

On The Conference Calls

If you are looking for friends, have a question about MCS safe products or lifestyle issues, or if you just want to listen to people who understand, please call in to our Sunday or Wednesday conference calls. They happen at 2 p.m. Eastern every week.

We are still talking with Memo Cedeno-Laurent of the Harvard School of Public Health every third Sunday of each month. It is an awesome opportunity to have a truly listening ear of someone in that position. They are nearly ready to begin surveys and studies of MCS people. They have already given five grants for research about chemical toxicity and sensitization. They are open to ideas for future studies about MCS.

E.I. Housing Initiatives Calls

The theme of the October 13 call was fundraising for E.I. housing initiatives. We had two speakers on that topic plus updates on several housing concepts.

The first speaker was Drew Xanthopoulos, a young man who is creating a documentary about MCS. The working title of the documentary is "The Sensitives". Drew used a Kickstarter online fundraiser to raise more than \$50,000 for the editing of the film. He told us about the prep work of contacting friendly organizations and e-mail list leaders, then the frenzy of the actual fundraiser, in his case 30 days. He posted daily thank you notes and photos on Facebook and sent over 100 private e-mails to select individuals.

The next speaker was Karen Kenning of Canary Co-op in New York State. She is preparing a

detailed case statement of the need for safer housing and how the Canary Co-op hopes to help fill the need. The case statement ends with specific ways to help the project. Karen will use this to personally approach wealthy people in her community that she has some connection to, or that may be interested in similar endeavors already. She recommends the fundraising guide "Asking About Asking" by Kent Stroman.

At the end of the call, JoAnne spoke up to say that she owns 360 acres in South Dakota that she feels belongs to the Sioux Tribe by right, but she would be willing for someone to use it to create an MCS community.

Christine in Montana and Sandy in New York also gave updates on their rural safer housing projects.

To listen to the October 13 meeting, call 712-432-1219, access code 274-197-353.

The next E.I. Housing Initiatives call will be January 12, 2016 at 2 pm Eastern. 712-432-1212, access code 274-197-353.

Growing Awareness

Thanks to Susan Molloy and others, the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL.org) finally included specific mention of MCS, EHS and Mold Sensitivity in their statement at the Summer 2015 conference. These disabilities are now listed under Environmental Health Barriers. Now there is a need for the local Independent Living Centers to catch up and learn how to help people with these disabilities.

National Public Radio (NPR) had a great article about MCS on Morning Edition, Sept. 22. It started by saying that many people want to get fragrances in the work place listed as "chemical irritants," and that fragrances are responsible for lost work hours and productivity. Then they told the story of a realtor in Madison, Wisconsin who had "a medical condition called MCS, Multiple Chemical Sensitivity." They said MCS occupies a medical and legal gray area, so it is not clear how much accommodation work places have to give. But fragrances make it into the top five complaints against workplaces.

They then told the story of a Canadian schoolteacher who is allowed her own permanent classroom and permission to remove fragrance devices and post notices of the school's fragrance-free policy. The whole article was well done and made MCS people seem normal and real. It even mentioned the realtor having to unplug the fragrances in the houses she shows, so listeners got a glimpse of how hard it is for us to find housing!

Social Security Update

Due to the large numbers of people becoming disabled, the SSD Trust Fund is projected to be depleted next year, 2016. Unless congress acts, this will result in about an 18% reduction in payments to current and future enrollees. This should not apply to disabled people over 65 years of age who are on SS retirement nor to people on worker's Compensation. Congress could raise payroll taxes so that income to the program would equal payments, or it could borrow from the SS Retirement Fund or the Medicare Fund.

Good News

General Mills, the first major cereal brand to go GMO free, has announced grants to help farmers go organic. Their aim is to create a large supply of organic grain to meet changing consumer choices.

Montgomery County, Maryland has just become the largest locality in the US to ban cosmetic (lawn) pesticides. Effective 2016, it joins several US towns and Canadian Provinces. France recently banned Roundup on lawns nation-wide.

About MCS Friends

How you can get involved:

1. Tell your friends about MCS Friends. Direct them to www.MCSFriends.org or to call 206-312-7862.
2. Put up our awareness poster on bulletin boards. You can get the poster on our website, or you can request a hard copy.
3. Tell us your ideas or suggestions.

We also need someone to be our mailing address for receiving membership forms. This person would need to add member information to our list on computer, and either deposit donations or send them to someone else for deposit. For now, our mailing address remains the same.

MCS Friends is a 501c3 non-profit registered in Michigan. Donations are tax deductible. We are registered with charitable programs from NEEDS.com and Amazon Smile. MCS Friends does not endorse products or professionals.