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**ENERGY COSTS IN THE NORTH END:  
THE RISE IN UTILITIES AND ITS EFFECT  
ON A LOW-INCOME COMMUNITY**

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## *Introduction*

The Wesleyan research team was commissioned by the North End Action Team (NEAT) and the Jonah Center to do an energy assessment of the North End neighborhood in Middletown, CT. The North End is, in fact, comprised of a few sub-neighborhoods characterized by different income levels. The organizations we worked with were interested in what problems North End residents encountered in the area of energy and utilities, and what could be done about these problems. The main goals to be achieved from this research were economic savings for North End residents, an evaluation of energy programs and assistance opportunities for those eligible, an assessment of interest and support for the Jonah Center's initial programs in the areas of environmental education and conservation, and further communication between North End residents and NEAT.

In addition to commissioning our research, the leaders of these organizations worked closely with us to determine the goals of our project and the means with which we would carry it out. Lydia Brewster is the executive director of the North End Action Team. Ms. Brewster helped form NEAT in 1997 with residents of the North End in response to the expanding physical, economic, and social decay that threatened to erode neighborhood stability. John Hall is the President and primary initiator of the Jonah Center project. The Jonah Center project maintains a long-term goal of transforming the land at the confluence of the Coginchaug and Mattabessett rivers into an educational and recreational facility geared renewable energy, conservation, and environmentalism. The facility would be powered by residual methane that has remained in the area because of the landfill that currently exists on the property.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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# ENERGY COSTS IN THE NORTH END: THE RISE IN UTILITIES AND ITS EFFECT ON A LOW-INCOME COMMUNITY

### *Background Information*

A group of students from Wesleyan University was commissioned by the North End Action Team (NEAT) and The Jonah Center for Earth and Art to do an energy assessment of the North End neighborhood in Middletown, CT. These organizations were interested in what problems North End residents encountered in the area of energy and utilities, and what could be done about these problems. The primary goals of this research were:

- Economic savings for North End residents
- Information on energy programs and assistance opportunities for those eligible
- Continued solidarity among North End residents and NEAT
- Assessing the interest and garnering support for the Jonah Center's initial programs in the areas of environmental education and conservation.

Data for this report were collected using a door-to-door survey.

### *Major Findings*

Rising energy costs represent a primary concern among residents of the North End; costs were almost exclusively featured as the number one energy concern among residents.

- Households making less than \$9,999 per year (8 respondents) were, on average, spending about one third of their income on heating bills during winter months, while those making above \$50,000 were only spending 5% of their income on heating costs.
- Federal guidelines call for a household to spend at *most* 30% of its income on *all* housing costs put together, but low-income households in the North End are spending *one third* of income on heat alone and almost *half* on heat plus electricity during winter months.
- Based on household income and other eligibility indicators such as individual electric meters and type of heating used, at least 25 respondents were eligible for some sort of state-funded assistance.
- Although 25 respondents were likely eligible for energy assistance, only 7 households received it.
- Increased energy costs have prompted residents to take some sort of action. Almost 75% of the surveyed population claimed that they were interested in learning about ways to save money and conserve energy.
- Most respondents showed an interest in outdoor/nature activities which validates the Jonah Center's mission for environmental activities and resources.

## *Recommendations*

The increase of utility bills creates a further instability in a low-income North End residents' personal and work life. Community involvement and education on energy-related issues are crucial to the sustainability of the Jonah Center initiative and are compatible with NEAT's long- and short-term goals.

- Present initiatives relieving the impacts of steadily-increasing energy costs.
- Improve access to weatherization and energy assistance programs through a strengthened partnership between NEAT and the main energy assistance provider, the Community Renewal Team (CRT).
- Raise awareness of the programs already in existence, and publicize the telephone-information line #211 in NEAT's newsletter.
- Organize a fall festival to raise community awareness, garner community support and to involve the community in NEAT's current projects.
- Emphasize youth in the Jonah Center's goal of making hiking trails along the Coginchaug and Mattabesett rivers.
- Educate children about energy and environmental concerns through extracurricular activities.
- Create a program that would teach youth how to do energy audits; this would involve North End youth and provide employment opportunities.

## *Conclusion*

The North End of Middletown is a largely low-income community that is extraordinarily affected by the rising costs of energy. NEAT and the Jonah Center, however, are two organizations that have the ability to raise awareness about the economic and environmental costs of energy inefficiency and present solutions that could help alleviate the stresses to both hard-working, bill-paying residents and the delicate environment within which they live. By fostering a community where these concerns are addressed, NEAT and the Jonah Center will play integral roles in raising the area's standard-of-living, cultivating and encouraging increased economic and environmental sustainability.

## I. Literature Review

### *Rising Energy Costs*

The environmental and economic costs of energy have become a major national concern. The energy used within the home and by automobiles account for nearly 40 percent of national energy demand.<sup>1</sup> In the past year alone, gasoline and crude oil prices have risen between 10 and 15%.<sup>2</sup> This puts a lot of pressure on people who rely on automobiles as their main source of transportation. However, this study is primarily concerned with residential energy expenditures in the areas of heating and electricity. People in the Northeast are particularly affected by rising energy costs because they must heat their housing units during the winter, which can become a daunting burden for low-income households.

### *Energy Costs in Low-Income Communities*

The poor spend a larger proportion of their income on basic living necessities. Energy is one of these necessities. Therefore, higher energy prices have a disproportionately negative impact on low-income households. Housing costs in general are a major issue for low-income communities. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has deemed that housing is affordable if rent, including utility bills, is no more than 30 percent of a household's income. HUD has advocated energy conservation as a way to reduce utility costs and therefore reduce monthly rent.

### *Energy Assistance*

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<sup>1</sup> Energy Information Association. <<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/steo/pub/contents.html>>  
<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Energy assistance provides low-income households with help paying winter heating bills. The Community Renewal Team (CRT) is a non-governmental organization, funded by the federal and state governments, that provides a range of anti-poverty programs to help people and families become self-sufficient. Their strategy is to “increase resources available to meet basic needs of low income families while supporting their move to economic self-sufficiency, leading to a reduction in the number of households in crisis.”<sup>3</sup> The CRT is in charge of dispersing state funds from the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) to low-income and working poor households, as well as a host of other programs. CEAP provides supplemental assistance to help defray heating costs.<sup>4</sup> Visits to the CRT for energy assistance also frequently include instructions on do-it-yourself energy-reduction measures (e.g., weather stripping and caulking, insulating hot water tanks, and replacing light bulbs and showerheads) that work for renters as well as homeowners.

CEAP is one of the most important energy assistance programs available to low-income households in Connecticut (others can be found in Appendix E, the energy programs and assistance fact sheet). The program offers up to \$326 of lump sum energy assistance to households that are eligible. (For the Connecticut state guidelines for CEAP eligibility, see Appendix C.)

The CRT is the gateway to most energy assistance programs in Middletown. All applications for state-funded energy assistance must go through the CRT, which has more

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<sup>3</sup> CRT Annual Report, 2005, 2.

<sup>4</sup> The CRT is also in control of dispersing funds for other programs, including the Contingency Heating Assistance Program (CHAP), which provides energy assistance for households with higher incomes than would qualify for the CEAP, as well as the Weatherization, Referral, Assistance and Packaging Program (WRAP), which helps Connecticut Light and Power (CL&P) customers with weatherization and conservation services. WRAP provides a wide range of improvements and home rehabilitation services that increase energy savings and remove dangerous conditions from the home. The program therefore assists with helping customers become more financially stable.

stringent requisites for applicants than the state does. These requirements are a result of the fact that the CRT is in charge of allocating funds for which the demand is high. The most disadvantaged or in-need groups are thus prioritized. The CRT's income guidelines for eligibility currently stand at below 200% of the poverty line.<sup>5</sup> Other criteria include an assets test,<sup>6</sup> whether or not there is a child under five in the household, and providing required documentation.<sup>7</sup>

### *Weatherization*

Most efforts to reduce energy consumption and costs fall into two categories: weatherization and conservation. Conservation entails using less energy and can be achieved by turning down the heat and by turning off lights and other electrical appliances. Weatherization entails making a house more energy efficient (using less energy for the same result). Some ways to do this include weather stripping, caulking, and insulation (of floors, ceilings, walls, ducts, attics, doors, windows, etc.). Weatherizing buildings and units can yield substantial savings for both owners and occupants by eliminating the cost of heating the air that leaks out of a housing unit. Home energy audits ascertain which parts of the house use the most energy and suggest the most effective measures for reducing energy costs. Households can conduct their own energy audits by locating air leaks, insulating, and inspecting heating and cooling equipment. Not only do projects like these help lower utility bills, but they save natural resources, protect the environment, and improve indoor air quality.

