

OPERATION PAYDIRT



Still from video *Now You See It, Part 2*

CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING

Lead is an invisible threat continuing to put millions of children in America at risk for poisoning that can cause learning disabilities, hearing damage, nervous system and kidney damage and attention and behavioral problems. Childhood lead poisoning is correlated with lower IQ, poor performance in schools, violence and crime, and its economic impact burdens our health, education, and justice systems. Lead poisoning is 100% preventable.

ENGAGING COMMUNITIES TOWARDS SOLUTIONS

Operation Paydirt is an artist-initiated project inviting children, families and communities to imagine, express and actualize a future free of childhood lead poisoning. Central to *Operation Paydirt* is the *Fundred Dollar Bill Project*, a creative campaign advancing public education and community engagement through the creation and collection of *Fundreds* – original, hand-drawn interpretations of \$100 bills. *Fundreds* represent the tangible voices of millions speaking to those with the power to end this national problem. Through the communicative power of art the project is visibly building support, and connecting people directly, empathetically, and personally with this important issue. The goal is to exchange the value of this informed public voice for real resources to support 100% lead poisoning prevention.

Increasing Knowledge:

Videos, graphics, events and classroom lessons informing children and adults of risks, prevention, and *Fundred* advocacy operations.

Building Grassroots Support:

The *Fundred Dollar Bill Project* uniting the voices of millions, invested in lead poisoning prevention.

Innovative Collaboration:

Partnering with Massachusetts Institute of Technology's CoLab to scale up through city-based initiatives.

INITIATIVES

Grassroots Mobilization: Since 2008, nearly 450,000 children, and their caregivers, have participated in the *Fundred Dollar Bill Project*, as collective expression of public will for solutions to lead poisoning.

Neighborhood Engagement: In 2008, Safehouse transformed a New Orleans house into a vault, becoming a unique venue providing lead information to local residents.

Creative Public Events: In 2010, the armored truck drove cross-country activating over 100 lead poisoning awareness events orchestrated by schools and museums nationwide.



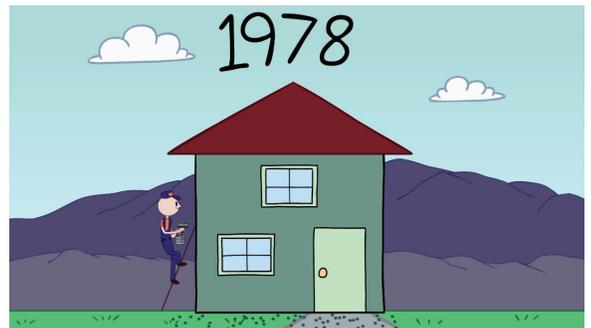
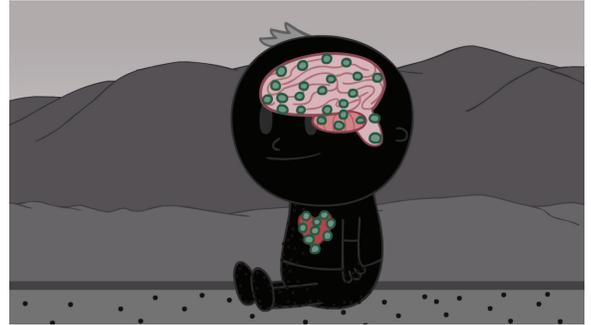
Tatyana Shelton of New Orleans shows off bundles of *Fundreds*

OPERATION PAYDIRT

School District-wide Educational Engagement: In 2013, a *Fundred* program integrating arts, health, and lead poisoning prevention lessons reached over 46,000 students in Charlotte, NC.

Reaching New Audiences: In 2014, two informative and engaging animations “making the invisible threat of lead visible” premiered on 2000 Los Angeles Metro buses reaching millions of riders.

Youth Engagement: In 2013, Charlotte area middle school students featured in a video telling the history of lead, ways to reduce exposure, and *Fundred* advocacy.



Stills from *Now You See It, Part 1*

EXPANDING PARTNERS

Since 2006, *Operation Paydirt's* initiatives have proven effective in engaging communities in the potential for change. This methodology can further underpin the work of the larger lead poisoning prevention movement by developing a massive citizen voice. Now, with the support of A Blade of Grass, a foundation that nurtures socially engaged art, *Operation Paydirt* is offering this creative momentum to support those with the knowledge and power to influence change towards lead poisoning prevention.

Key collaborators include: MIT's Community Innovators Lab (CoLab), partnering with *Operation Paydirt* to create the space for a convening of lead poisoning prevention partners to co-create communications and movement-building strategies. The Healthy Homes Collaborative, based in Los Angeles, as a partner advising this national conversation.

We invite you to share your specific experience and expertise to inform the campaign, and find out more about participation for expanding the potentials in your locality! For more, please contact us, information below.

ABOUT THE INSTIGATOR



Mel Chin with *Fundred* Guards and Artists in Charlotte, NC

Mel Chin is known for the broad range of approaches in his art, including works that require multi-disciplinary, collaborative teamwork, and often become a platform for valuing the creative involvement of others. *Operation Paydirt* is his most ambitious contribution to this evolving practice of social change. Chin's work has exhibited extensively in the U.S. and is the recipient of numerous national and international awards, including honorary doctorates. A retrospective of his work opened at the New Orleans Museum of Art in February 2014. See www.melchin.org for more about the artist.

CONTACT

Mary Rubin, Co-Producer
mary.rubin@sanjoseca.gov
(o) 408.793.4340 (c) 415-999-0257

Amanda Wiles, Co-Producer
amanda@operationpaydirt.org
(o) 828-678-9892 (c) 865-310-0532