



The Pennsylvania
**INTEGRATED PEST
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**



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Partnership Aids in Making Homes Healthy

PHILADELPHIA, Pa. – An otherwise healthy pregnant mother began experiencing anxiety attacks and arrhythmia (rapid heart beat), while other members of the family had strange symptoms that seemed to worsen while inside their home. She was concerned that maybe their house was making them sick, but didn't know where to turn.

She found out about a company called Healthy Spaces in Philadelphia and had them conduct a home evaluation. They discovered that the pesticides being applied outside plus one being used for flea control on their dog were contributing to their symptoms. A shift from automatic use of pesticides to an integrated pest management (IPM) approach helped to alleviate their health problems.

This is just a typical case for Philadelphia School and Community IPM Partnership (PSCIP) partner Jim Quigley, owner of Healthy Spaces. "Many of our customers who are having a health problem in the home or office may actually be having a problem with the pesticides used in those spaces," Quigley explains. "But, it's a constant battle getting people to understand pesticides are designed to kill and can sometimes have unwanted side-effects on other inhabitants in the house. We want people to stop using pesticides, but customers still need an answer to their pest problems, which is where IPM comes in."

IPM is a safe, effective, and scientific approach to managing pests. IPM uses knowledge of pests' habits and needs to help implement pest prevention tactics as a first line of defense. Pesticides are used as a last resort, and only pesticide products that pose the least-toxic, least risk of exposure to residents are chosen.

Quigley started Healthy Spaces after a home remodeling project alleviated the indoor allergies he had been experiencing for over 12 years. "We found mold in our home, which we didn't even realize was there. In addition, we learned after pulling up our carpeting that it can absorb chemicals, such as pesticides. After completing our remodeling, my allergies went away almost overnight and my wife's breathing became easier too."

The Quigleys decided they wanted to share this information with others and help them find similar solutions. They started Healthy Spaces in 2006, putting Jim's knowledge of the environment's impact on health to work along with his wife's experience as an environmental health educator with the Women's Health & Environmental Network

(WHEN). Jim contacted PSCIP while trying to find IPM information to help a customer control a mouse infestation without pesticides.

Healthy Spaces educates customers about potential health impacts of their indoor environment, investigates sources of potential harm, determines how to minimize them, and recommends changes to optimize a healthier home. According to Quigley, people spend approximately 57 percent of their lives in their home. “People need to know its okay to become aware of how they feel in their home. If their home is making them sick, we’ve found that pesticides falls into the top four things negatively impacting air quality in that space.”

Other issues Healthy Spaces focuses on include chemicals off-gassing from household products (formaldehyde) and building materials (volatile organic compounds), molds, allergens and other biological pollutants. Healthy Spaces can also evaluate moisture conditions that can lead to mold growth, water quality issues and testing services.

Quigley says they start by offering basic to comprehensive home environmental evaluations based on the needs of the customer. If necessary, they will conduct tests that require laboratory analyses, such as air sampling for bio-aerosols or for chemicals. “We give the customer a comprehensive report based on our findings, any laboratory results, prioritized recommendations and action steps, and resources they may need. We can also provide consultation and project management services,” says Quigley. Healthy Spaces has helped over 25 families this year.

For more information on Healthy Spaces, contact them at (215) 233-1852 or e-mail at jim@healthyspaces.com. You can also visit them on the Web at <http://www.healthyspaces.com/>.

For more information on PSCIP, including meeting minutes, partners in the initiative, and current and future activities, visit Web site <http://www.pscip.org/>. Or, you may contact Michelle Niedermeier at the Penn State Philadelphia Outreach Center, phone (215) 471-2200, ext. 109, or e-mail mxn14@psu.edu.

PSCIP is part of the Pennsylvania IPM program, a collaboration between the Pennsylvania State University and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture aimed at promoting integrated pest management in both agricultural and urban settings. For more information, contact the program at (814) 865-2839, or Web site <http://www.paipm.org>. To view our archived news releases, see Web site <http://paipm.cas.psu.edu/10.htm>.