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<sup>5</sup> CRT Annual Report, 2005, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Singles may not have over \$7,000 in liquid assets and families may not have over \$10,000 in liquid assets.

<sup>7</sup> For example, proof of previous four weeks pay from date of application, entire utility bill if heat with utility, date of birth, social security numbers for all household members, proof of any household income from any source.

Retrofitting is a primary example of a weatherization measure. Retrofit refers to upgrading a room or building by installing new parts or equipment. Whereas some weatherization programs examine the amount of energy a building uses and the cost of that energy, other programs undertake retrofits that meet the needs of particular building configurations. Existing consumption and costs are evaluated to keep the benefits of weatherization greater than the costs. It should be noted, however, that these benefits are accrued over time. State-of-the-art weatherization measures have come a long way since their inception. Even minor weatherization techniques have the potential to lower costs and consumption to a great extent.

## II. Methodology

Data for this report were collected using a door-to-door survey. This form of data collection was chosen because it facilitated personal contact, allowing the surveyor to clearly explain the purpose of the survey and also to clarify any confusion regarding the survey questions themselves. Furthermore, door-to-door surveying ensures instantaneous responses and avoids a completely self-selecting data collecting process. A door-to-door survey seemed to offer the lowest risk of excluding certain populations as it does not require literacy skills, as with a written survey, or having a phone, as would a phone survey.

The target population was derived using maps obtained from NEAT. In order to ensure randomness, we attempted to survey every 11<sup>th</sup> unit on every street in the North End. Working in pairs, we walked through the neighborhoods. If no one was home, we marked the map and continued to the next 11<sup>th</sup> unit. These residences were then revisited at another time in order to control for time of day and day of the week. If upon returning to a house there was still no answer, we moved to the next unit. Similarly, if in the first round someone answered but refused to complete the survey, we surveyed the following unit but maintained the original counting system. Surveyed units were recorded on maps, but the address was not linked to the survey response, and the addresses will remain confidential.

Surveying began on February 25 and ended on April 9, 2006. Most surveys were conducted during the hours of 12:30pm and 6:30pm on Saturdays and Sundays. Some surveys were conducted during the week between 5:00pm and 7:30pm (or whenever it began to get dark) in order to control for time and varying work schedules and

availability. However, due to a low weekday success rate, the researches focused their energy on weekend surveys.

The survey questions themselves were based on the project proposal submitted by The Jonah Center and NEAT as well as subsequent conversation with both John Hall and Lydia Brewster. Questions aimed to gather information in three areas: determining existing problems (e.g., cost, problems with landlords), estimating participation rates in and knowledge of currently offered programs, and gauging interest in potential programs.

Before beginning the survey of the North End, a focus group meeting was held with the research team, Lydia Brewster, and several North End residents (recruited by Lydia, all of whom were involved in some way with NEAT). The residents were given a preliminary survey and asked to provide feedback on how it could be improved, questions that were confusing, things to add, etc. Their suggestions were then incorporated into a new draft of the survey, and surveying began.

Before administering each survey, researchers explained who they were, their affiliation with NEAT and The Jonah Center, briefly described the purpose of the project, and emphasized confidentiality. The average length of the surveying process once contact was made with the resident was about 6 minutes. Our most basic objective with this survey was to gauge whether and to what extent rising energy prices are putting an economic strain on the neighborhood.

We began our survey (see Appendix B) with open-ended questions to avoid the assumption that there were energy problems in the community so as not to lead the interviewees to feel they should respond in a certain way. Determining how many North End residents owned their own homes, whether or not utilities were included in rent, what

type of energy was used, if the unit has an individual meter, number of people residing in a household and income were all essential as many of the energy assistance programs are contingent these factors. Questions regarding landlords sought to gauge the responsiveness of landlords to heating and energy problems, since most renters have little agency when it comes to fixing maintenance problems. The cost of energy and heating bills in combination with income was used to determine what percentage of a household's income was going towards its energy costs. Furthermore, as income is directly related to energy assistance eligibility, the researchers wanted to see if there was a population that was facing energy-related problems but was not eligible for existing programs. More personal questions, specifically the household's income, were asked later in the survey with the hope that some level of comfort could be established in the interim.

In addition to identifying existing problems, the researchers wanted to determine what solutions, if any, were already being implemented. A series of questions was asked in order to see what residents were already doing to address the rising cost of energy. These questions were used to gauge interest in potential projects/programs and to see where NEAT's and The Jonah Center's assistance is most needed and/or wanted.

At the end of each survey, the resident was asked if s/he would be interested in being a contact for NEAT. S/he was then given a fact sheet addressing energy usage of various appliances (e.g., how much it costs to run a television for twelve hours) on one side and providing names and contacts for local organizations and programs that help with energy efficiency and bill paying on the other (see Appendix E). The aim of this was to provide interviewees with accessible ways to reduce the cost of their bills.

Though the survey focused on 25 closed and partially-closed questions, respondents were allowed and even encouraged to expand on responses to questions. The researchers, who did not live in the survey area, recognized that there were likely problems or circumstances that were not known or considered when designing the survey and thus a conversational approach allowed for further data and perspectives to be gathered.

There were several weak points to the structure and content of the survey. The first questions were somewhat awkward and repetitive, though it proved effective to start with an open-ended question. The survey was not sufficient in assessing the specific effects of rising energy prices on the household. Many people said that it put serious financial strains on them, but it would have been interesting to have had a built in mechanism to assess and quantify these strains. A topic of some confusion was the word “energy” and knowing when to differentiate between heat, electricity, gas and oil. However, being more thorough with this would have made the survey much longer and more tedious.

Allowing an opportunity for people to add whatever comments or questions they had at the end, hear what ideas, if any, they had, could have been very beneficial. While we tried to do this informally, there was no mechanism within the survey to encourage respondents to share their ideas for solutions. A question such as “what do you think could be done about energy concerns in the North End” should have been included.

A methodological question that came up throughout this survey, one that is perhaps impossible to fully resolve, is the effect of “outsiders,” four students from a top-tier liberal arts college, doing research on a low-income neighborhood. On many

occasions people were made visibly uncomfortable by our presence, which may have been due to our outsider status. It is hard to determine the influence of this fact on the survey results, but the researchers feel it would be negligent not to acknowledge its existence.

Throughout the data-collecting and report-writing stages contact was maintained with NEAT and The Jonah Center, and face-to-face meetings were held every few weeks to reassess goals and processes and to discuss findings. Once data were collected, they were entered into SPSS and analyzed by the research team. The report was written by the team, who then gave a rough draft both to NEAT and The Jonah Center for edits and input.

In addition to producing a full report, the researchers have written an executive summary that will be sent out with NEAT News in order for North End residents to have easy access to the data collected during this project.

### III. Data Analysis

#### *Overview*

Rising energy costs represent a primary concern among residents of the North End; nearly all of the survey respondents cited a noticeable increase in their energy bills from last year to this year. Additionally, costs were almost exclusively featured as the number one energy concern among residents. As previously stated, energy costs tend to disproportionately affect low-income households. Though energy costs are relatively similar for all households, lower-income people are disproportionately affected because those energy costs make up a larger percentage of their income. In addition, there is a greater tendency for low-income housing units to be poorly insulated and highly energy-inefficient. Because of the high tenant turnover rate in the North End, some North End residents—several of whom stated this when answering survey questions—have less of an incentive to fix expensive energy related problems in their home if they know they have to move soon. This contributes to both economic and environmental stresses. Houses that are less energy efficient consume more oil and electricity and therefore cost more to heat. The burden of these costs falls more heavily on low-income households.

