

Fair, Festival, and Community Event Guide©

For

Germ City™: Clean Hands, Healthy People

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April 2, 2003

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INTRODUCTION

Fairs, festivals, and special community events are wonderful outreach opportunities for the **Germ City: Clean Hands, Healthy People Program**. Through the years, community leaders of fairs and festivals have increasingly recognized the importance of health promotion during public events with respect to hand washing and hand hygiene. Our guide is a compilation of experiences from outreach with more than 150,000 participants in Washington, Alabama, Hawaii, Idaho, and West Virginia. We have included information on successes, challenges, and opportunities. Our guide begins with an overview for conducting the **Germ City: Clean Hands, Healthy People Program** for public events as well as commonly asked questions from participants. The **Germ City: Clean Hands, Healthy People Program** has been successfully presented in both small rural settings with 200 participants and large fairs like the Western Washington fair attracting more than 60,000 participants during a seventeen day long program.

Our guide also includes an in-depth case study provided by public health educator, Pamela Wild of Bellingham, Washington. Pamela developed and provided leadership for a community hand washing education team and was instrumental in the delivery of the program at the Northwest Washington Fair. Located in Lynden, Washington, the 85 year old fair attracts more than 200,000 visitors annually. The fair includes a variety of activities including agricultural demonstrations, amusement rides, local and nationally recognized entertainers, food vendors and for-profit and non-profit exhibitors. Following the Case Study examples of a Press Release, Community Announcement, Program Comments, Check List for Organizing Events, and other materials developed by the Whatcom County Health Department for use the Northwest Washington Fair are included for help in developing your community programs.

As you conduct the Germ City Program, we encourage you to share your successes and challenges with us. Please e-mail Susie Craig at scraig@wsu.edu and we will work to include your suggestions and comments in the next edition of the Fair, Festival, and Community Event Guide and on our web site. Working cooperatively, we can make positive differences in food safety and community health. Thanks!

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THE BASICS

For every community event, you will need:

- A covered, protected space for the **Germ City** unit preferably located in a high traffic area and clearly visible to potential participants. **Germ City** units are often located inside buildings or under a larger tent with sides that can be added for protection overnight.
- A three pronged electrical outlet, extension cord, and tape or other materials to cover and secure extension cords to prevent tripping.
- Black-light sensitive hand lotion like GlitterPotion or Glo-Germ
- Restrooms located nearby with multiple hand wash sinks - preferably with hot water supply
- Ample supplies of soap and paper towels and plans for refilling during event
- Educators and volunteers
- Support from event sponsors/management

I. Advance Planning is Critical and Valuable

- *Establish Partnerships with KEY Decision Makers*
When key decision makers are involved from the beginning of the planning process, it can make significant differences in the outcome of program delivery. Our experience is that with advance planning, event planners and representatives of fair management will often go out of their way to ensure good placement and support of the **Germ City Program** during the events. Especially with fairs, there is heightened concern for public safety related to petting zoos, food service operations, and public health. Hand washing education becomes fundamental to ensure public safety during a fair or community festival.
- *Ask Questions, Listen, Build on Existing Community Strengths*
Our **Germ City Program** partners have been as diverse as our public events. They have included county health department sanitarians and health educators, state health department epidemiologists, 4-H members and leaders, restaurateurs, registered nurses, hospital employees, health care cooperatives, Cooperative Extension Food Advisors, members of civic organizations, Consumer and Family Living high school students, dietetic student interns, and community volunteers.

In many instances, both partners and volunteers have evolved from careful consideration of community strengths, identifying public health concerns and needs, asking questions, and doing lots of listening. Frequently the partners and volunteers have become long-term supporters of the **Germ City Program** identifying additional program outreach opportunities for

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hand washing education. This gradual process of developing meaningful relationships ensures significant community support and involvement.

II. Volunteers Are Vital: Recruitment, Training, and Recognition

Examples of written materials used in recruitment, training, and recognition are included in the Appendix. Many of the examples were developed for the **Germ City Program** in Whatcom County, Washington. They are further described in the Case Study. PowerPoint slide presentations for volunteer training and **Germ City** unit set-up are also included in the **Germ City** materials.

It's a good idea to include these components in volunteer training:

- Overview of the **Germ City Program** including goals and objectives, Unit set-up and take-down
- Germ City** operation during public events including skills necessary to encourage participation, common questions from participants, volunteer expectations, and safety concerns.

Read through the Case Study provided by Pamela Wild from the Whatcom County Health Department to learn more about the details. While they had a large volunteer training preceding the fair, volunteer shift leaders trained many of the on-site volunteers at the beginning of their shifts. Larger events may necessitate the need for detailed training; however a simple approach may be appropriate for many community festivals and fairs. The Case Study also includes ideas for volunteer recognition.

III. Operational Logistics

THE SET-UP and LOCATION

The set-up for **Germ City** is critical. The unit must always be in a covered location – inside a building or under a tent with protective sides that can be added if the unit is set-up for more than one day. The unit is not waterproof or meant for outdoor, uncovered use – even though it may look like a tent. Inside locations are often best for temperature, wind, and sunlight control as well. Our experience has been that one day events under a protective tent top are occasionally more challenging. Temperatures can rise and bright, direct sunlight and wind can interfere with the educational experience.

