Letter from the Director

2022 was a year of transitions. Transitioning to post-COVID organizing, adjusting to a less hostile EPA, transitioning out Board members at the end of their terms, and bringing new members on Board. I finished my first 3-year term as Board Chair and have the honor to continue as Chair for the next 3 years.

Evelyn Mayo

The major transition we are positioning ourselves for, however, is to increase our staff capacity. For almost 30 years we have been the only group to pay a full-time organizer focused on environmental protections in DFW. The demand for our work is greater than our ability to meet the need. We know what to do, we just need your support in doing it at the capacity necessary for maximum impact.

We appreciate all the support over the years and hope we can continue to rely on your support to do this much needed work. We are proof that small stuff adds up, but we can't do it without your help. Our wins are your wins, so please enjoy the much deserved break and celebrate what we have accomplished together this year.

Cheers!
Evelyn Mayo

Note from Board Chair

In just 12 months Downwinders at Risk will be 30 years old. That's a remarkable achievement for a locally-based grassroots group that has no state or national affiliations. Our transformation has also been exceptional. We've morphed from a rural and suburban-centered single-issue group governed by an all-white board into DFW's leading environmental justice and clean air organization administered by a team that's now two-thirds People of Color.

Instead of a single issue, we're involved in a wide variety of program work. We're building high-tech tools, doing groundbreaking original research, and organizing in the the most polluted neighborhoods. This range wouldn't be possible without the devotion of our board members, who give so much of their unpaid time and energy to make sure we don't miss a beat.

Nor would it be possible without your loyalty to Downwinders. Some of you have been with us since the beginning. Some of you have found us in the last five years. Your continued support for what we do and the way we do it here in Texas is critical to our survival over the next 30 years. Thank you.

Jim Schenck

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Many of the programs that we initiated when I first joined the Board 5 years ago are now maturing and transitioning to their next phase. SharedAirDFW deployed 10 air monitors in Southern Dallas this year. The Neighborhood Self-Defense Project has produced two neighborhood plans and is now implementing them through campaigns, city-supported zoning changes, and code amendments. The vision we had for this group 5 years ago is being realized and showing even more how necessary we are.

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Jim Schenck
Downwinders at Risk Education Fund is dedicated to taking effective action on behalf of those being harmed by air pollution. Our goal is to build a strong grassroots constituency and create new strategies for clean air in North Texas. We do this by informing, connecting, and mobilizing citizens to become active participants in the decision-making that affects the air we breathe. In doing so, we improve both the quality of our air and the quality of our democracy.

We’re committed to working for environmental justice with communities impacted by the worst pollution; to deliver the best science to those communities; to making decisions about pollution and polluters more democratic; to providing solutions to the problems we spotlight, and to funding staff devoted to grassroots empowerment.
The NSDP supports residents in developing land use plans that reflect their visions and values by addressing environmental injustices in land use. The Singleton Corridor plan was completed in November ‘21 and presented to the City planning department in Spring ‘22. The city plan commission will initiate a public rezoning process December 2022.

The Coalition formed in May 2022 to reinstate the neighborhood planning policy in support of Floral Farms. Since then, we have successfully advocated for changes to the zoning code for batch plants, helped draft the new neighborhood planning policy, led to amendments in the process of city-led community engagement efforts, and successfully lobbied for changes in the prioritization of neighborhood rezoning to account for equity and environmental justice. We also filed a HUD complaint against the city of Dallas on racist land use policies.

The Floral Farms Neighborhood-Led Land use plan was completed in November ‘20. As part of the implementation, the community proposed future zoning changes that align with their plan. The "Authorized Hearing" to rezone the community began with the first neighborhood meeting in September ‘22 and the second meeting is scheduled for January ‘23. We continue to work with Neighbors United/Vecinos Unidos to ensure their plan is respected in this process and with ongoing zoning cases.
There are now four SharedAirDFW particulate matter pollution monitors hosted in the Joppa neighborhood. The remaining 6 will be placed throughout this next year, making it the most thoroughly monitored neighborhood for air pollution in Dallas.

This year's focus in the 3-year public health study in partnership with Texas A&M University and the Robert Woods Johnson Foundation, was on data collection. The Joppa resident steering committee led outreach to obtain study participants in the survey and airways testing, as well as hosted several public health events in the community.

A recommendation from the Singleton Corridor Neighborhood Plan was to remove the largest source of pollution in West Dallas, GAF Shingle Factory. The campaign launched in September 2021 and has amassed dozens of supporters. GAF has agreed to leave, the question now, is when.

Learn more here: https://www.downwindersatrisk.org/
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