#### *General Profile of Sample*

Our survey sample is comprised of forty-five residents from various socio-economic and geographic groups within the North End. Table 1 highlights some characteristics of the survey population that directly relate to some of the questions on energy assistance applications and the eligibility requirements of most energy assistance programs (see Appendix C).

**Table 1: Short Profile of Survey Population**

|  |     |          |
|--|-----|----------|
| Renters                                    | 53% | 24 of 45 |
| Renters who do not have utilities included | 79% | 19 of 24 |
| Owners                                     | 47% | 21 of 45 |
| Owners who are landlords                   | 62% | 13 of 21 |
| Has an individual meter                    | 93% | 43 of 45 |
| Uses Oil for heat                          | 55% | 24 of 44 |
| Uses Gas                                   | 39% | 17 of 44 |
| Uses Electric                              | 5%  | 2 of 44  |
| Uses other type of heating                 | 2%  | 1 of 44  |

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SURVEY POPULATION

### *Comparing Sample Data to 2000 Census*

It was important to gauge the degree to which the sample population was representative because our surveying did not cover every resident in the North End; we have compared our data with that from the 2000 Census. Although the Census data is presently seven years out of date, it is the most recent profile of the North End available. Although random samples should characterize the total population fairly accurately, our exact circumstances, possibly dictated by time constraints, whether or not a resident was home, and their willingness to respond may have skewed the data towards the over- or under-representation of certain subgroups.

Table 2 displays the percentage of the population in each income<sup>8</sup> category, comparing the income profile represented by the Census with that found in our survey population.

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<sup>8</sup> The average annual inflation rate from 1999-2005 was 2.62%. While this affects the actual income figures - \$9,000 dollars today is not the same as \$9,000 dollars in 1999 -- the percentage of the population in each income group is still pertinent.

**Table 2: Percentage of North End and Survey Populations by Income**

| Yearly Household Income | North End Population according to 2000 Census | Survey Population |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Below \$9,999           | 14%   | 21% (8 of 37)     |
| \$10,000-29,999         | 39%   | 35% (13 of 37)    |
| \$30,000-49,999         | 26%   | 14% (5 of 37)     |
| Above \$50,000          | 21%   | 30% (11 of 37)    |

As the survey data shows, we may have over and under-represented certain income brackets in comparison to the 2000 Census, although this is uncertain given the age of the data.

We only spoke to one person who made between \$40,000 and \$49,000 a year, which explains the discrepancy between the sample and Census data categories. The over-representation of households in the lowest income bracket is a result of the willingness and availability of certain respondents in certain neighborhoods. In addition to income distributions, another characteristic that is over-represented in the survey group is the percentage of households with children under 18. Of the sample population, 37.7% has one or more children in residence, while the Census describes only 25.5% of North End residences as having children. However, this discrepancy may reflect a real change in the number of North End households with children in the past few years.

When comparing our data with the Census data, the population of renters to owners is the most striking discrepancy (table 3).

**Table 3: Renter/Owner Comparison of North End and Sample**

|        | Percent of North End Population | Percent of Survey Population |
|--------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Renter | 75%                             | 53%                          |
| Owner  | 25%                             | 47%                          |

This disparity may be a result of the difficulties we encountered in accessing large apartment buildings where the population would have been largely renters. This could pose a problem in the study because it is not representative of the North End. This study has adjusted for the over- and under-representations by presenting much of the data separately for tenants and owners.

## **ENERGY USE AND COSTS**

### *Income Spent on Energy Bills*

In the North End, there is a considerable discrepancy between low-income households and higher-income households in the percent of income they spend on energy bills, particularly during the winter (see Table 4).

**Table 4: Average Percent of Income Spent on Energy During Winter Months**

|                 | Avg. Percent of Income Spent on Electricity and Heating | Avg. Percent of Income Spent on Heating |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Under \$9,999   | 47  | 33                                      |
| \$10,000-29,999 | 21  | 15                                      |
| \$30,000-49,999 | 9   | 7                                       |
| Above \$50,000  | 7   | 5                                       |

Households making less than \$9,999 per year (eight respondents) were, on average, spending about one-third of their income on heating bills during winter months. To put

this in perspective, federal guidelines call for a household to spend at most 30% of its income on *all* housing costs put together, and low-income households are spending *one-third* on heat alone and almost *half* on heat plus electricity. This is in stark contrast to the households from the sample earning between \$10,000 and \$30,000, which spent an average of between 10% and 15% of their income on heating bills. Households making above \$50,000 on average spent less than 5% of their income on heating bills.

*Energy Assistance*

Based on household income and other eligibility indicators such as individual electric meters and type of heating, at least 25 respondents were eligible for some sort of state-funded assistance. In general, households of three or more people earning less than \$30,000 per year are eligible for some form of energy assistance.<sup>9</sup>

**Table 5: Respondents Who Receive Energy Assistance by Income**

|        |                 | Do you receive energy assistance? |     | Total |
|--------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-----|-------|
|        |                 | no                                | yes |       |
| Income | <\$9,999        | 4                                 | 4   | 8     |
|        | \$10,000-29,999 | 11                                | 2   | 13    |
|        | \$30,000-49,999 | 5                                 | 0   | 5     |
|        | >\$50,000       | 9                                 | 1   | 10    |
| Total  |                 | 29                                | 7   | 36    |

<sup>9</sup> The vast majority of the sample respondents had their own electric meters. This is important because most energy assistance programs do not service households that share a meter as it is impossible to monitor such a household's energy use. Different energy assistance programs are available based on whether a household uses oil or gas. The most common source of heat in the North End is oil.

Although 25 respondents were likely eligible for energy assistance, only seven households received it (see Table 5).<sup>10</sup> One possible problem may stem from the fact that the CRT, which is the gateway to all state-funded energy programs, is only open from 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM, Monday through Thursday. This makes it very difficult for working families to make an appointment with CRT and therefore to apply for energy assistance. Another obstacle seems to be a basic lack of knowledge of available programs and resources, most importantly the Community Renewal Team, among residents.

**Table 6: Respondents Who Had Heard of the CRT (By Income)**

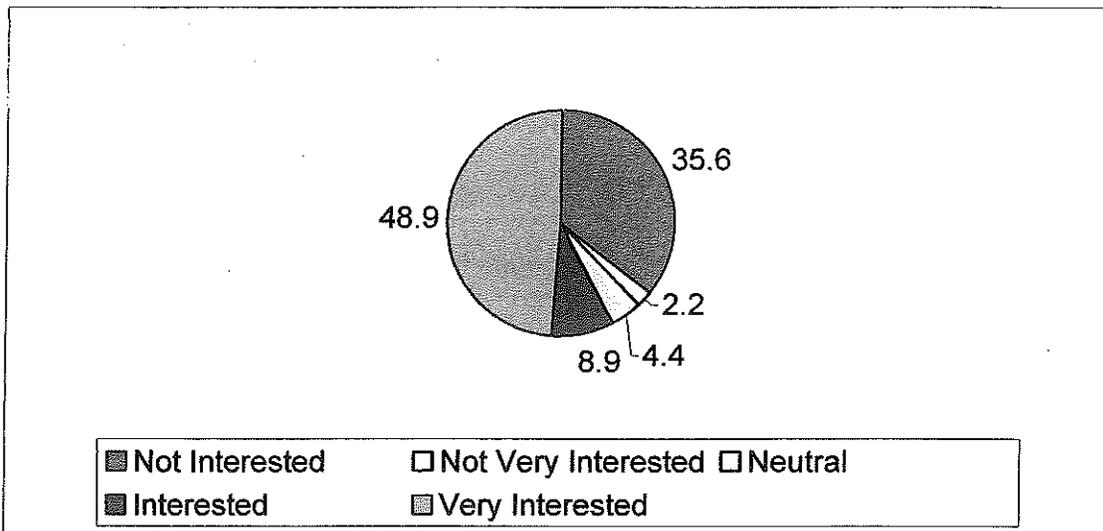
| Income          | Have you heard of CRT? |     | Total |
|-----------------|------------------------|-----|-------|
|                 | no                     | yes |       |
| <\$9,999        | 2                      | 6   | 8     |
| \$10,000-29,999 | 6                      | 7   | 13    |
| \$30,000-49,999 | 4                      | 1   | 5     |
| >\$50,000       | 7                      | 4   | 11    |
| Total           | 19                     | 18  | 37    |

Of the 45 survey respondents, only 21 had heard of the Community Renewal Team (see Table 6). Of the 21 households making less than \$30,000, only six received energy assistance and only 13 had heard of the CRT. However, 17 of these 21 were interested in receiving information about energy assistance programs and were most likely eligible.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> This proportion falls in line with the comparable utilization of welfare programs in the United States. However, welfare programs exist in order to benefit those who may need assistance.