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Location near restrooms with adequate hand washing facilities is important. While it is possible to have other options for permanent restrooms and hand washing facilities, the process becomes much more difficult. Other options for hand washing facilities include portable trailers with externally mounted hand sinks and hot water heaters requiring water, electricity and drainage facilities, commercial portable hand sink units, and small child-sized sinks that are connected with hose to a potable water supply. It's easy to see that the logistics can be complicated and time consuming if the event location does not have permanent restrooms.

PROCESS and PARTICIPANTS

Germ City is set-up, the booth is organized, the volunteers have arrived, and the fair gates have opened for the day. It's time for your first visitor to **Germ City!**

Encouraging Participation

Germ City tee-shirts, costumes, large placards, bubble machines, posters placed strategically throughout the public event or fair, public announcements during the event, event passport systems linked to **Germ City** participation, educational give-aways, and outgoing, enthusiastic volunteers and educators encourage participation. Be creative and use your imagination.

Entering Germ City

- Greet visitors with an invitation to test/practice their hand washing skills.
- Explain the **Germ City** process:
 - Apply special lotion with make-believe/pretend germs
 - T ake a look inside **Germ City** at pretend germs on hands,
 - W ash normally
 - T ake another look at your hands inside **Germ City**, Observe .
- The first visit to **Germ City**:

A volunteer places a small amount of black-light sensitive lotion on participants' hands asking them to apply like hand lotion. Reinforce that the lotion does not contain real microbes and they are seeing a simulation of bacteria or viruses on their hands inside **Germ City**.

You'll hear lots of oohs and ahhs when participants enter the tunnel for the first time. We recommend that a volunteer is stationed inside the tunnel to answer questions, provide "traffic

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control”, and for the teachable moments that occur after the hand washing during the second trip through **Germ City**.

There are two approaches for hand washing education with Germ City: One is to ask participants to wash their hands normally as described above. The other is to encourage participants to practice washing according to the guidelines and observe the effects of recommended practices on their second visit through the tunnel. Generally, we prefer the opportunities for education that come after a normal hand wash. Many participants have shared that even after volunteers/educators encourage a “normal wash”; they still wash longer than normal and are surprised that the pretend microbes are still present. The experience provides great teachable moments.

- The second visit to **Germ City**:
Here are a few examples of the most common participant observations on their second visit to **Germ City**:

Observation: I really washed more than normal for me and it still wasn't good enough.

Learning Opportunity: Time is an important part of hand washing. How long does it take after you add soap to thoroughly scrub your hands? Discuss 20 seconds linking to singing or counting.

Observation: I used cold water and it looks like I have even more pretend bacteria on my hands.

Learning Opportunity: Warm water always works better than cold. It is much more difficult to adequately wash with cold water.

Observation: I did a better job on one hand than the other.

Learning Opportunity: Most people have a dominant hand. For instance if you are right handed, many people may do a more thorough job washing their left hand.

Observation: I missed spots on the bottom of my hands and by my wrists.

Learning Opportunity: This is one of the most common areas to miss when washing your hands. Hand washing and tying shoes have a lot in common. Both are behaviors you practiced and learned....and do the same way every time. If you saw missed spots on your hands, it's very likely that you miss these same spots every time you wash

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your hands. What might you change? How long do you think you need to practice this change?

Observation: There are pretend microbes under my fingernails/near a small cut/ on my bandage/ in the rough edges of my calluses.

Learning Opportunity: There are many places in which bacteria/viruses may wedge themselves like fingernails, cuts, or bandages. Ask participants how they might handle these situations: Nail brushes at home, apply clean bandage after hand washing.

Observation: I missed the outside edges of my hands

Learning Opportunity: Like tying your shoes or putting on your clothes, we have patterns or an order of how we do things. Hand washing is the same way. It's likely that your hand wash pattern always misses the outside edges of your hands. What might you do differently?

Observation: I touched my face - my arms with the pretend microbes.

Learning Opportunity: This is a great example of how we move bacteria from one place to another. This is called cross contamination. Can you identify places around school or home that might be cross-contaminated? Examples: Bathroom doors, faucets, computer keyboards, balls, desk and table edges, other students' hands.

- Additional Educational Opportunities and Discussion Topics
 - Stress the importance of hand washing after visiting the Petting Zoo
 - Stress the importance of hand washing before eating at the fair or special event
 - Reinforce steps of hand washing
 - Discussions about cross contamination and food safety at-home including the most important times to wash hands using the poster included with the **Germ City Program**.

How much discussion is possible will be determined by the number of participants you have at any one time and the number of volunteers. During volunteer training, it's a good idea to clearly define your objectives for hand washing education for those peak times when there are larger numbers of participants. A compilation of other questions commonly asked during a **Germ City** event are included in the Appendix.

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It's very likely many participants will want to re-visit **Germ City** after washing for a second time if the crowds aren't large. At fairs and festivals with annual **Germ City** programs, families often enthusiastically re-visit to check on their hand washing techniques.

