Introduction
On April 7, 2017, a group of nine students from the Environmental Justice Clinic at Yale Law School, along with Professor Marianne Engelman-Lado, participated in a tour of Fair Haven, CT. The tour was led by Lee Cruz of The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven. We visited several sites in Fair Haven, developing an understanding for the EJ history and issues in the area, as well as an appreciation for the resilience, beauty, and optimism of the community.
**English Station**

The English Station power plant was shut down in 1992. Originally coal-based, the power plant was converted to natural gas, then scaled back to a peaking plant, and finally closed permanently. The closure of the plant was an early environmental justice victory in New Haven, a collaboration of community advocates and state officials, after residents began noticing higher rates of asthma in the area. Today, the property is contaminated by PCBs, asbestos, and other toxic chemicals, and a timeline for clean-up is still in progress.

![English Station is on the right. Salt piles on the left.](image)

**Salt Piles**

The state of Connecticut stores salt piles alongside the Mill River. Residents have noticed that the trees along the street have died and are fearful of greywater problems. They are planning to plant trees that can survive in a salt-rich environment.

**Farnham Court Housing**

Farnham Court is a housing complex on Grand Avenue. It is the fourth project in New Haven to receive funding from HUD to expand its footprint, reduce the number of
units, create individual entrances and lawns, and enact other improvements. The complex sits alongside I-91. Organized by New Haven Environmental Justice Network, the community demanded and got the State of Connecticut to put up a sound barrier (similar to the one that already existed by Wooster Square) to protect them from the noise generated by traffic on I-91, as well as a series of drive-by shootings that had occurred from the highway.

**Old Clock Factory**

From the mid-1800s through the mid-1900s, the clock factory on East Street employed 1500 workers, including women who painted watch faces with radium-based paint (a highly toxic chemical that was traced to throat and jaw cancer). The company closed in the late 1950s. Since then, the factory has been shuttered and closed, as the city tries to decide what to do with the site. The factory is highly contaminated with lead, asbestos, PCBs, and other chemicals. The city is in conversations with a developer about converting the site into housing for “creatives” to help drive New Haven’s future as a start-up city.

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**Alderman-Dow Scrap Business**

Since the early 1900s, Alderman & Dow ran a very successful scrap metal yard elsewhere in New Haven. In the 1950s the city exchanged that property for
Alderman’s current location on the waterfront. Although this business serves a vital function for the community and for the environment as a whole, the smell of oil-based paints and solvents permeates the area, and the land has an accumulation of minerals, oils, and metals.

**Criscuolo Park and surrounding area**

Criscuolo Park is the second most used park in New Haven. It sits near the old English Station power plant and I-91. Phoenix Press owns and operates New Haven’s only wind turbine nearby. The turbine powers the printing press, and when the business is not using it, the turbine provides power for 500 households. Phoenix Press also allows New Haven Farms to operate a community garden by the wind turbine to provide healthy food and health education for patients of the Fair Haven Community Health Clinic.
City’s long range plan calls for a waterfront walkway connecting Criscuolo Park to Quinnipiac River Park. Some members of the community dream of a green tree-lined avenue leading to a community park, but without the tax base to support such a plan it remains a dream. The avenue contains several notable businesses such as Fair Haven Furniture and Urban Miners, a salvage and disassemble business that gives parts of old homes new life and keeping the materials out of the waste stream. Also on River Street, there is a historic building where Connecticut’s black Civil War troops were housed. The men of the 29th Colored Regiment Monument erected a monument in Criscuolo Park in their honor.

Don’t Dump
On the bank of the Mill River sits an eclectic and strangely beautiful gathering ground for locals. Curtis, a community member, organized a Don’t Dump campaign, and created a safe place for community members to meet and to fish. In the area, local residents historically supplemented their food with fish from the River. But
contaminants in the water from nearby industrial plants and the storm sewer outflow have led to gastrointestinal problems for some residents.

![Don't Dump sign by the community gathering place](image)

**Brewery Square**

Brewery Square Apartments, alongside the bank of the Quinnipiac River, was originally a brewery. A third of the units in the building are government subsidized housing, as are hundreds of other units in the neighborhood. The pipes for the combined sewer overflow run under the parking lot of this property. The pipes belong to a multi-town Water Pollution Authority that is in the process of repairing them after more than a decade of use led to disrepair and leaks. On a somewhat positive note, the constituent municipalities of the Greater New Haven Regional Water Pollution Control Authority (GNHWPCA) established a [Green Fund](#) with $1,000,000 when they purchased the Water Pollution Control Authority from the City of New Haven. Some businesses in this environmentally stressed neighborhood required government siting approval and environmental permits. These include Buchanan Marine Barge
manufacturers and the Buckeye pipeline. Both businesses reduce the number of trucks on our highway system, but both businesses shift the environmental burden onto one of the six poorest neighborhoods in New Haven. The issue lies not necessarily in what these businesses are doing, but in where they are doing it. The concentration of these types of businesses is in relatively poor neighborhoods of color.

**Quinnipiac Marsh**

Alongside the Quinnipiac and Mill Rivers, community members organized to create a series of walking trails. The cash outlay for the markers and public maps was only $3,500, thanks to community commitment and partnerships with CARE at Yale School of Public Health and the Department of Transportation and Parks of the City of New Haven. The community wanted the walking trail because there was a pervasive fear to walk in the neighborhood due to crime. The area has transformed, and the walking trial provides one continuous loop through poorer and more affluent sections of the neighborhoods alike. The trial includes scenic areas such as the setting of the Captain’s Church poem and song.
Conclusion

We ended our tour with a few sites in the Fair Haven residential community. We saw climate resilience measures, urban renewal and community projects, and school gardens. Through it all, we witnessed community diversity, spirit, and pride.