

# Non Toxic Oregon coming to your community!

by Lisa Arkin, Exec. Director

Beyond Toxics is launching the **Non Toxic Oregon Project**. Our goal is to guarantee our right to be safe from toxic chemicals when visiting parks, sporting fields and schools. After all, these are public facilities supported by public dollars.

In the past two years, dozens of cities across the nation have switched to organic land care. Cities in Oregon should be on this list too!

Oregon mayors and school superintendents are working with Beyond Toxics to rethink using pesticides in parks and on school grounds. The shared goal is to adopt an organic land care approach to keeping public facilities neat, beautiful and safe for children and pets. Organic land care makes the use of synthetic pesticides obsolete.

We are thrilled with the results of *Organic Land Care*, our series of presentations in May. We featured a team of experts who helped dozens of cities in other states make the switch from using synthetic pesticides to organic techniques on public land. Nearly 200 Oregonians from Wilsonville to Talent, including elected leaders, maintenance staff and mothers holding tiny babies, attended the Beyond Toxics forums.

We teamed up with Non Toxic Neighborhoods, a grassroots group in Irvine, California that took action after discovering a childhood cancer cluster in their community. Using a practical soil science approach, they convinced their city council and school district to stop using pesticides in public parks and on school grounds.

Beyond Toxics and our community partners hosted Bob Johnson, a former city manager and city planner who now volunteers for Non Toxic Neighborhoods, to give a series of presentations in five Oregon cities. Bob explained how maintaining parks and playgrounds with organic products that improve soil health can save money and time. In southern California, practicing organic land care has also reduced irrigation water use from 5 days a week to 2 days a week, which is quite a cost savings. From park maintenance staff to parents, those who heard Bob's presentation are excited to support organic land care to end the risk of exposing kids and pets to cancer-causing poisons such as glyphosate and 2,4-D.

You may find it shocking that Beyond Toxics still receives calls from distraught parents who've witnessed their local playgrounds and ballfields being sprayed with industrial-strength glyphosate and 2,4-D. Parents shouldn't have to worry that their children are being exposed to harmful chemicals linked to cancer and hormone disruption at their neighborhood playground!

We're seriously concerned that Oregon's pesticide advisors at Oregon State University approve of spraying toxic pesticide products that mix glyphosate 2,4-D and dicamba together. There are no studies on what happens to children exposed to a mixture of three pesticides in one product.

Two pesticides likely cause cancer and the third one, dicamba, is highly prone to drift.

Parents have the right to ask "When is killing a weed more important than protecting my child's health?" In 2013, Beyond Toxics wrote and helped pass the Oregon School Integrated Pesticide Management Law. The law clearly articulates the goal of protecting children's health. In fact, pesticides must be used as the last resort or in an emergency, and cannot be used as a routine application.

## Why is this important?

Chemicals disrupt our body's natural functions, resulting in significant harm to our health. Pesticides can cause cancer, endocrine disruption and neurological damage. Recent research is revealing that the common pesticides we're using are associated with diabetes and other conditions, links never before suspected. For children, small exposures can have big consequences. It's not about what this exposure is

going to do to you one day at a time...but what about 10, 20, or 30 years down the line?

We have a vision of a healthy future: non-toxic neighborhood parks and schools throughout Oregon. We ask you to join us to achieve this vision.

**“ Parents have the right to ask 'When is killing a weed more important than protecting my child's health?' ”**

We're seeking community partners to host in-person and video conferencing workshops across the state. In a virtual workshop, we can loop in the nation's top experts right to your community meeting center, school board meeting or city council public sessions. Please contact Beyond Toxics to work with us to launch a Non Toxic Oregon program in your area.

We would be happy to partner with you!



(L to R) Kristina Lefever, Beyond Toxics board member; Bob Johnson, Non-Toxic Irvine; and Lisa Arkin, Executive Director in front of the Beyond Toxics office in Phoenix, Oregon.



(L to R) Darby Stricker, Mayor of Talent; Bob Johnson, Non-Toxic Irvine; and City Councilor Stephanie Dolan in front of the Talent City Hall after an historic meeting to adopt organic land care in Talent.