<sup>11</sup> One of the four respondents in this group that was not interested in receiving information about energy assistance programs was already enrolled in a CRT-administered program that provides oil assistance. This respondent's enrollment in a program can help explain the lack of interest. Several interviews indicated that while residents were interested, they simply lacked the time to go through the process etc.

**Figure 1: Interest in Energy Assistance Programs**



Overall, over half of the entire sample (see Figure 1) expressed interest in receiving information about energy assistance programs. Many of those who lacked interest were in higher-income households that are not eligible for assistance (see Table 7). Other respondents explained that they were simply too busy to deal with more information and didn't have time to research programs themselves.

**Table 7: Interest in Energy Assistance Programs by Income**

|        |                 | How interested are you in receiving information on assistance programs? |                     |         |            |                 | Total |
|--------|-----------------|---|---------------------|---------|------------|-----------------|-------|
|        |                 | not interested  | not very interested | neutral | interested | very interested |       |
| Income | <\$9,999        | 1   | 0                   | 0       | 1          | 6               | 8     |
|        | \$10,000-29,999 | 2   | 1                   | 0       | 1          | 9               | 13    |
|        | \$30,000-49,999 | 3   | 0                   | 1       | 1          | 0               | 5     |
|        | >\$50,000       | 6   | 0                   | 1       | 0          | 4               | 11    |
| Total  |                 | 12  | 1                   | 2       | 3          | 19              | 37    |

### *Other Energy Concerns*

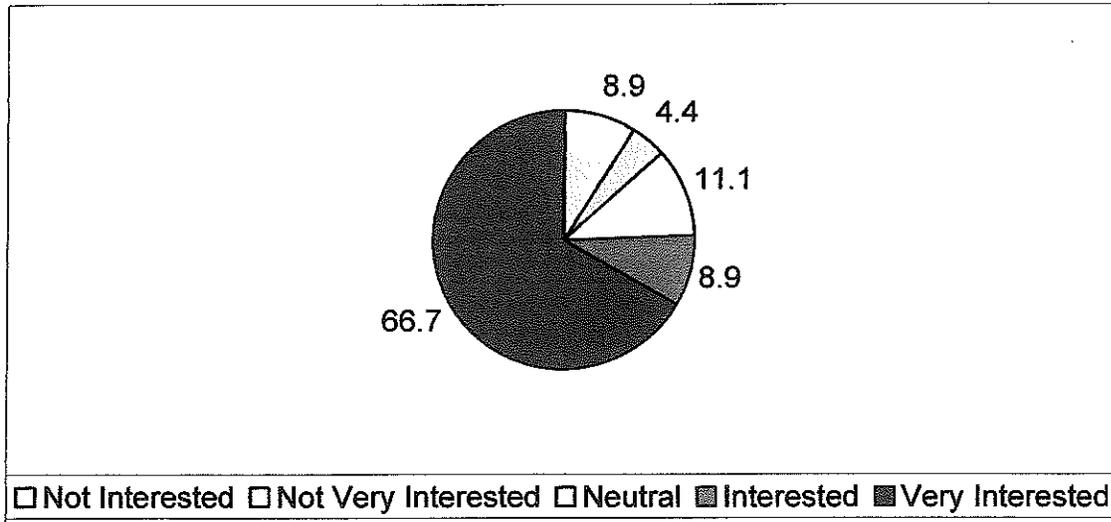
Aside from rising oil and gas prices, one aspect of heating a house that may contribute to higher costs is insulation. Of 43 respondents, 35 reported that their living space's temperature was satisfactory in the winter. Of the eight people whose living space was not satisfactorily warm in the winter, five had household incomes below \$20,000. Though most residents were satisfied with the general warmth of their houses, 33 of 44 respondents said that there were rooms that were either too cold or too hot in their living area. This group was more evenly dispersed across income, perhaps because most houses in the North End are fairly old, regardless of the income level of the people who reside in them.

Despite the lack of uniform temperature in many units, 15 of 21 tenants remarked that their landlords were responsive when it comes to their heating concerns. Examples of such responsiveness included anything from fixing a heater to lowering the ceiling of a newly-renovated apartment in order to conserve heat and even one landlord who dropped \$50 off the rent each winter month. Four of six who described their landlords as non-responsive had household incomes below \$20,000. This may indicate that landlords of lower-income renters are less responsive to maintenance concerns that lead to energy inefficiency; however, further studies would be needed to solidify this claim.

Out of 45 respondents, 32 have tried to lower their energy bills. Of these 32, nine have tried minor weatherization, 17 have attempted to use less energy and conserve, and six respondents used other methods to curb consumption and cost such as putting plastic on the outside of their windows, plugging up cracks under doors with towels, and turning off electrical appliances when leaving the house. This figure suggests that the increase in

costs have prompted residents to take some sort of action and could explain why almost three-quarters of the population (see Figure 2) stated that they were interested or very interested in learning about ways to save money and conserve energy.

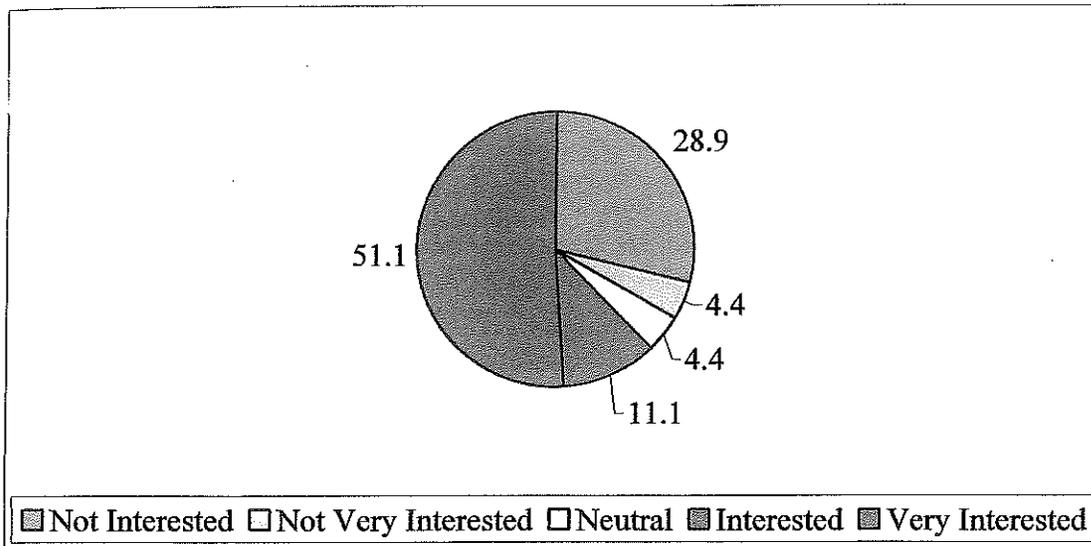
**Figure 2: Interest in Ways to Save Money and Conserve Energy**



### *Other Interests*

The final section of our survey asked residents to scale their interest level in certain areas of energy and bill assistance, information, awareness, jobs, and outdoor activities.

