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Better Schools. Safer Streets. Stronger Neighborhoods.

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Mayor Rawlings-Blake and Representative Sarbanes Announce EPA Grant to Promote Healthy Environments for City Kids

Award will build capacity to recognize and address environmental health hazards affecting children.

BALTIMORE, MD. (October 18, 2011) – Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake was joined today by Shawn Garvin, administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Mid-Atlantic region, Congressman John Sarbanes, and Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot to celebrate Children's Health Month. The Mayor was presented with a check from Mr. Garvin for \$100,000 to fund the Healthy Environments for City Kids Initiative. The Baltimore City Health Department was one of 13 organizations selected from 263 applicants across the country to receive a grant from EPA's Office of Children's Health Protection to reduce children's exposure to environmental hazards.

“In Baltimore, we are working collaboratively to build stronger, healthier neighborhoods and schools for our children—places where they can learn and thrive,” said Mayor Rawlings-Blake. “With this new funding from the Environmental Protection Agency, we can better protect our children now and in the future.”

“During October and throughout the year, the EPA is committed to working with communities like the City of Baltimore to promote healthy environments where children live, learn, and play,” said EPA Regional Administrator Shawn M. Garvin. “The Healthy Environments for City Kids Initiative is a shining example of how the community is taking steps to address a wide range of environmental hazards, creating healthier and safer school environments.”

The EPA has a long history of undertaking efforts focused on improving the environments where children live, learn, and play. Because children are growing and developing, they are more vulnerable than adults to adverse health outcomes resulting from exposure to environmental hazards. This project focuses on increasing long-term capacity in at-risk, low-income communities to recognize and reduce children's exposures to environmental dangers, including lead, mold, pests, pesticides, carbon monoxide, and environmental tobacco smoke, among others.

“Parents should be able to send their children to school or out to play with confidence that they are in a safe and healthy environment,” said Congressman Sarbanes. “This grant will reduce childhood exposure to environmental hazards, and help ensure our kids are safe and healthy.”

The Health Department will receive \$100,000 over 18 months to promote and support healthy child care and school environments, educate community members about environmental health risks, and build capacity of home visitors to recognize and address children’s environmental health risks.

“This grant will provide funding for the Baltimore City Health Department to implement Healthy Environments for City Kids, a program that complements the Healthy Baltimore 2015 goals of promoting healthy children and creating health-promoting neighborhoods. We know that healthy children learn better, so it makes sense to ensure that the environments in which children live support their health,” said Commissioner of Health Dr. Oxiris Barbot.

For more information about the Health Department’s Bureau of Healthy Homes programs, visit www.baltimorehealth.org.

Protecting children’s health from environmental risks is fundamental to EPA’s mission. Since 1997, when the Office of Children’s Health Protection was established, EPA has increased its focus on protecting children’s health through improving the environments where children live, learn, and play. To learn more, visit www.epa.gov.

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