Exiting and Evaluation

With plenty of volunteers and space, there are opportunities for additional outreach with participants. At most public events, planners want to collect data on participation and evaluate the event. Currently, evaluation tools are being developed for use during fairs and festivals.

At many fairs and public events, sponsors use give-a-ways after participation in **Germ City**. Examples include neon imprinted pencils, statics with 6 steps of hand washing, book bag tags, stickers, and bookmarks.

IV. Marketing and Media

A sample press release and public announcement developed by the Whatcom County Health Department are included in the Appendix. **Germ City** is a positive news story with "hands-on" participation. Newspapers, and television reporters and radio personalities have reported on many **Germ City** events.

CASE STUDY

Northwest Washington Fair, Bellingham, WA

Written with Pamela Wild – Edited by B. Susie Craig

Editors Note: Please remember as you read this Case Study, that the Northwest Washington Fair is a large public event. Pamela Wild would also share with you that she is very attentive to detail – which is one of the reasons she volunteered to share their approach to those of you planning similar events.

The Whatcom County Health and Human Services department organized a successful **Germ City** hand washing education event at the Northwest Washington Fair (NWF) in August 2001. Staff members of the Whatcom County Health and Human Services Department and 72 volunteers provided hand washing education to more than 6,000 children and their families.

Whatcom County Health and Human Services (HHS) is a local health department located in the northwestern corner of Washington State. With 90 employees, the health department serves 167,000 residents in a county 2126 square miles in area. Many department employees in the Food Safety Program, Communicable Disease Program, and the Maternal and Child Health Program are actively involved with hand washing education promotion.

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In the Beginning....

The Northwest Washington Fair manager had previously visited other fairs and had expressed interest in the **Germ City Program**. In 2000, the fair was inadvertently associated with an E. coli outbreak whose source of contamination was never ascertained. The fair manager and the county executive discussed their shared mission of promoting health and safety education and determined that HHS organizing a **Germ City** project at the 2001 fair would be mutually beneficial project.

HHS staff met with fair representatives in January 2001 for advance planning. The Fair agreed to provide no-cost space, passes for staff and volunteers, and a hot and cold potable water source and drainage for **Germ City Program**. Communication between the two organizations was excellent which helped solve challenges with creativity and good humor.

With the county executive's endorsement of the **Germ City Program**, the HHS Management Team was able to devote the necessary resources to effectively developing the event. A coordinator was identified and the event was promoted in staff meetings and via intra-department e-mail.

Volunteers are vital.....

Professionals in Whatcom County with interest in hand washing education formed the Whatcom Hand Washing Education Network (WHEN) several years previous to conducting the **Germ City Program**. WHEN includes restaurant managers, school nurses, infectious disease nurses, clinic health educators and other interested persons. The purpose of the network is to promote hand washing education at businesses, health organizations, schools and in the community. Members of WHEN were extraordinary helpful with volunteer recruitment for the fair.

Volunteers were recruited from restaurants, food wholesalers, Cooperative Extension's Master Food Preserver volunteers, grocery stores, health professional membership groups, community college culinary students, community food cooperative, hospital, nursing homes, student health profession interns, fire departments, health and social service non-profit organizations, and community health clinics. WHEN recruited 72 volunteers. 95% of the volunteers arrived at the booth on-time and completed their shift. Volunteers donated 324 hours which equated to \$5,000 of program support using the Economic Report of the President that evaluates their time at \$15.39 per hour.

Volunteers were professional, enthusiastic, and appropriate with their interactions with the fair visitors. There was an "esprit de corps" among volunteers that encouraged responsible and committed volunteers. A few of the volunteers were compensated in various ways by their respective employers.

Volunteers received free entry to the fair. After volunteering for a 4.5 hour shift with **Germ City Program**, they were able to enjoy the fair for the rest of the day.

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Even if you do not have a comparable support group like WHEN in your area, our experience was that volunteer recruitment was relatively easy. The public health educator began recruiting by soliciting names of potential volunteer groups from co-workers using phone and mail contact for follow-up. Almost everyone was successful in their recruitment efforts. As one of our contact persons explained: “Teaching little kids about hand washing just sounded like good fun and a good way to help the community, too.”

There were recruitment challenges....:

1. Several volunteer groups who were initially interested did not meet during the summer. Therefore, they weren't able to participate or they chose not to organize their members for this event.
2. Friday and Saturday evening shifts were difficult to fill and volunteers from restaurants were not available because these were their busiest times.

Germ City Program training.....

If possible, find someone with experience to conduct **Germ City Program** training for staff and volunteers. Susie Craig, faculty member with Washington State University Cooperative Extension provided a “hands-on” three hour orientation. HHS “shift leaders” were required to participate and volunteers were invited to attend. Orientation was held in a local church and snacks were provided for participants. The church was located across the street from the fairgrounds, so staff and volunteers could see the booth location, discuss logistics, and meet key fair staff.

Orientation included a short history of Germ City, a review of public health research on the “why’s” and “how to’s” of hand washing, and a PowerPoint presentation of successful “Germ City” events and set-up. The HHS public health educator talked about roles and responsibilities, safety rules, logistics and communication during the fair. Participants set-up the “Germ City” exhibit at the end of orientation.