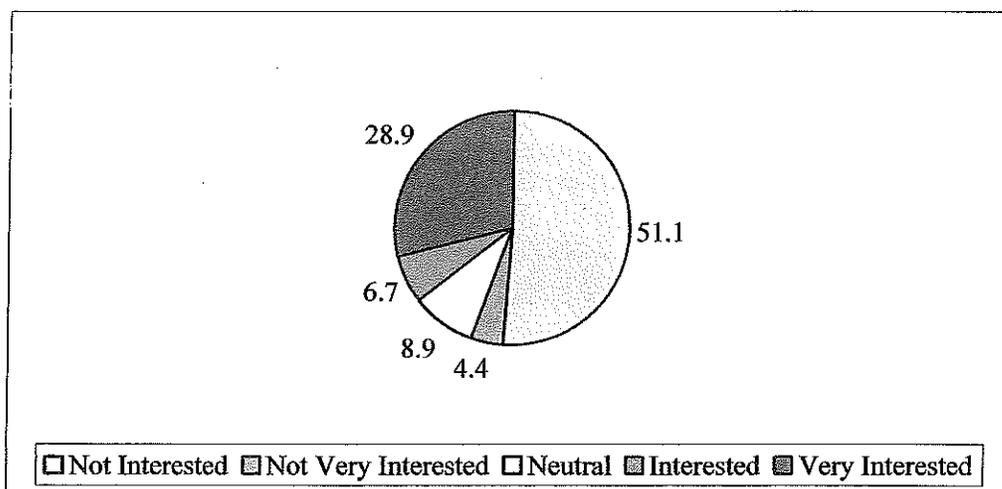
**Figure 3: Interest in Having an Energy Audit**



Twenty-eight out of the 45 respondents declared that they were either interested or very interested in having an energy auditor visit their home to see if there are ways to reduce energy costs (see Figure 3). This interest level is parallel to the previous data that describe nearly three-quarters of the sample as wanting to learn more about ways to save money and conserve energy, suggesting heightened concern with energy efficiency and use brought on by increased economic stresses.

A follow-up question asked how interested respondents were in being “trained to do this.” (See figure 4.)

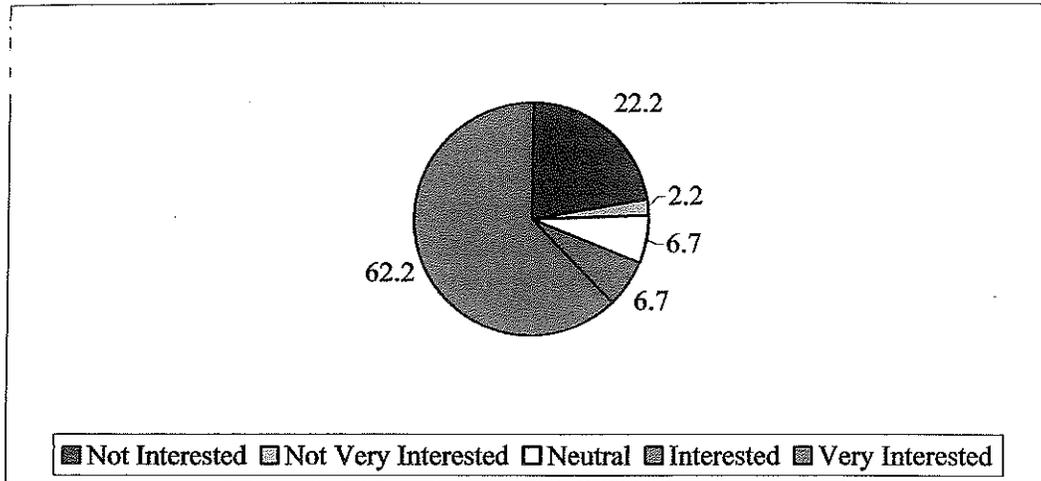
**Figure 4: Interest in Being Trained to be an Energy Auditor**



Approximately one-third of the survey sample was interested in becoming an energy auditor. This suggests that a program to train energy auditors might be a worthy initiative. Each section of the neighborhood would only require a few auditors and the training could provide jobs to interested community members.

The final question asked residents how interested they would be “in activities for children that included nature, hiking, biking, and local waterways.”

**Figure 5: Interest in Outdoor Activities for Children**



Most respondents expressed concern over a lack of organized activities for their children, especially during the summer, and seemed very excited by the prospect of healthy, outdoor programs and resources. On the other hand, households who did not have children were still interested in local nature and the outdoors, but often answered “not interested” on account of the fact that the question was directed towards families with children. Given that some of the Jonah Center’s first projects revolve around increasing community access to local nature, the fact that the community is very interested in such plans suggests the Jonah Center is right to proceed in that direction.

#### IV. Recommendations

The increase of utility bills creates a further instability in a low-income North End resident's personal and work life. Providing basic necessities to for oneself and one's family becomes nearly impossible if more than 30% of income is going to utility bills. This puts a neighborhood at risk, both in that it de-stabilizes a family's access to food, housing, and health care, and also perpetuates the transitional nature of the North End community. After carefully considering our findings, we have come up with a series of suggestions for NEAT and The Jonah Center in the areas of lowering energy costs, involving the community, and creating/utilizing access to the local environment. While the vision of the actual Jonah Center is focused on a much larger contingent than just the North End, or even Middletown, the process around its development and the projects leading up to its creation affects North End residents most directly. As that is the case, community involvement and education on energy-related issues are crucial to the sustainability of the Jonah Center initiative and are also compatible with NEAT's long- and short-term goals.

##### *Access to Existing Energy Programs and Subsidies*

The issue of rising energy prices, and its burden to low-income residents especially, is one that needs immediate attention, with initiatives relieving the impacts of steadily increasing energy costs presented as soon as possible. Residents of the North End could have a much greater access to the body of information about weatherization programs.<sup>12</sup> Since many residents do not have access to the web, it would be very helpful

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<sup>12</sup> These energy assistance programs can be found through the Community Renewal Team as well as on the internet.

for NEAT, in conjunction with The Jonah Center, to find a way to improve access to weatherization and energy assistance programs. This could be achieved through a strengthened partnership with the Community Renewal Team (CRT), which, as shown by the data, needs more publicity in the North End. Many of the residents who were eligible for free weatherization programs and energy assistance were unaware of the CRT's role in administering energy assistance programs. NEAT could aid in this process by placing information about the CRT in its newsletter around the change of seasons when either heating units or air conditioners are turned on and energy costs become a primary concern.

Since economic savings for North End residents is one of NEAT's primary goals, collaboration and increased communication with the Community Renewal Team should be encouraged. From this collaboration, North End residents could be made more aware of certain issues like new or updated state-offered programs being, access to alternative energy, access to free energy efficient goods, access to free energy audits, etc.

One issue with the CRT for North End residents is the limited open office hours. For low-income people, making an appointment between the hours of 8:30am and 2:30pm can become more of a burden than a help. One way NEAT and the Jonah Center could alleviate this time pressure would be provide (or facilitate) volunteers from either the CRT or their own organizations going door-to-door, or to hold an open house in the North End to offer information about what programs each resident is eligible for. Both organizations might also be able to convince the CRT to hold extended hours for a few days during the busiest times of the year.

One last way NEAT could raise awareness of the programs already in existence, is

to publicize the telephone-information line (#211) in its newsletter. Many residents reported that 211 helped to answer energy-related questions and give centralized information on the issues, as well as information on the Community Renewal Team. Thus, the information hotline would be a valuable resource to those who don't already know about it.

*Community Outreach: Community Festival*

Based on the percentages of people who did not know about NEAT and the Jonah Center, there appears to be a need for community outreach activities that alert and engage the community in the projects and organizing already present in their community. A fall festival hosted by NEAT and The Jonah Center might garner community support, obtain more contacts for the NEAT newsletter and other mailings, and involve the community in NEAT's current projects. Several residents in the St. John neighborhood mentioned that they felt excluded from NEAT's efforts, which would be a prime reason to engage this part of the North End and hold the festival there.

NEAT and the Jonah Center volunteers could organize a daytime concert, with workshops such as poetry, dance, art, and hip hop provided by community members and Wesleyan students, tables set up by both community members (to sell goods or promote a cause) and businesses (such as Home Depot and Ace Hardware, to give free energy efficient materials), and the Community Renewal Team (with information on energy assistance). Booths with information on energy-related issues and prevention strategies could also be present. This would create a setting for NEAT and The Jonah Center to not only promote their own organizations but also to provide entertainment, food, and

information simultaneously, grounding energy-related issues physically within the community as both an economic and social concern.

