

Protecting kids? Moms are on the job.

May 9, 2013 by Kristin Schafer



I'm looking forward to Sunday morning. Breakfast in bed, flowers and chocolate — plus sweet, handmade cards from kids who often don't take the time to say thanks. What's not to like?

But I also like the fact that Mother's Day was actually founded to celebrate [moms taking action](#) to protect their children and communities. And it's in that spirit that I'd like to honor all the moms working to keep kids safe from harmful pesticides — from my colleagues here in the PAN office to the thousands of supporters and partners taking action in the U.S. and around the world. You are amazing.

Years ago, I had the privilege of working with a mom from a small town on the central California coast who was deep in the battle to protect her community from the [strawberry pesticide](#) methyl bromide. Turns out this neurotoxic, ozone-depleting chemical was drifting into her neighborhood and her children's school.

This mom — her name was Karen — got herself up to speed on the status of the chemical under state, national and international law. She dove into the science on human health effects. And she studied the patterns of prevailing winds that were blowing the toxic chemical into her home. She also worked full time and got her kids to school with lunches packed and notes to the teacher signed.

Moms shouldn't have to work this hard to keep their kids safe.

I remember feeling both inspired by her efforts and deeply frustrated that Karen had to literally become a pesticide expert to protect her kids from harm. There's something seriously broken about our system when individual moms have to take charge of protecting their children and communities from pesticides that [scientists tell us](#) are harmful to kids.

Mom is on the job

You may have seen the recent news coverage of Sandra Steingraber's battle in New York to protect her kids and community from chemical harms. Her [interview with Bill Moyers](#) is powerful and motivating — it's well worth watching if you have a chance.

With both her actions and words, Sandra once again [reminds us](#) that it's time to play the "Save the World symphony" to protect all that we love.

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Published on Pesticide Action Network (<http://www.panna.org>)

"It is a vast orchestral piece, and you are but one musician. You are not required to play a solo, but you are required to know what instrument you hold, and play it as well as you can."

This Sunday, let's honor the creative and brave moms across the country who are taking up this challenge in all kinds of ways. Some are making [smart choices](#) in the produce aisle and farmers' market. Others are working with schools and local farmers to get safe and healthy food into school cafeterias. Still others are meeting with — or becoming — leaders in city halls and state capitols across the country to press for change.

As she heads out the door to fight for a healthier future, here's what Sandra — scientist, writer and longtime PAN friend and supporter — tells her kids: "Mom is on the job."

Our hope is that our work here at PAN to protect all kids from harmful pesticides will make this job easier for moms across the country and around the world. If you agree and would like pitch in, I hope you'll consider [making a donation](#) today.

And to all you amazing moms out there: Keep up the great work!

Source URL: <http://www.panna.org/blog/moms-shouldnt-have-work-hard>