



Leadership
For a
Clean and Just
Oregon

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Photo by Carla Hervert

Beyond Toxics NEWSLETTER

Our children's health is more important than perfect laws

by Lisa Arkin and Kristina Lefever, Board Member

Beyond Toxics launched our Non Toxic Oregon campaign to tackle a serious problem: *killing common weeds with cancer-causing and brain-damaging pesticides has taken priority over the health of children playing on school grounds and in city parks.* Decades of science proves that, even in very small amounts, children's exposure to pesticides, especially early in life, leads to higher incidences of cancer, developmental disabilities and asthma.

We are encouraged that positive change is close at hand now that the science was upheld in the courts. In October, a Superior Court judge delivered a landmark verdict against Bayer (Monsanto), confirming the jury's findings that their flagship product, Roundup, is directly linked to the onset of cancer. The plaintiff, a school janitor and groundskeeper, regularly sprayed Roundup as part of his required duties.

Why is Roundup still on store shelves? Why are Roundup and other products containing glyphosate routinely sprayed on school grounds? Let's challenge the post-WWII habit of using chemicals and pesticides to tend our landscapes and invite a paradigm shift! We can do better for the children, families and recreation-minded folks who spend time in our public schools and parks.

Under the banner of our Non Toxic Oregon campaign, Beyond Toxics works with cities and institutions to switch from a pesticide-based landcare system to an organic system. Oregon cities like Talent and Springfield are already adopting the model and evolving toward improving family and pet health, beauty and working smarter and not harder in their park maintenance.

We know that organic landcare management systems work! Cities and schools across the country (from Irvine, CA to Willamette University in Salem) have already made the switch for their parks and green spaces. City and school officials feel good about the decision, knowing they are reducing costs and protecting nearby water ways and that people, pets and pollinators are no longer being poisoned by toxic pesticides.

Help us ensure that science-based evidence, not corporate-concocted mistruths, are the basis of pesticide policies. Beyond Toxics will soon launch a series of science pubs to help you follow the history, medical evidence of harm, and environmental fate of pesticide use.

Please invite us to your town. We want each of you to become strong advocates and to hear your voice supporting our upcoming pesticide reform legislation. We'll need you at the State Capitol for our Legislative Lobby Day to defend two bills--one to protect workers, water, soils and pollinators from insecticides and the second to protect rural communities from herbicide drift.

We're eager to join with you, our supporters, to make this the paradigm shift now.



A kindergarten child stands next to sprayed grass at her Clackamas County school.