#### *Community Outreach: Youth*

Concern for the safety of kids and problems of youth-based crime incidents and involvement with the juvenile court system was raised by a number of North End parents. Many parents surveyed addressed a concern for local youth, especially during the summer months given the lack of activities for kids in the area (for families with low incomes in particular). Furthermore, with all the energy (and larger environmental justice) issues the North End faces, it is important to pay attention to the present and the future effects simultaneously. There are many children living in the area and it is vital to include them in the process of addressing these problems. At the most basic level, kids should be made aware of the existence of the environmental problems facing them and their communities and how social and environmental factors are related and can affect them. What does it mean (financially, socially and environmentally) for energy prices to be rising? What other options are there? What can be done about it? If the Jonah Center ran a course either in a local school, through the Green Street Art Center, or elsewhere, to educate kids about energy and environmental issues that affect them directly, the next generation of North End residents might become an integral part of the solution.

#### *Hiking Trails*

One of the most popular ideas among residents was having access to local hiking trails and waterways. This is quite serendipitous as the Jonah Center is currently focusing

much of its energy on the task of building hiking and walking trails through the area surrounding the Coginchaug and Mattabesset rivers and constructing a boat launch. This is an ideal opportunity to both involve the community and push ahead with the Jonah Center's vision. Our survey revealed an interest in having access to local environments both for kids and adults. However, given the lack of summertime activities in Middletown, special emphasis should be placed on including children in this process.

### *Environmental Art*

The Jonah Center is interested in including environmental art (sometimes referred to as ecoart) in the creation of hiking trails and in the general opening-up of the North End Peninsula. Adding a sense of artistic creativity to the natural environment not only provides a means by which to increase community involvement, but also changes the way people view the environment around them and reinforces their connection to it. Ecoart Space, a non-profit that takes creative approaches to restoring the environment using art to "inspire communities into action" over environmental concerns, is a particularly relevant resource. This organization, based in New York, specializes in working with children on art and ecology based curriculums and installments. Furthermore, Middletown itself has several key resources that would potentially be available to the Jonah Center, including Wesleyan University and The Green Street Art Center.

### *Energy Audit Training*

There are obvious linkages between poverty, the high cost of energy, opportunities for youth, and unemployment. In an attempt to address several of these issues

collectively, we propose that NEAT and The Jonah Center create a program that would teach youth how to do energy audits. Participants could be hired out as professionals to assess the energy efficiency of other people's homes or could simply inspect their own houses for inefficiencies. Such a project would both involve North End youth and provide employment opportunities. In addition to teaching weatherization techniques, the program could cover an array of urban environmental subjects such as air pollution, green construction, environmental justice, community gardens and the importance of green space. Having in-depth knowledge of your neighborhood, including its natural environment, also fosters a sense of ownership and pride, which is in line with many of NEAT's fundamental goals.

## V. Conclusion

While environmental sustainability is of utmost importance, it should not take precedence over concern with the immediate well being of local residents. Moreover, one should not have to choose between social welfare and the environment—the two are intimately connected and should instead be addressed in tandem, each being used to further the other’s purpose. Any environmental problem is also a job, money, and/or health problem. Looking at it this way provides more opportunity for community involvement because improving the environment is a social issue that is interconnected with people’s day-to-day survival. The nature of the Jonah Center project lends itself to “solution-based” activism, giving people something to stand for—The Jonah Center, Clean Energy, Community Building—rather than something to stand against. This positive stance is much more effective in garnering community support, which is integral to any movement whether financial, environmental or social.

The North End of Middletown is a low-income community that is extraordinarily affected by the rising costs of energy. NEAT and the Jonah Center, however, are two organizations that have the ability to raise awareness about the economic and environmental costs of energy inefficiency and present solutions that could help alleviate the stresses to both hard-working, bill-paying residents and the delicate environment within which they live. By fostering a community where these concerns are addressed, NEAT and the Jonah Center will play integral roles in raising the area’s standard-of-living, cultivating and encouraging increased economic and environmental sustainability.

## WORKS CITED

*Census Website.* [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

*CRT Annual Report.* 2005.

*Energy Information Association.* <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/steo/pub/contents.html>.

*NEAT Website.* <http://www.neatmiddletown.org/>.

*The Jonah Center Website.* <http://www.thejonahcenter.org/>.

## **Appendix A – Agreement on Methodology and Timeline**

Wesleyan Community Research Seminar  
Spring 2006  
*North End Action Team/Jonah Center for Earth and Art Project*

### **Agreement on Methodology and Timeline (AMT)** February 15, 2006

#### **I. Purpose of Study**

The Wesleyan research team will work with The Jonah Center and North End Action Team (NEAT) on a project to research the possibilities for energy conservation and utility savings among North End residents in Middletown. The main goals of the project are to provide energy and money saving information to interested residents and collect concrete data for quantitative analysis. The research will assess the needs of North End residents in the area of energy use and attempt to raise broad awareness of the energy issues affecting them. The Wesleyan research team also hopes to identify a core group of interested residents to carry on education and awareness programs within the neighborhood after the academic project is complete.

#### **I. Methodology and Timeline**

##### *Literature Review and Background Research (February 13-24)*

The objective of the Literature Review and Background Research phase of the project is to ensure the most effective and well-organized study possible by creating a foundation of knowledge in the area of energy efficiency and low-income neighborhoods. Researchers will explore existing energy programs and organizations that give financial support for paying utility bills in Connecticut and specifically the Middletown area. Researchers will also seek out examples of viable reports to use as a guideline in designing our own surveys.

During this time the researchers will also compile two fact sheets to distribute to community residents: one addressing energy use of various appliances (e.g., how much does it cost to run a television for twelve hours) and the other providing names and contacts for local organizations and programs that help with energy efficiency and bill paying in order to provide interviewees with accessible ways to reduce the cost of their bills. If there is ample time, researchers will also contact local hardware and general stores to determine whether or not there is any interest in establishing some sort of price reduction in energy efficient appliances and products (e.g., light bulbs, caulking, windows) to encourage energy efficiency in the North End.

##### *Fieldwork and Data Collection (February 25- March 10, March 28 – April 7)*

Our fieldwork will begin with a preliminary group interview with active Middletown residents familiar with NEAT. The people who will participate will be chosen based on a

list that Lydia Brewster will provide. This interview will help us to get a general sense of immediate needs and concerns in the neighborhood.

The research will, however, maintain a quantitative focus so that the agencies can use the final report in a way that might be politically persuasive. Qualitative anecdotes will be incorporated to make the research more personal and to galvanize community members to the cause of conserving energy and reducing costs.

We will conduct a series of door-to-door surveys with a random sample of the entire North End. Surveys will be orally administered with both open- and closed-ended questions that seek to ascertain energy needs and concerns. Questions will be geared toward an understanding of energy use as it relates to income, household size, rent, and relationships with landlords. Each survey will be accompanied by an informational handout that will educate residents about energy conservation and savings measures. Specifically, we will familiarize residents with Connecticut's Energy Assistance Program, which can benefit households with low incomes. *Data*

*Analysis and Report Writing (April 8 – May 19)*

### **III. Confidentiality, Data Ownership**

Consent forms will be utilized to ensure that the data can be incorporated into our findings and information that is linked to individuals will not be released except in the case of residents who wish to become active and follow-up our research with NEAT or the Jonah Center. Although we will own the data and report, NEAT and the Jonah Center will be free to use the report at their own discretion.

### **IV. Agency Relations**

As our research does not need hands-on, daily agency involvement, we will meet with John Hall and Lydia Brewster every other week to provide updates, while providing detailed email summaries on the off weeks. The channels of communication will always be open, however, with both parties accessible to the best of their abilities.

