

The Long Island Teen Environmental Activists (LITEA)

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Background:

The Long Island Teen Environmental Activists (LITEA) is a community based, volunteer driven organization comprised of like-minded high school teenagers who wish to heighten the public's awareness of environmental pollutants and their effects on human health.

Hypothesis/Objectives

It is our goal to identify toxic triggers within our environment that mimic endocrine-disrupting cells and potentially contribute to breast cancer. We believe that if today's youth become advocates of environmental safety then it will compel the local community to take action.

Work Performed

At monthly meetings, students discuss methods on how to reduce their exposure to these deleterious contaminants through interactive methods such as quiz bowls and movie nights. This past March, students presented testimony in front of the Suffolk- County Legislature to secure the "first in the nation" ban on Bisphenol-A (BPA), known as the Toxin Free Toddlers and Babies Act. The chemical BPA, which is used to make certain plastics and canned food liners, has been linked to breast cancer. Furthermore, last year, members cleaned a portion of Heckscher State Park in celebration of Earth Day. **LITEA** initiated a school-wide recycling program, which will be implemented soon at Walt Whitman High School. This year, LITEA members intend to visit local middle schools to educate students on how many heavy metals have been identified as environmental estrogens. These metals are found in electronics that many teenagers use, such as cell phones, and may end up in landfills. LITEA members have certainly put their newfound knowledge to good use. They take a cautious approach when purchasing household products and are on the lookout for goods that may contain environmental estrogens by clearly reading ingredient labels. Some of them write articles about the information they have learned for international publications such as Teen Ink Magazine and Pakistan Post. Others aspire to pursue careers in environmental advocacy or environmental health.

Conclusions

LITEA members have realized that there is in fact no planet B, and it is up to us to actively make sure that our planet Earth will continue to be habitable for future generations. They feel it is their obligation to try and eradicate the illnesses that are plaguing the environment and take proactive measures to preserve it.

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