

# MCS Friends Newsletter

Volume 2 Issue 5

[www.mcsfriends.org](http://www.mcsfriends.org)

#206-312-7862

Spring 2015

Spring has arrived, and it's time to renew. May is MCS awareness month and MCS Friends membership drive month. Feel free to copy the membership form and share it with friends before you fill it out and return it.

## Big News!

One of our members has been talking to Memo Laurent of Harvard School of Public Health and educating him about MCS. Harvard received a large gift from the Marilyn Hoffman Program to study the effects of indoor and outdoor air quality on human health and MCS people in particular. Memo will be our guest on our support group call Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> at 2 pm Eastern Time. He will ask us questions about how to study MCS as it relates to air quality.

## The E.I. Housing Initiatives Call

These calls are hosted quarterly by MCS Friends. Upcoming dates are July 14<sup>th</sup> and October 13<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 Eastern Time. 712-432-1212, access code 274-197-353#. Recordings are available at 712-432-1219, access code 274-197-353#.

The April meeting featured **Jim Wilkins** of [www.TinyGreenCabins.com](http://www.TinyGreenCabins.com). Jim is a custom builder of non-toxic and less toxic tiny houses or trailers, ranging from 64 to 320 square feet in size. He is located in Minnesota, but he also sells plans or shells of tiny houses, so that purchasers can do the finish work themselves. Jim mentioned that the IRC minimum square footage standard is dropping to 196 square feet, and many cities are beginning to allow tiny houses. Jim's phone number is 651-788-6565.

**Jean** from Massachusetts, who facilitated the first part of the meeting, shared about the low-interest Rural Development Loans. They may be

used for existing or new houses, and for single or multi-family projects. Go to [www.USDA.gov](http://www.USDA.gov) and enter "housing assistance" in the search bar. Jean also told us how she got many thousands of dollars worth of special accommodations built into her apartment unit because she applied to live in it while it was under construction.

**Karen**, of Canary Co-op in New York state, shared they have now received 501c3 status. They need more board members as well as people who want to buy a housing share. They are making a list of MCS people who need housing in New York. Call Pat at 585-414-7422.

A lady who owns a large rural property near Ashville, North Carolina, also spoke of her desire to create low-income housing.

## Another Musical Presentation

**Andrew Whipple** is planning a presentation of "The Sound Of Music" for September. To get involved, call 206-312-7862.

## Growing Awareness

The MCS Friends awareness poster is now available on our website, or via mail by request. It's designed to be posted on bulletin boards, and several of our members have already used it to raise awareness and meet other MCS people in their local communities.

We had a brainstorming session to collect ideas for May, MCS Awareness month. Please let us know if you want to work on any of these ideas and need help or support.

1. The awareness poster mentioned above.

2. Business cards with a simple explanation of MCS and contact info for you or your support group.

3. Bumper stickers that say: "Living Fragrance Free!"

4. Ask your library to make a display of MCS related books and brochures.

5. Public service radio announcements. These may be free and can be targeted to a local area.

6. Write articles about chemical sensitivity for related support groups, such as asthma, autism, chronic fatigue, etc.

7. Write prayer requests to be published in church bulletins, spoken from the pulpit or shared with prayer circles. These requests could mention specific needs of the MCS community such as non-toxic housing, family support, understanding friends, etc.

8. Start a social media campaign to ask people to go fragrance free for a month. It could be named "The Baking Soda Challenge," with YouTube videos, similar to the "Ice Bucket Challenge" for ALS.

9. Have a table at a health fair or at a joint fundraising event for non-profit organizations.

### **Local Support Groups**

These are a powerful way to help MCS people, to raise awareness, and to lobby for pesticide and fragrance free policies. We are compiling a list of local support groups on our website [www.MCSFriends.org](http://www.MCSFriends.org).

If you can't access the web and would like to find a group near you, or if you want to start a group or add one to our list, please call us at 206-312-7862.

### **It's Time To Renew**

If you joined MCS Friends after January 1, 2015, you will automatically be renewed for another year. Otherwise, please fill out the membership form and mail it back promptly.

It is also an election year for MCS Friends board of directors. If you wish to receive a ballot, check the box, "I wish to be a voting member." If you're interested in being on the board, let us know. We especially need a treasurer in Michigan.

### **We Are Growing!**

We appreciate and rely on your support. We have over 105 members and over \$700 in the bank. Our expenses include website hosting, mailings, and office supplies. All staff are volunteers. Several of the board members would like MCS Friends to be more active in giving small grants for MCS awareness projects, raising money for MCS housing projects, etc. But we need more helpers and board members.

### **Classifieds**

*Hope In Him Ministries* is hosting a Mother's Day conference call on May 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm Eastern Time. All are welcome. 605-475-4000, access code 678-960#.

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