Special Note: Participants practiced setting up Germ City in case there was a need to take it apart for severe weather or if they planned to use the unit for other programs during public events and in schools after the fair.

HHS staff and volunteers unable to attend the orientation were sent orientation packets (Appendix). When staff and volunteers arrived for their shift, the “shift leader” would quickly walk through the educational experience describing and showing their work.

Volunteer recognition.....

Volunteer groups were recognized and thanked with large, professionally printed placards (Appendix) that were displayed at the **Germ City Program** entrance. The placards were signed and presented along with thank you letters to the recruiting group’s contact person or director. Individual volunteers were sent “thank you” letters with copies of the newspaper articles that covered the events (Appendix).

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Special concerns and volunteers....

County government rules regarding volunteers were researched. In order to provide state worker's compensation insurance, volunteers were required to sign in and out, give their names, address, telephone number and social security numbers. The sign-in sheets were turned into the HHS Business Office and the county's Human Resource Department. There was some concern regarding confidentiality of personal information on the sign-in sheets.

Inquiries were made about bringing children to "work" the "Germ City" activities with their parents. Older youth (14-17 years) did serve as volunteers. They telephone interviewed with the Public Health Educator prior to the fair.

Germ City operations.....

For each shift there were four volunteers and three HHS staff. A HHS staff person per shift was designated as the "shift leader". Each shift was 4.5 hours and included time for breaks. Each out-going "shift leader" trained the next "shift leader." The public health educator supervised the set-up and break-down of the display. She also served as back-up to staff or volunteers. In addition to Germ City, our volunteers also coordinated a HHS information table with additional educational resources. Our system worked well.

Extra efforts have positive effects on program delivery....

We participated in the "Passport" event that involved all county and city government agencies participating at the fair. It involved each agency stamping a visitor's "passport" (a printed brochure describing the services of each agency and their location on the fairgrounds) and giving them a bead to add to a key chain. Once all the beads were collected, the visitor's key chain had a message on it. These extra activities complemented the **Germ City Program**, our public health education goal, and helped draw visitors to our booth.

We requested and found community support.....

Donations were generously given by local businesses. They included soap, soap dispensers, paper towels, brochure racks, printed placards, potted plants, construction of the hand washing/sink unit, and materials for the sink. These items significantly lowered the cost of the event.

Donors were thanked and named on a professionally printed placard at **Germ City Program** entrance. Thank you letters were sent and the Public Health Educator personally phoned each donor immediately after the fair.

Media and marketing....

A press release was developed with fair management. The press release was faxed to all Whatcom County media outlets three weeks before the fair. A telephone call to a popular radio personality was made telling him about the **Germ City Program** and asking if he would like to interview staff for his show. He did a fine job on it, too. Two newspaper

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articles were published. The first article previewed the event in the entertainment section and the second made the front page of the county's biggest paper. All the media coverage was positive.

Evaluation....

Public, fair management, staff and volunteer assessment of the **Germ City Program** event was overwhelmingly complimentary. Many ideas of how it could be improved were forthcoming with enthusiasm for doing **Germ City** again next year. Fair management related enthusiastic public response and a desire for continuing the event in the foreseeable future.

Immediately after the fair, the public health educator called the volunteer group's contact person to thank them and ask for feedback. All feedback was positive with welcomed suggestions for improvement. Additionally, the HHS all-staff meeting held in September was devoted to a group assessment of the fair (Appendix) and "rallying the troops" for next year.

The Public Health Educator soon after met with the WHEN group and solicited their assessment (Appendix). The membership was so enthusiastic that a 2002 work plan was developed and goals set that included the **Germ City Program** for the 2002 fair.

In the future....

Our first experience with **Germ City Program** went quite well despite many unknowns. Knowing that "we're only the new kid on the block once" we will be adding and trying out new things to continue the project's vibrancy in future.

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APPENDIX

Sample Press Release

Community Announcement for Volunteer Opportunity

Check List for Event Organization

Fair Information for Volunteers and Staff

Comments from Staff and Volunteers About the Germ City Program

Almost Everything You Wanted to Know About Hand Hygiene

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

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...Press Release....

Date: July 30, 2001

To: All Whatcom County Media

From: Whatcom County Health and Human Services

RE: Hand Washing Education at Northwest Washington Fair

Contact Person: Paul Chudek, Supervisor, Food Protection Program

New Handwashing Education Exhibit Debuting at the 2001 Northwest Washington Fair

Whatcom County Health and Human Services (HHS) and Washington State University Cooperative Extension are presenting “**Germ City**”—an interactive hand washing education display. Community volunteer groups from Red Robin Restaurant, Old Country Buffet Restaurant, St. Joseph Hospital and Sea Mar Community Clinic will be working with HHS staff and the Northwest Washington Fair to teach children and families good hand washing techniques.

