



**Press Kit:** <https://goo.gl/Vzuf3g>

*Contains press release, fact sheets, media sources, images, logos, b-roll and additional resources.*

## **City of Grand Rapids and other community partners aim to make 50 homes lead-safe this summer**

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN – June 7, 2017 – People wearing bright red t-shirts are canvassing some of the neighborhoods and festivals in Grand Rapids starting this June – but they’re not stumping for a political candidate: They’re hoping that homes in the city will *Get the Lead Out!*

Armed with free lead-testing kits and brochures, these team members from the Healthy Homes Coalition of West Michigan are letting people know about federal funds available to make lead abatement possible.

“Lead lurks in the paint of homes built before 1978 – and most houses in the City of Grand Rapids were built before that year. Paint flakes and peels, and when improperly scraped or sanded off, dangerous lead dust can be kicked up,” says Paul Haan, executive director of the Healthy Homes Coalition of West Michigan and gubernatorial appointee to the State of Michigan’s Child Lead Exposure Elimination Commission.

That flaking, peeling lead paint and dust – ingested or breathed in – can be dangerous to anyone. But lead is especially toxic to babies, children and pregnant women. Lead poisoning can cause permanent brain damage and other health issues. (*See FACT SHEET for more information on the dangers of lead.*)

It doesn’t take much lead to create a toxic situation. One gram of lead dust is enough to make 25,000 square feet of flooring hazardous for young children, according to Haan.

“We’re talking an amount as small as the equivalent of a packet of Sweet’N Low – just that small amount is enough to contaminate a dozen homes in Grand Rapids,” says Haan. “The good news is that lead poisoning can be prevented, and there’s funding to help people get the lead out safely with professionals trained in lead abatement.”

The funding is through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The City of Grand Rapids administers the grant locally and partners with the Healthy Homes Coalition of West Michigan, the Kent County Health Department, LINC, and the Rental

Property Owners Association to facilitate the *Get the Lead out!* program. June has been designated “Healthy Homes Month” by HUD but team members will be encouraging applications as long as funding lasts.

The most common types of work done to remove lead hazards from homes are repairing or replacing windows, and re-painting or replacing siding.

Funding is available for eligible homeowners and landlords. Anyone living in the City of Grand Rapids in a home built before 1978 is encouraged to contact the Healthy Homes Coalition to learn about eligibility. For more information, please call the Healthy Homes Coalition of West Michigan at 616-241-3300 or visit [www.GetTheLeadOutGR.org](http://www.GetTheLeadOutGR.org). Or, contact the City of Grand Rapids Community Development Department at [616-456-3030](tel:616-456-3030) or Doug Stek, Housing Rehabilitation Supervisor, [616-456-3672](tel:616-456-3672).

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#### **About the *Get the Lead Out!* Program**

The *Get the Lead Out!* lead-hazard control program is a targeted effort to fix homes. It is part of the larger efforts of the *Get the Lead Out!* Collaborative, which also focuses on getting children tested and connected to health care services, educating the public and advocating for common-sense laws and policies to protect children. *Get the Lead Out!* is a program led by the City of Grand Rapids in collaboration with the Healthy Homes Coalition of West Michigan, the Kent County Health Department and the Rental Property Owners Association. More at <http://gettheleadoutgr.org/>.

#### **Get the Lead Out! partners:**



#### **About Healthy Homes Coalition of West Michigan**

The Healthy Homes Coalition is an independent, local non-profit organization that seeks to ensure that all children have the opportunity to grow up in a healthy home that is free from environmental hazards. More at <http://www.healthyhomescoalition.org/>.

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