

21  
DAY

# RACIAL EQUITY CHALLENGE

## DAY 10: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Do you often think about what is in the air you are breathing when you are outside? Have you ever been instructed to not plant a garden or allow your children to play in your yard because of ground pollution?

These challenges are reality for many families across our country and in our own community, where even in the same county people experience drastically different quality of air, earth, water, and life. Pollution, often created in high-traffic areas and when hazardous waste is improperly disposed of, contributes to serious health issues like asthma, pulmonary disease, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and now higher rates of viral community spread with COVID-19.

This is *environmental injustice*, and like so much of what we have discussed in this Challenge, it negatively affects communities of color much more than predominantly white communities. (Think housing, health disparities, access to medical care, wealth gaps, etc.)

Perhaps the most widely publicized environmental injustice in recent years was the [Flint Water Crisis](#), which resulted in 9,000 children (and thousands of adults) consuming toxic, lead-contaminated water for 18 months while government officials told residents the water was safe to drink.

Today, we are seeing environmental injustice play out before our eyes as the coronavirus is disproportionately devastating low-income, marginalized communities, people who do not have the opportunity to work from home, and those with preexisting conditions that can be a result of discrimination and environmental challenges.

The effects of environmental injustice are complex and far-reaching. We can take on this issue together through education, advocacy, and action. Consider the resources and next steps below.

## LEARN

**Option 1:** Read [When a Virus Exposes Environmental Injustice](#)

**Option 2:** Watch [Environmental Justice Explained](#)

## REFLECT AND TAKE ACTION

### Questions to Consider for Self-Reflection:

- What issues of environmental injustice exist in your community?
- What steps can you take to begin addressing environmental injustice?

### Local Ways to Get Involved:

- Review your county's environmental quality data. [Monroe County environmental information can be found here](#) and the [City of Rochester water information is here](#).

### Share What You Learned:

Use the images below to share that you learned about race and equity today, and be sure to include #ROCequity.