Fairgoers will see immediate results of their hand washing efforts. Participants rub a special lotion that simulates germs on their hands that becomes visible inside **Germ City**. After washing, they walk through an 11-foot tube with black-lights that show the missed “pretend germs”. Participants enter “**Germ City**” thinking they’ve done a good job but leave with a better understanding of what it takes to clean hands adequately.

Paul Chudek, Supervisor of HHS’s Food Protection Program said: “Hand washing is a critical public health issue. The Fair, the volunteers and “**Germ City**” make it possible for us to teach thousands in one week”. Ron Vander Yacht, Manager of the Northwest Washington Fair, said: “We are delighted that HHS accepted our request to teach hand washing. Education of youth and the health and safety of families visiting the fair are two of our major goals”.

Hand washing helps prevent the spread of many diseases including E. coli., Shigella, Hepatitis A, Norwalk virus, influenza and the common cold. A recent Washington State Department of Health (DOH) study identified “Inadequate hand washing” as a factor in 31.1% of foodborne disease outbreaks that occurred between 1990 and 1999. (For further information regarding this ongoing study, contact: Dave Gifford, DOH, 360-236-3074.) It’s so important that the Center for Disease Control and Prevention has labeled it: “The single most important means of preventing the spread of infectious diseases”.

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The “**Germ City: Clean Hands, Healthy People Program**” was developed by Washington State University Cooperative Extension and has been utilized at county fairs throughout the state.

“**Germ City**” will be located next to the historic milking parlor on the south side of the dairy barn. It’s free as well as wheelchair and stroller accessible.

For further information on HHS, the reader should feel free to contact Pamela Wild, Public Health Educator, at (360) 676-6720 or pwild@co.whatcom.wa.us.

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COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT FOR VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Volunteer Opportunity to Teach Hand Washing Education

Whatcom County Health and Human Services (HHS) is presenting Germ City: Clean Hands, Healthy People Program at the Northwest Washington Fair in Lynden (August 13-18, 2001) Germ City is an educational program from Washington State University Cooperative Extension that promotes hand washing and good health. Several community groups including the Red Robin Restaurant, Old Country Buffet Restaurant, St. Joseph Hospital and SeaMar Community Clinic have generously volunteered to work with the **Germ City Program** to teach fair visitors good hand washing skills.

Each 4.5 hour shift will have at least four volunteers. We encourage volunteers to come as a team from their community group and work together. Volunteers will receive a free entrance pass that will allow them to volunteer one shift then enjoy the fair for the other part of the day.

We are looking for volunteers with good people skills and a strong desire to teach hand washing—a very important public health and food safety issue. Participants will include children, teens, and adults. The work will involve applying “pretend germs” to participants’ hands, teaching about how germs cause disease, demonstrating good hand washing techniques, and using diplomatic crowd control.

Volunteers should have patience, stamina and a sense of humor and be on-time for shifts. The ability to work as a team and be willing to represent HHS, the Northwest Washington Fair and their community group with the best of professional manners is vital.

Appearance is also important. The Northwest Washington Fair encourages a color-coordinated look at each booth. Volunteers are encouraged to wear neat, clean white shirts and khaki or dark blue pants if at all possible. Shorts and jeans are allowed if they are clean and modest. If a volunteer group has some kind of “uniform” shirt, you are encouraged to wear it. Nametags will be provided. There will be a great deal of exposure to the sun and heat. Volunteers are encouraged to bring sunscreen, sunglasses, tasteful hats and water bottles and to wear comfortable shoes.

Volunteers are invited to Germ City Program training on Wednesday, August 8th, from 1:00 to 4:00 PM at the Lynden Fairgrounds. This preliminary training is not required. Volunteers will be trained on-site and coordinated and supported by HHS staff.

If you have any questions or want to attend the training, please call...Pamela Wild at (360) 676-6720. All groups are encouraged to participate. Thank you very much for your interest in this important public health matter!

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Checklist for Organizing Germ City ”/HHS Event

Fair Contributions and Support:

- Meet with Fair Management early January
- Secure space/location
- Obtain free volunteer passes
- Sign and submit necessary forms or contracts
- Notice of give- a-ways submitted
- Water hook up and electrical hook-ups identified and checked
- Plan and coordinate press releases and other publicity

Germ City Program Orientation:

- Set date, time, and location
- Recruit volunteers and staff
- Send reminder notice (letters to volunteers and email to HHS staff)
- Identify trainer/speaker requirements
- Send location and directions to speaker and volunteers
- Audiovisual equipment, Speaker’s needs, room arrangement
- Refreshments
- Thank you note to facility

HHS and volunteer orientation and orientation packet:

- Contact volunteer groups’ contact person, send volunteer need announcement and follow-up with telephone call
- Develop volunteer mailing list as volunteers are recruited
- Volunteer Description
- Germ City Information and Overview
- Dress code-Public Health Matters t-shirts
- Transportation/parking/parking fees/passes
- Schedule of shifts of HHS and volunteers
- Location of our site

Other Items Needed:

- Thank you placards
- Cooler and bottled water
- Germ City supplies
- Camera
- Supplies for Passport Activity
- Give-a-ways

Media:

- Final coordination with Fair staff
- Send press release three weeks before fair
- Call special interest media/radio to discuss covering event

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Thank yous:

- Volunteers and sponsors
- Fair Management
- Media outlets
- Staff

Update this list for use next year!