### **V. Contacts**

Andrew Aprile (917.734.8812), [aaprile@wesleyan.edu](mailto:aaprile@wesleyan.edu)  
Makenna Goodman (917.903.8233), [mlgoodman@wesleyan.edu](mailto:mlgoodman@wesleyan.edu)  
Kalia Lydgate (831.247.9127), [klydgate@wesleyan.edu](mailto:klydgate@wesleyan.edu)  
Lirra Schiebler (401.855.0575), [lschiebler@wesleyan.edu](mailto:lschiebler@wesleyan.edu)  
Rob Rosenthal (860.685.2943), [rrosenthal@wesleyan.edu](mailto:rrosenthal@wesleyan.edu)  
Craig Thomas (802.989.9568), [crthomas@wesleyan.edu](mailto:crthomas@wesleyan.edu)

## Appendix B – Energy Survey

February 22, 2006

Energy Survey

Wesleyan Community Research, NEAT, and The Jonah Center for Earth and Art

We are a group of Wesleyan students who have signed on to do energy research for NEAT, the North End Action Team, and the Jonah Center for Earth and Art. These groups want to know the energy concerns of North End residents in the areas of heating and electricity.

1) How have energy costs affected you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

-What do you think are the biggest energy issues that you face?

\_\_\_\_\_

2) Do you rent or own your home?

-If you rent, are your utilities included? Y/N

-If you own, are you a landlord? Y/N

-If you are a landlord, do you include utilities? Y/N

3) What kind of heating do you use? (gas, oil, electric)

-Who provides your heat?

4) Do you have an individual meter? Y/N

-Do you use alternative energy? Y/N

5) What is your average heating bill for a winter month?

[\$50-150] [\$151-200] [\$201-250] [\$251-300] [\$300-350] [Above 350]

6) What is your average electric bill per month?

[\$50-150] [\$151-200] [\$201-250] [\$251-300] [\$300-350] [Above 350]

7) Have you seen a noticeable increase in your electric and/or heating bill(s) from last year to this year? Y/N

8) Have you ever tried to lower your energy bill(s)? Y/N

-If yes, how?

9) Do you ever have questions about your bill(s)? Y/N

10) Have you ever followed up on these questions? Y/N

11) Is your house warm in the winter? Y/N

12) Are any of the rooms in your house too cold or too hot? Y/N

13) Is your landlord responsive, or non-responsive when it comes to energy concerns?

14) Do you receive energy assistance? Y/N

-If so, what kind?

15) Have you heard of the Community Renewal Team? Y/N

16) What is your annual income?

[under \$9,999] [\$10,000-19,999] [\$20,000-29,999] [\$30,000-39,999]

[\$40,000-49,999] [\$50,000-59,999] [\$60,000-69,999] [\$70,000-79,999]

[\$80,000-89,999] [\$90,000-99,999] [above \$100,000]

17) How many people reside in this household? \_\_\_\_\_

Are there children under the age of 18 in residence? Y/N

**For questions 18-26, please gauge your interest on a scale of 1-5, 5 being "very interested," 4 being "interested," 3 being "neutral," 2 being "not very interested" and 1 being "not interested."**

18) How interested would you be in having someone come over to your house to see if there are any ways you can reduce energy costs? 1 2 3 4 5

19) How interested would you be in getting trained to do this? 1 2 3 4 5

20) How interested are you in learning more about ways you can save money and conserve energy? 1 2 3 4 5

21) How interested are you in receiving information about energy assistance programs?  
1 2 3 4 5

23) How interested are you in having assistance reading and/or paying your energy bills?  
1 2 3 4 5

23) Have you heard of NEAT? Y/N

22) How interested are you in activities for children that involve nature, local waterways, hiking, camping, biking, etc?  
1 2 3 4 5

24) Have you heard of the Jonah Center? Y/N

Contact Person Information Sheet  
Energy Survey  
NEAT/Jonah Center/Wesleyan Community Research Team

25) Are you interested in being a contact person for NEAT/JOC in future energy-saving programs and endeavors?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C - Connecticut Guidelines for CEAP Eligibility

### Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP)

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| Household of 1 is eligible if income is: | Under \$14,355 |
| Household of 2 is eligible if income is: | Under \$19,245 |
| Household of 3 is eligible if income is: | Under \$24,135 |
| Household of 4 is eligible if income is: | Under \$29,025 |
| Household of 5 is eligible if income is: | Under \$33,915 |
| Household of 6 is eligible if income is: | Under \$38,805 |
| Household of 7 is eligible if income is: | Under \$43,695 |

*Above row includes homeowners and renters who pay separately for heat. Also includes renters whose heat is included in their rent-- as long as more than 30% of gross income is paid toward rent.*

Or--if you or a member of your household is at least 60 years old or has a disability, your household is eligible if...

|                           |                |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| Household of 1 income is: | Under \$19,140 |
| Household of 2 income is: | Under \$25,660 |
| Household of 3 income is: | Under \$32,180 |
| Household of 4 income is: | Under \$38,700 |
| Household of 5 income is: | Under \$45,220 |
| Household of 6 income is: | Under \$51,740 |
| Household of 7 income is: | Under \$58,260 |

*Above row includes homeowners and renters who pay separately for heat.*

### Contingency Heating Assistance Program (CHAP)

CHAP is for households with higher incomes than would qualify for the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program.

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| Household of 1 is eligible if income is: | Under \$26,833 |
| Household of 2 is eligible if income is: | Under \$35,089 |
| Household of 3 is eligible if income is: | Under \$43,345 |
| Household of 4 is eligible if income is: | Under \$51,601 |
| Household of 5 is eligible if income is: | Under \$59,858 |
| Household of 6 is eligible if income is: | Under \$68,114 |
| Household of 7 is eligible if income is: | Under \$69,662 |

*Above row includes homeowners and renters who pay separately for heat. At this level, renters are not eligible if heat is included in the rent.*

## Appendix D – Annotated Bibliography of Resources and Model Projects

### GREEN ENTERPRISE and GREEN CONSTRUCTION/HOUSING:

#### - The Ella Baker Center for Human Rights

<http://www.ellabakercenter.org/page.php?pageid=10>

- Main focus of this organization is the criminal justice system and related inequalities within low-income and minority neighborhoods, though their projects span many disciplines
- Executive Director Van Jones is working on a project that would turn all of West Oakland, CA into a green enterprise zone. This is part of a project called “Green Jobs Not Jails,” which promotes

#### - Green Communities

<http://www.enterprisefoundation.org/resources/green/about-essentials-grants.asp>

- First national green building program that focuses entirely on affordable housing: aims to transform the way communities think about, design and build affordable homes.
- \*\*offers grants, loans, tax-credit equity, training and technical assistance, gives developers and builders the resources to bring green projects to life
- Green Communities Initiative: in the fall of 2004, the initiative is a five-year, \$550 million commitment to build more than 8,500 environmentally friendly affordable homes across the U.S.

#### -“Internet Visionaries Betting On Green Technology Boom: Vast Market, Huge Profit Potential Beckon Investors”

By Anny Shin

Washington Post Staff Writer

Tuesday, April 18, 2006; Page D01

#### -Low Income Housing Group

<http://www.djc.com/news/re/11163631.html>

#### -National Housing Institute

<http://www.nhi.org/online/issues/103/shab.html>

-“Green Communities, Green Jobs”

#### -“Once-Gritty New Haven Takes a Green Step Forward”

Northern Sky News, Interview by Ali Macalady with Mayor DeStefano

<http://www.northernskynews.com/backissue%20pages/Green%20New%20Haven.html>

#### - The Restore

<http://cetonline.org/>

<http://www.restoreonline.org/hot.htm>

- Accepts donations of “quality but unwanted home improvement materials” and resells them at lower prices (includes salvaged material and surplus stock from homeowners, contractors and collection centers)
- Remington building offers possibility of green building supplies outlet, could host other “green” facilities similar to the Restore (possibility to gather materials from Wesleyan on move-out days)

### HIKING TRAILS, ECOART and URBAN ECOLOGY

#### - Ecoart Space

<http://www.ecoartspace.org/>

- A nonprofit organization working internationally with individuals and organizations who are interested in creating new approaches to restoring the earth

- Use art as a means to inspire communities into action when addressing environmental issues (activities include curating exhibitions, working with schools and children on art and ecology based curriculum and serving as an information and consulting resource for artists, museums, educators and others)

