

A Message from Breast Cancer and the Environment Advocates and Trainers: Why This Is Important

As advocates armed with research on breast cancer and the environment, including knowledge of safer alternatives, we have enjoyed addressing audiences of different cultures, socioeconomic status, ages and genders over the past two decades. The Witness Project of Harlem provided us a unique opportunity to work with an outstanding group of women, trusted and well regarded in the community of Harlem. The workshops were met with high energy, shared concerns and common goals. We learned from each other.

After presenting information on primary prevention of breast cancer and risk reduction in our workshops, the women were further empowered when we introduced the environmental justice component. The Witness Project of Harlem participants learned how to address concerns with legislators, landlords and other people who influence their lives. The topics that resonated most with these women were exposure to toxic pesticides and cleaning products used in their apartment buildings, the challenges they face securing venues that provide affordable organic foods, and acknowledging that dollar stores may sell products that contain toxic ingredients.

The highlight for us was seeing how they would tailor their message to the many, richly diverse audiences that make up Harlem, the Bronx and Brooklyn.

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