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Fair Information-2001
For Community Volunteers and Whatcom HHS Staff

August 13-18, 2001

Dear Community Volunteers and HHS Staff:

Thank you for your generous help with **Germ City Program** and the Whatcom County Health and Human Services (HHS) booth! This public health education event is possible because of the hard work and generous donations of many people. One of them is you!

Below is information to help achieve our goals. It's a bit lengthy, but with over 54 staff, 72 volunteers and thousands of "Germ City" visitors, some guidance is a good thing. Several of the Fair's rules are included below, too. If you have any questions, please call Pamela Wild—the HHS Fair Activity Coordinator at (Phone Number). Many thanks!

Our Three Purposes are:

1. **To educate fair visitors on the importance and the correct methods of hand washing in a fun and interactive manner.** We are expecting many children and adults to participate each day in **Germ City**. Our mascot, Dr. Bubbles, will be roaming the fairgrounds encouraging people to visit **Germ City**. Training on "Germ City" will be given at the August 8th event (see below) and on-site at the Fair as volunteers arrive to work.
2. **To promote our free education kits for the public to borrow and teach hand washing to their families, school, community, youth, business and church groups.** A kit will be on display at our booth. If visitors would like to know how they could teach hand washing themselves, please show them the kit and give them Pamela Wild's business card.
3. **Promote the public's awareness and use of our numerous HHS programs.** Our tent will also contain an HHS booth that will have lots of brochures, prizes and an activity called "Public Health Wheel of Fortune" that will promote HHS' programs. These will be HHS staff's responsibility.

Telephone Numbers:

- Northwest Washington Fair's Business Office: (Phone Number)
 - Whatcom County Health and Human Services (Phone Number)
 - Pamela Wild- HHS's Fair Activity Coordinator: Work-(Phone Number) and home-####-#### (use the home number only in emergencies)
- ***Always state that you are calling because or from the Fair. Thanks!***

Germ City Program Training:

We will be having training on Wednesday, August 8th from 1:00 to 4:00 PM. Training is not required for volunteers. HHS staff will train volunteers as they arrive at the Fair for their shift. However, if volunteers want to attend, please call Pamela Wild. The training is at Christ the King Church. (Pass the Lynden Fair office on Front Street. Make a left

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hand turn at 17th Street. Peoples Bank is on the corner. The Church is in the shopping center on the left. It is on the right side of True Value Hardware. Park in the parking lot) Cookies and juice will be provided. Please be on time. The last section of the training will involve walking to our site at the Fair, showing the layout, and discussing logistics.

Directions to the Fair

Take Interstate 5 North to Bellingham until you come the Guide/Meridian exit (Route 539 North) exit #256. (As you come off the ramp you will be forced to go right and northward) You know you are on the correct road going north when you pass Bellis Fair Mall on your left and a Shari's restaurant on your right. Proceed for about 14 miles. Make a right onto Front Street. There will be a cemetery before and after the right turn onto Front Street. Proceed about ½ mile. On the right will be the Fair's office with a big sign.

Parking

Parking is plentiful and free on side streets off of Front Street and in church parking lots. Give yourself enough time to park and walk to our tent. For “Germ City” to work well, we need everyone to be on time. (See attached map)

Passes

Volunteers: The ticket in the attached envelope enables your group’s volunteers to enter for free. The community groups’ coordinators will get the passes to their volunteers. By accepting this pass, the Northwest Washington Fair and HHS assumes you will work your complete shift. On the day you work (either before or after your shift) you are free to enjoy the Fair’s activities as a guest. There are no extra volunteer passes so hold on to yours tightly!

Staff: HHS staff will be given a pass for each shift they work. It is in the attached envelope.

Location of Germ City

See the attached map. Our tent is located closest to Gate #2. It's outside, next to the historic milking parlor on the eastside. It is against the south wall of the cow barn. Another close landmark is the clock tower. If you don’t know these landmarks, just ask other people at the Fair to direct you.

Signing In and Out

Please complete the sign-in sheet at our HHS booth. The County’s Human Resources Office needs to know this information for Worker’s Compensation Insurance purposes in case there is an accident or sickness. It will be kept confidential. We also want the information to send you a big thank you letter!

Who is in Charge?

The HHS staff person in charge of “Germ City” (there is one asterisk * next to their name on the attached roster) will be responsible for training the volunteers and coordinating

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Germ City. When arriving, volunteers should introduce themselves to the shift leader. The rest of the staff should help with “Germ City” when needed because it is our “main event”.

Fair Rules

A copy of the Fair’s regulations, along with our contract and “giveaway” list, will be in a folder at the HHS booth for your review if any questions arise. The Fair is very professional and is very concerned about safety, cleanliness and a professional appearance. HHS staff are encouraged to scan the regulations when they have a free moment.

Volunteer Description

See the attached “Volunteer Description”. HHS staff are encouraged to read it, too, so to be able to support the volunteers in their work.

