FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Public Event Introductory Presentation

Granite City - Friday, April 1, 2016 - An Opening Ceremony for the new Greener Cleaner Granite City Air Quality Flag and Ozone Garden Program will be held at 10:00 a.m. at Six Mile Regional Library District, 2001 Delmar Avenue, Granite City. Refreshments will be served. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend.

United Congregations of Metro-East is providing a service for the community by offering educational programming and science activities that highlight ways to improve our air quality and health. This is made possible through a grant awarded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to United Congregations of the Metro-East. Local resident and member of both United Congregations of Metro-East and Granite City Cool Cities committee, Linda Aud is the leader of this project, which benefits all residents in the 62040 zip code. Partners in writing the grant proposal include: Saint Louis University, Granite City Community Gardens, and Granite City Cool Cities. The success of this project is possible because of the joint efforts of all project partners:

United Congregations of the Metro-East, Saint Louis University's Center for Environmental Sciences, Madison County Green Schools Program, Granite City Cool Cities, Granite City Community Gardens, United Steelworkers - SOAR, Six Mile Regional Library District, SWIC Granite City Campus, Granite City Housing Authority, Granite City Fire Department, Granite City School District 9, St. Elizabeth Catholic School, Holy Family Catholic School, University of Illinois, Washington University, Sierra Club, Madison County Partnership for Community Health, the Clean Air Partnership, Second Baptist Church, and the Boy Scouts.

There are two parts to the project. The first part is an Ozone Garden located at the Granite City Fire Station on Rock Road. The Ozone Garden was planted in June of 2015. This year the Ozone Garden will be available for visitors. Kelley Belina, St. Louis University's Ozone Garden Project Manager, oversees our garden as well as Ozone Gardens at the SWIC Belleville Campus, the Saint Louis Science Center, Grant’s Farm, and the Missouri Botanical Gardens. An Ozone Garden is a visible way to demonstrate the damage ground-level ozone pollution can do to plants and the environment. Kelley will present more information on this part of the program.

The second part of the project is a Citizen Monitoring Network using EPA’s Air Quality Index and EPA’s Air Quality Flag Program. The Six Mile Regional Library District is installing Citizen Air Quality Monitoring Networks to monitor our local air quality including ozone, black carbon, and particulate matter. The equipment reports through the regional network to contribute to the overall collection of data for the metropolitan St. Louis area. The Fire Station on Rock Road will also have an Ozone Monitor at the Ozone Garden.

The visual component of the second part is the Air Quality Flag program. Staff and students for each participating organization will check the EPA’s AirNow data daily to provide the most accurate air quality forecast and will then display the appropriate flag. Sites displaying flags are: SWIC Granite City Campus,
GCSD9 Schools, St. Elizabeth School, Holy Family School, the Granite City Housing Authority, the Six Mile Regional Library District libraries, and the Fire Station on Rock Road. Included in the project are opportunities for classroom visits, air quality-related lessons, and professional development for teachers and library personnel. Kim Petzing, Madison County Green Schools Coordinator, is leading the educational components of the project and will present information on this part of the program.

Linda Aud will give an overview of how the project evolved and the project goals. Refreshments will be provided by the Six Mile Regional Library District.

Contacts: Linda Aud, Project Lead (618) 931-4817
Tina Hubert, Six Mile Regional Library District (618) 452-6238