



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Hinesburg Boy Scout Tackles Radon Issues in His Community



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HINESBURG – Jeff Giroux is 17 years old and can say, backed by Vermont Department of Health statistics, that he may have saved his neighbor's life.

Giroux, as part of his Boy Scout project to become an Eagle Scout, enlisted 15 volunteers and worked for a year to distribute as many free radon detection kits as possible. Giroux and his team hosted four events in Hinesburg, and made nearly 1,500 phone calls that resulted in the distribution of 140 radon kits.

"My hope was that everyone I talked to would be interested, because this is a serious issue especially in Vermont," Giroux said. "I told people, 'It's free. There is no reason not to do it.'"

January is Radon Awareness Month. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer and cannot be seen, tasted, or smelled. Giroux first learned of the dangers of radon through posters in the hallways at Champlain Valley Union High School.

"Your efforts will lead to significantly reduced lung cancer risk in those homes where elevated radon levels are detected and remedied," Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD, wrote to Giroux on Dec. 14, 2015. "You have helped educate Vermonters about this largely overlooked health risk, and you have set a wonderful example through serving your community and helping others to protect themselves from harm."

Health Department Epidemiologist David Grass, estimates that due to Giroux's efforts, 17 homes with elevated radon levels will be identified and one case of lung cancer will be prevented.

One out of every eight homes in Vermont has elevated levels of radon, a naturally occurring radioactive gas that seeps into homes from soil and bedrock. Because radon levels can change daily, weekly and seasonally, a long-term test of 3 – 12 months (ideally including a heating season) is the best way to accurately test for the gas.

Testing is easy. Get a free kit by emailing radon@vermont.gov, or call 1-800-439-8550.

For more information about radon, radon testing and mitigation, visit the Health Department website at <http://healthvermont.gov/enviro/rad/Radon.aspx>

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