Health and Safety

Our tent, which contains the HHS booth and **Germ City** is outside. There will be a great deal of exposure to the sun and heat. Everyone is encouraged to bring sunscreen, sunglasses, tasteful hats, water bottles, and wear comfortable shoes. **Germ City** is wheelchair and stroller accessible. The Fair is a pretty safe place but use caution. Please bring as few valuables as possible and be responsible for them yourself. If any visitor acts in a violent or threatening manner, remove yourself immediately from the situation and report the incident to the Fair staff right away. There will also be a cell phone in the tent. Secure it during work hours and at night.

Breaks

Please take a break during your shift. Fair work can be intense and we hope you will take care of yourself. Coordinate with your co-workers know including when to expect you back at the tent.

Shift Roster

See the attached roster for volunteering organizations and workers’ names. Contact telephone numbers are also on the roster. The **Germ City** leader should encourage introductions of the shift co-workers both volunteer and HHS staff.

Clothing

The Fair encourages a color-coordinated look at each event and booth. Volunteers and HHS staff are encouraged to wear neat, clean, plain white shirts and khaki or dark, plain pants. Shorts and jeans are fine as long as they are clean, neat and modest. If a volunteer group has some kind of “uniform” shirt or outfit (such as the Red Robin or Old County Buffet uniform), that is welcomed and encouraged.

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Identification

- **Volunteers:** Please use your group's nametag if you have one. If not, use one of the nametags we will have at the booth and add your organization's name.
- **HHS Staff:** Please use your HHS nametags.

Stay inside the Booth

The Fair's rules are that you may not solicit outside the booth.

Giveaways

Because HHS had to submit a list of "giveaways" to the Fair management several weeks ago, we ask our volunteer groups not to bring anything for distribution. If your group has printed literature on a relevant public health topic that is appropriate for family reading, please send a copy or fax of it to Pamela Wild ahead of time.

Workman's Compensation and Volunteers

As a volunteer of Whatcom County Health and Human Services, you are entitled to Workman's Compensation in case of a work-related illness or injury. After securing medical attention, contact our Human Resource Department or Pamela Wild immediately. The County's Human Resources Department telephone number is 676-6802.

Ending a Shift

Be sure to sign out before you leave. Volunteers and HHS staff are encouraged to write down any positive or negative comments on how their shift went. (Note from Pamela: "If you don't tell me, I can't make it better!") HHS staff are encouraged to thank the volunteers for their help (We couldn't do this without them!) Everyone is encouraged to orient the next shift as to how to do activities, how the activities have been going, etc.

Securing the Booth and Equipment at Night

The Fair is a very safe place but use caution. Tie down the tent flaps every night. Pack and secure materials that might fly away during a windstorm. Cover everything with tarps. Tents leak and, as any Girl Scout will tell you, rainwater seeks the most vulnerable items. Don't leave any personal items in the tent over night.

Thank you for taking the time to read these instructions. It will help us give consistent, positive messages about hand washing and Health and Human Services programs. Have fun and call me if you need anything.

Regards,
Pamela Wild
Public Health Educator and Fair Activity Coordinator
Whatcom County Health and Human Services
(360) 676-6720, ext: 50852

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Staff and Volunteer Comments about Germ City Program

HHS All-Staff Meeting Comments- September 2001

- Shifts too long and exhausting.
- Shift length was just the right amount of time.
- Some shift leaders had to skip taking a break so others could.
- Some shifts were slow and workers were just standing around.
- Two HHS staff and two volunteers enough.
- Keep the same amount of staffing!
- Improve our “barking/hawking” skills and increase visitors. If too many visitors come, just stop “barking/hawking”.
- Buy more and better signs. The included signs were amateurish and old looking.
- Open up the sides of the tent for more ventilation and better traffic flow.
- Set a minimum age for volunteers.
- Make it very clear to volunteers that they must not bring their children to stay or work at the booth. It just didn’t work out well for us and especially the young kids.
- Work on sink plugging up. Lots of water flow caused back up.
- Need more sinks. Build a line of several sinks. Lines started to back up.
- Soap dispensers were too well protected. Had to tell visitors where to find them.
- At the beginning of the week, the hot water was sporadic. By the middle of the week, no problem. We were in competition with the cowshed needing it.
- The volunteers were wonderful! Only a few problems and those were manageable.
- Some volunteers wanted to leave early. What do we do then?
- Talk to each shift leader. Start analyzing which shifts are slow and which are busy.
- We need to rotate the responsibilities more so to prevent boredom
- Need to include more children oriented questions. Suggestions: Mr. Yuck stickers, pencils, suckers with a public health message, toothbrushes and floss, coloring books, bookmarks, book bags, soaps with a message on or in them, water bottles, brushes with a message, magnets with more topics on them, etc.
- Everyone loved the water saving devices as prizes. The children were excited about giving them to their parents.
- We need to get out from behind the table. Is that’s okay with the fair’s rules, we need easier access from behind the tables then.
- Can we have more space?
- We could use the displays as traffic control.
- Provide more information to public on how to obtain the handwashing education equipment.
- Better ventilation needs to be a priority for next year.
- “Passport” activity went great.
- A special training for orientation is not necessary again. We now have a cadre of veterans who will pass it on to the new staff and employees.
- Asked HHS staff to grade the event over all: Overall response—“Well organized and we want to do it again”. Encouraged staff to keep sharing ideas throughout the year and thanked them for all their help.

