

# BECAUSE HEALTH

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**The public's knowledge of environmental health issues has changed tremendously over the past few decades, with CHE playing a critical role.** In 2018, while I was Director of CHE, we launched Because Health, an environmental health educational campaign for the general public. Because Health is now a part of the Center for Environmental Health, a nonprofit leading the nationwide effort to protect people from toxic chemicals.



Because Health successfully brought younger voices into the environmental health conversation and played a crucial role in educating mainstream audiences about environmental health issues. Because Health's specialty was distilling complex environmental health concepts into actionable steps that people can take to build a healthier future for all. When Because Health merged with the Center for Environmental Health, the website had more than 400 pieces of educational environmental health content and averaged 40,000 users a month with more than 1 million page views a year. Because Health also organically built an engaged community of over 70,000 users on Instagram.

Quality educational forums and resources are particularly critical at this time because current political forces are threatening to undermine decades of public health and environmental protections. CHE's role in this context as a trusted evidence-based resource and forum for sharing emerging environmental health science in easily accessible and engaging formats is extremely important. When I was at CHE, I was able to launch Because Health by leveraging CHE's rich network of environmental health scientists and advocates. By translating the science and communicating it in ways that were appealing, we reached a new audience of millennials. Because Health focused on reaching millennials because many of them are having children or are preparing to enter the phase of their lives where they are rethinking their environment, their consumption, and the impact of their purchasing. Because Health sparked an interest in environmental health in a new generation by creating environmental health education that was accessible, curated, relevant, and shareable, while still being strongly rooted in the latest science.

By educating the public and engaging citizens of all ages in the environmental health conversation, we helped build a groundswell of demand for policies, as well as economic and legal structures, that prioritize preventative actions to protect public health. Millennials have upwards of \$200 billion in annual buying power and are trendsetters across all industries from fashion to food. More and more, millennials are taking on higher leadership and management

positions in the workforce and are at the forefront of innovation in many sectors. I hope that by getting millennials engaged with limiting exposure to toxic chemicals, individuals will apply their talents to incorporate environmental health principles and the precautionary principle in their personal lives and careers. In order to face the current and future challenges of toxic chemical pollution, we need all hands on deck. -||



*Karen Wang, PhD, MSc is an expert science educator with deep knowledge in environmental health, data analysis, and research methodology. She is currently a healthy building environmental consultant. She is the former director of the Collaborative on Health and the Environment at Commonweal, and the founder of Because Health, an environmental health website and social media campaign. Karen has a PhD in Applied Economics from the University of Washington and also holds a MSc in Earth Systems and a BA in Economics from Stanford University.*