Blood Lead Testing Clinic this past fall. We hope to see you all again in September 2007!

## LEAVING US

### A Special Thank you and Good-bye to Mary-Rose Stanchuk



*Mary-Rose Stanchuk, Lab Technologist, Castlegar Hospital.*

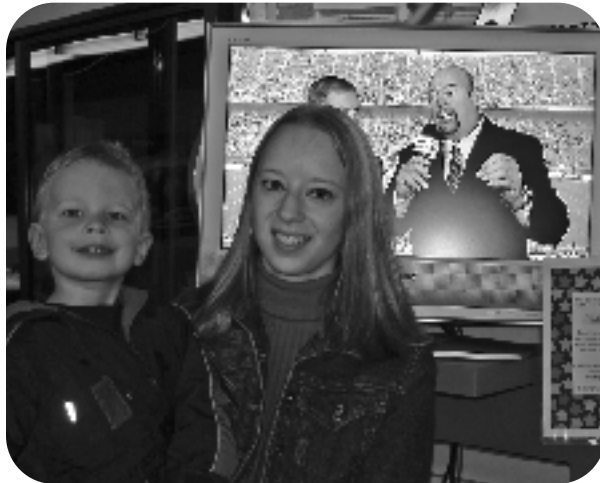
The Trail Lead Health Services would like to say a big thank you and good-bye to Mary Rose Stanchuk who has been our dedicated Lab Technologist for the last 8 years and is now continuing to work at the Castlegar Hospital. Thanks for your many hours collecting and preparing blood samples to be shipped to the lab. We will all have fond memories of your warm smile and caring touch. The children, especially, will never forget you!

## **DRAW PRIZE**

# **Grand Prize Winners from the Fall 2006 Blood Lead Clinic**

So, we are sure everyone wants to know who won the High-Definition Flat-Panel LCD TV and the Walmart \$150 gift certificate!

Well, the lucky winners of the TV were Sandra and her son Tyson Chanig. We hope you have found a good use for this!



*Sandra and her son Tyson Chanig.*

The Beaulieu family, including Michael and Abigail won the Walmart certificate.

Thanks to all the families who participated in the Fall 2006 Blood Lead Screening. We hope to see you all again next year!



*Walter Beaulieu with children Abigail and Michael.*

## **What Do Families Need To Know About Lead?**

- Good hygiene is the key. Wash your children's hands frequently throughout the day and always before snacks and meals. Keep fingernails short and clean.
- Keep your floors clean by vacuuming and damp mopping. Leave your shoes at the door.
- Wash children's toys frequently, especially the ones your child particularly likes to chew.
- Encourage your child to eat a well balanced diet high in calcium and iron. Garden produce should be washed before it is eaten. Feed young children in a highchair (after you have washed their hands).
- Keep bare dirt areas in the yard to a minimum. Sandboxes are great, especially if they are kept covered when not in use. Wash your children's hands after playing outside.
- When renovating older homes, take special precautions to avoid exposure to lead-bearing dust and paint chips (especially for pregnant women and young children).
- Find out more about the Work Project Assistance Program by calling Interior Health at 364-6223.

## Ongoing Community Education Projects

- In 2005 the “Lead and your Family's Health” brochure was updated. The brochure is available through the Trail Health Unit, Dr's clinics, Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital maternity ward, and is mailed to new parents.
- Annual newsletter mailed to every household in Trail.
- Radio advertisements throughout the spring and summer on topics such as: lead and nutrition, lead and pregnancy, blood lead testing, and reducing lead in the home and yard.
- Storybook aimed at preschoolers is available to daycare providers through the Child Care Resource and Referral Program.
- Ongoing presentations to community groups such as Building Beautiful Babies and Child Care Resource and Referral Drop in Play Group.

## HANDWASHING



*Valerie Pitman, Health Coordinator, teaches children at the Child Care Resource and Referral Drop in Playgroup about the importance of handwashing in keeping blood lead levels low.*

## Student Helps Out at the Trail Lead Health Services



Taryn Lloyd was a great help during the 3 days she spent working with the Trail Lead Health Services. Parents may have spoken to Taryn when she called to make an appointment for children attending the Fall 2006 Blood Lead Clinic. Taryn, a grade 12 J. L. Crowe student, was chosen to participate this past summer in the Shad Valley Program (a science, technology, and entrepreneurial program). As part of her summer placement she spent a month at Teck Cominco and was involved in taking soil samples around the Trail area.

### For more information contact:

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