

Environmental Groups Launch “Do It Yourself” Air Monitoring Project in Hamilton & Toronto

Pause for a moment and take a deep breath. Every three seconds, we fill up our lungs with air. But what is in the air we breathe?

This is a common question for the people who live, work and play in growing cities like Toronto and Hamilton. Heavy traffic, construction, energy demands and industrial activity all contribute to local air pollution but we are still trying to better understand where air quality problems exist *at the street level* and what solutions are needed to solve this human health threat.

Environment Hamilton and Toronto Environmental Alliance have figured out a way to do this.

We have launched an innovative project called INHALE, which stands for Initiative for Healthy Air & Local Economies (www.inhaleproject.org). This is the first initiative in Canada where local residents can do their own air monitoring by moving around their neighbourhood using basic equipment that measures inhalable air particulate pollution and tracks their whereabouts on a GPS unit.

Environment Hamilton and Toronto Environmental Alliance are inviting the media to join us for a Neighbourhood Air Monitoring Walkabout in the Jamesville neighbourhood of Hamilton this Saturday March 28th. See firsthand how an innovative “Do It Yourself” air monitoring project will empower residents to collect local air quality data that they can then use to inform action for change.

“INHALE will engage people in conversations around urban quality of life by involving them in the collection of neighbourhood air quality data” say Lynda Lukasik, the Executive Director of Environment Hamilton and the Project Lead for INHALE Hamilton. “We can use this information to spark community-level conversations and neighbourhood action for positive change”.

“By signing up as a Community Air Tracker local residents become more than volunteers, they become citizen scientists. With the simple press of a button, they collect valuable data about the air pollution in their community” says Heather Marshall, Project Lead for INHALE Toronto.

Neighbourhood Air Monitoring Walkabout

Date & Time: Saturday March 28th at 10:00 AM

Start Location: 22 Wilson Street (Environment Hamilton office)

10:00 AM Community Air Trackers will receive basic equipment training and be outfitted with their monitoring gear at Environment Hamilton office (22 Wilson Street)

10:30 AM Walk along James Street North, gathering air pollution data as we go. We will stop to photo-document and discuss any areas where we measure high pollution levels.

Excellent photo and video opportunities:

- Action shots of volunteers using hand-held air monitoring equipment outside
- Digital display of real-time air pollution readings can be videotaped
- Reporters can access identical air monitors as video props
- Interview access to Environment Hamilton and Toronto Environmental Alliance spokespeople