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WHEN's Assessment of "Germ City"/Fair Activity-September 2001:

- ◆ Health and Human Services (HHS) and "Germ City" will be at the Fair next year.
- ◆ Fair costs were right on the budget. We also received \$6,000 of donations including the volunteer hours which were almost \$5,000 in value.
- ◆ Over 6,000 children and their families participated. Discussed how the number was probably under counted. A lot of people "got away from us" before they received a static cling or cling was thrown into the "no thank you" box.
- ◆ While we have received many good suggestions on how to improve it for next year, all we have received is compliments and not criticisms.
- ◆ WHEN members approved and signed "thank you" letters
- ◆ Pamela will be delivering the "thank you" placards with a letter to each volunteer organization. This is in addition to the individual thank you letters so they can be shared with board of directors, be placed on the wall, etc.
- ◆ A member hoped that the Environmental Health administrators will participate in "Germ City" next year.
- ◆ We will continue to develop our "hawking" or "barking" skills. Emphasizing the free hand washing and free stickers helped.
- ◆ WHEN participants hope that the same number of staff and volunteers are recruited per shift next year. We will probably be more popular next year and it made taking breaks feasible. WHEN volunteers all had busy shifts.
- ◆ Discussed children of volunteers participating. Agreed that 16 years is a good age limit. Suggested that Pamela interview 16 and 17 over the phone first.
- ◆ Lengthy talk about public's concerns regarding good hand washing impacting the environment and possible helpful answers.

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Almost Everything You Wanted to Know About Hand Washing

1. Are these real germs in the lotion?
Answer: No. There is a coloring substance in hypoallergenic lotion that you will be able to see under the black lights inside **Germ City**. Young children may be convinced these are real germs. Keep reassuring them it's pretend germs.
2. Does the lotion cause allergic reactions?
Answer: Since there are several products on the market that are black-light sensitive, it's a good idea to request a Material and Safety Data Sheet on the product you choose to use with **Germ City**. Generally speaking, the label states unless people have multiple and severe allergies, the product is safe. If there is concern, don't use it. Talk with your manufacturer about product specifics.
3. How many germs are on your hands at any time?
Answer: Millions.
4. When should you wash your hands?
Answer:
 - ◆ After using the bathroom
 - ◆ Before eating or drinking
 - ◆ Before preparing food
 - ◆ Before and after touching raw meat, poultry, or fish
 - ◆ After visiting a petting zoo at a fair or festival
 - ◆ After playing with pets
 - ◆ After changing a diaper or helping someone use the toilet.
 - ◆ After taking out the trash.
 - ◆ After cleaning
 - ◆ After working or playing outdoors
 - ◆ After coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose
5. What are the 6 steps for good hand washing?
Answer: 1. Wet hands with warm water 2. Apply soap 3. Scrub hard for at least 20 seconds with warm water 4. Rinse with warm water 5. Dry with a clean paper towel 6. Turn off water with paper towel
6. How long should you wash your hands?
Answer: At least 20 seconds. That is the minimum time to scrub all areas of the hands and allow the soap to lift off the germs.
7. What song can you sing twice that is usually equal to 20 seconds?
Answer: "Happy Birthday", the "ABC" song, "Row, row, row your boat", etc.

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8. How long does a surgeon take to wash his or her hands?
Answer: About 10 minutes. They scrub every plane of every finger, knuckle, palm, back of hand and wrist at least 10 times with a brush.
 9. If you use only water when you wash, what do you have on your hands?
Answer: Wet germs! However, if that's all that's available, scrub with water and try to get some dirt, and thus germs, off your hands.
 10. What diseases does hand washing help prevent?
Answer: Hand washing helps prevent include: colds, stomach viruses, influenza (flu), some eye infections, E. coli, Shigella, Hepatitis A, Norwalk virus.
 11. Is anti-bacterial soap better to use than just regular soap?
 12. Aren't the sanitizers
 13. better than warm water and soap?
 14. My profession's guidelines on hand washing are different than what you are teaching.
Answer: Follow your professional guidelines. These are guidelines for the general public. You may have a lot of infection control issues at your work.
 15. Why are paper towels better than cloth towels?
Answer: Cloth towels can spread germs from one person to the next. Paper towels are thrown away after using turning off faucets and opening bathroom doors.
 16. Where do germs come from?
Answer: Germs are on and in everything unless it has been sterilized. We are cleaning hands not sterilizing hands. It is impossible to sterilize hands.
 17. After washing my hands, how soon do they become dirty?
Answer: Your hands start getting more germs on them right away because germs are floating in the air. The purpose of hand washing is two fold: (1) Wash well and often to reduce the number of germs on your hands, and (2) Because it's impossible to get all the germs off, try to keep your hands away from mouth, nose and eyes.
 18. How can I teach hand washing education in schools and other events?
Answer: Supply local Contact Information and Information about **Germ City**.
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