- Seeks to connect human beings into larger ecological systems
- Extensive "links" section

Amy Lipton

PO Box 10

Garrison, New York 10524

[amy@ecoartspace.org](mailto:amy@ecoartspace.org) [amy@ecoartspace.org](mailto:amy@ecoartspace.org)

[http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2005/01/ecoartists\\_enga.php](http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2005/01/ecoartists_enga.php)

**- Landviews: Online Journal of Landscape, Art and Design**

<http://www.landviews.org/articles/metaphor-pw.html>

- ecoartists: engaging communities in a new metaphor
- presents a variety of successful ecoart projects

**- "Promoting Better Health With More Hiking Trails"**

--Steve Grant, Hartford Courant, April 17, 2006

--Discusses key elements of urban hiking trails—specifically in CT

--Part of an initiative to have a trail within 15 minutes of every home in CT linking all CT cities

-- Contact: 860-346-2372, or [info@ctwoodlands.org](mailto:info@ctwoodlands.org)

**- Urban Ecology Institute**

[http://www.bc.edu/bc\\_org/research/urbaneco/](http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/research/urbaneco/)

**- Urban Forest Ecosystems Institute**

<http://www.ufe.org/jobs.lasso>

- works in co-operation with other government agencies, private consulting firms and schools on interdisciplinary projects addressing a variety of ecosystems from inner-city forests to semi-developed forests

**COMMUNITY and YOUTH INVOLVEMENT with the ENVIRONMENT:**

**-Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE)**

<http://www.ace-ej.org/>

- Aims to build "the power of communities of color and lower income communities in New England to eradicate environmental racism and classism and achieve environmental justice"

- Works specifically to develop youth leadership

**-CT Coalition for Environmental Justice**

<http://www.environmental-justice.org/>

P.O. Box 2022

Hartford, CT 06145-2022

(860) 548-1133

(888) 548-1133 (toll free)

(860) 548-9197 (fax)

--MAY 2= World Asthma Day (Hartford Public Library)

**-Community Arts Network**

[http://www.communityarts.net/links/archivefiles/media\\_arts\\_all/index.php](http://www.communityarts.net/links/archivefiles/media_arts_all/index.php)

- List links concerning community building, the arts and environment

**- Statement Arts: Art for a Conscious World**

<http://statementarts.org/>

**- United States Department of Agriculture**

[http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/newsroom/newsrelease/2002/nr\\_2002-09-25-minority\\_communities.htm](http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/newsroom/newsrelease/2002/nr_2002-09-25-minority_communities.htm)

- Project to raise local awareness of environmental issues, education program, minority neighborhoods

**- Interprogram—Art and Environment, Grant Recipients**

[http://www.nathancummings.org/inter\\_grants/000318.html](http://www.nathancummings.org/inter_grants/000318.html)

**- Green Guerillas**

<http://www.greenguerillas.org/>

- established the modern community gardening movement in New York City

Since 1973 greenguerillas™ has helped thousands of people realize their dreams of turning

- Provide services to grassroots organizations to help enhance community gardens and help community leaders, especially youth, sustain neighborhood coalitions

**- Green Corps**

<http://www.greencorps.org/>

- Field school for environmental organizing

**- Database of State Incentives for Renewable Energy (DSIRE)**

<http://www.dsireusa.org/>

# A Few Energy Programs

## Bill Assistance

**Connecticut Energy Assistance Program – CEAP**  
**Contingency Heating Assistance Program -- CHAP**

Government-funded assistance programs that help pay for heating. Call information hotline at 2-1-1. Application deadline is April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

## Operation Fuel

A private assistance program for households that need emergency help with energy bills but are not eligible for government assistance. Contact the Fuel Bank at (860) 344-0097 until May 31<sup>st</sup>.

## Bill Reduction/ Payment Plan

**CL&P's NUSTART**

With NUSTART customers can reduce or eliminate their past-due balance if they pay an agreed-upon budgeted amount on time each month. Request an application from CL&P by calling 1-800-286-2828 or 860-947-2828. This is not a seasonal service, so there is no deadline.

\*Note: Matching payment plans are available for most utility companies in Connecticut.

## Energy Conservation Products

**United Illuminating: UI Helps**

UI Helps program can provide energy-saving products for your home, free of charge. These include water heater blankets, low-flow shower heads and energy-efficient lights. Call UI at 877-WISE-USE

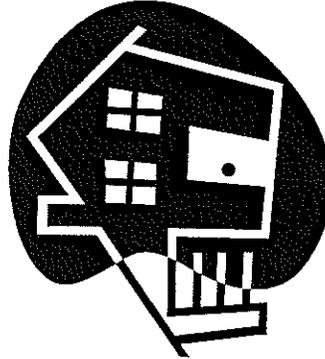
## Weatherization Assistance

**WRAP**

WRAP offers free weatherization procedures for free to low-income renter's/homeowners. A one page application and landlord permission form can be found at [www.clp.com/clmres/energy/wrap.pdf](http://www.clp.com/clmres/energy/wrap.pdf)

**DOE Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)**

WAP works with state/local governments to provide energy audits and +/- \$2500 of work on your home. If you receive Supplemental Security Income or Aid to Families with Dependent Children, you are automatically eligible. For more information, call: CT Dept of Social Services at 1-800-842-1508.



## Construction Rebates

**CHIF: CT House Investment Fund**

The Energy Conservation Loan Program (ECL) and the Multifamily Energy Conservation Loan Program (MEL) provide financing at below market rates to single family and multi-family residential property owners for the purchase and installation of cost-saving energy conservation improvements. Contact [loans@chif.org](mailto:loans@chif.org)

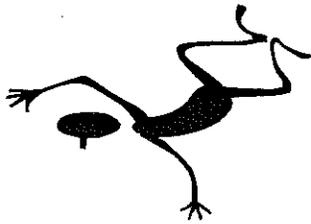
## Local Contacts

### North End Action Team (NEAT)

A grassroots community organization serving Middletown's North End neighborhood.  
**For further questions contact the NEAT office located at 33 Ferry St. tel: 346-4845**

### Jonah Center for Earth and Art

A non-profit organization that aims to transform the North End Peninsula into a center for recreation, education, renewable energy development and artistic expression.  
**For further questions contact John Hall at: 346-6657 or visit the website: [www.thejonahcenter.org](http://www.thejonahcenter.org)**



## Energy Saving Facts

\*Replacing 25% of your lights with fluorescents will save you about 50% of your lighting costs.

\*For every degree you lower your heat in the 60-degree to 70-degree range, you'll save up to 5% on heating costs. The thermostat should be set at **65 to 68 degrees for maximum energy efficiency.**

\*Using cold water reduces your washer's energy use by 75%.

\*Install weather-stripping or caulk leaky doors and windows and install gaskets behind outlet covers. **Savings up to 10% on energy costs.**

\*Turn off dripping faucets. **One drop per second can add up to 165 gallons of hot water a month**—that's more than one person uses in two weeks!

\***Unplug cell phone chargers** that are not in use. They use energy just by being plugged in.

### Energy Use Breakdown for the Average Household

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| Heating                                  | 38 percent |
| Hot Water                                | 19 percent |
| Major Appliances (e.g. refrigerator, TV) | 21 percent |
| Other Appliances                         | 15 percent |
| Lighting                                 | 7 percent  |

### Definitions

~Energy can have many definitions, but for the purposes of this survey/information sheet: usable power or power sources, such as electricity, oil, coal, and gas.

~Something that is **Energy Efficient** uses less energy but has the same or better performance than normal products or systems.

~**Home Energy Audits** are the first step to assess how much energy your home consumes and to evaluate what measures you can take to make your home more energy efficient. An audit will show you problems that may, when corrected, save you significant amounts of money over time. You can perform a simple energy audit yourself, or have a professional energy auditor carry out a more thorough audit.

~**Weatherization** is the process of changing a building to reduce energy consumption and costs. Specific measures include adding insulation, installing storm windows and doors, caulking cracks.

~**Caulking** is a material used to seal areas where heat is escaping or where cold air is entering a building.