



Dear Clean Air Coalition Members and Supporters,

My name is Emily Terrana and I am proud to be a member of Clean Air Coalition's Tonawanda Coke campaign team and the Co-Chair of the Board of Directors. I am writing to share how Clean Air's work supports my own roots of resilience in fighting for environmental justice for our communities.

I grew up in the Riverside neighborhood of Buffalo, the City of Good Neighbors. My childhood was full of our City's promise of good neighbors—my grandparents lived around the corner from us in the little yellow house my mother grew up in, my aunt and uncle lived right next door and we had a strong community of folks that my family had known for decades. Our summers were full of barbecues with family and friends, Towpath parades down Tonawanda Street and All Saints Church lawn fetes. **I am so grateful for the values of community, fairness and celebration that my family and neighbors taught my sisters and I growing up. As I raise my own children now, I hope that I can pass on these values and love of community to them.**



As time went on, I realized that not all of our neighbors were so great. My home was one block away from the start of the 53-site industrial zone in Tonawanda and a few blocks in the other direction from the 190 that hugged the side of the Niagara River. **I remember driving to get Slurpees with my uncle and smelling nasty fumes as we drove past the huge factories that bordered our neighborhood. On a warm and windy day, that smell wafted into our backyards while my sister and I would play outside. To this day, that smell reminds me of my childhood.**

In February of 2018, my mother Julie was diagnosed with Stage IV Pancreatic Cancer at the age of 54. Our family was crushed but we pulled together with the support of our beloved community to care for one another and bring my mother joy and comfort during the worst time we

could imagine. When my mother passed away less than three months later, our community held us tightly and that promise of Good Neighbors was fulfilled again.

Through all of the shock and grief, I couldn't help but be reminded of our childhood home, my mothers and mine, and who else shaped our experiences there. That little yellow house held so many beautiful memories for our family and was just unlucky enough to be too close to toxic smoke that filled my mother's lungs since she was just a baby. **Our very bad neighbors cared too much about their profits and shareholders bottom lines than they did my community's health and dignity. CEOs padded their pockets while my family's bodies were padded with toxins, and that is just not right.**

The summer after my mother passed, Tonawanda Coke was brought back to Federal Court on charges that they had violated their probation. My comrades at Clean Air and I sat to bear witness in every court appearance, making our anger and grief known to all. We sat and listened to corporate lawyers mow over our stories, our experiences, the science we know to be as true as the sun is warm to protect their perceived right to make money off of our health and joy. **We cried together and held each other up—we were the good neighbors we longed for.**

I had been a member of Clean Air for a couple of years, but it was in the intensity of the court room that I realized how much I love, respect and care for this incredible team. Clean Air organizers and members hold one another through grief, through our righteous anger at injustice and holds onto our hope for a healthy, just and dignified world for all of us. **Clean Air is rooted in the same values that my mother and Nanie instilled in my sisters and I. Clean Air fuels and roots my resilience as we fight for environmental justice, because they're home to me.**

Home is made up of a connection of relationships, of people who are committed to one another and who work to keep everyone held, safe and accountable. **[I am asking you, neighbor, to join us in keeping our home resilient by becoming a member of Clean Air Coalition.](#)**

Our work is urgent, and it takes a long time, but together we can build the world we need. Together, we can find home.