



Many of us are concerned about the dangers posed by climate change but are stymied by the overwhelming nature of the problem. We know that the greenhouse gases produced by the energy we use, the products we consume, and the stuff we throw away are significant causes of climate change, and we know we need to reduce our carbon footprints (our emissions of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide). Now there is a fun way for us to work together locally to make effective changes in our lives.

Frankfort Climate Action Network (FrankfortCAN) is partnering with local organizations on a greenhouse gas reduction initiative, called Lighten Up, Frankfort! The goal for Lighten Up, Frankfort! is to achieve substantial, measurable reductions in our community's carbon footprint.

We are using a simple and attractive guidebook called The Low Carbon Diet which is being employed successfully to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in communities around the country. During the initiative, participating households will gather in small groups four times over the course of one to three months to calculate their household's carbon footprint, set a target for reduction, and plan or implement changes that will reduce their emissions to meet their target. The changes that participants make may include increasing recycling, reducing hot water use, carpooling, tightening up drafty windows and doors, or installing a more energy-efficient appliance. Most participants will find that they are saving money on utility bills as well as reducing their carbon footprint.

Lighten Up, Frankfort! will begin this fall as a pilot program involving teams formed by about ten local organizations, and in December we will report carbon reduction totals achieved through the pilot. This initial campaign will give us a chance to gain experience and engage community partners in preparation for a community-wide drive in 2010.

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