



“Solar Spring Break” Helps College Students Provide Clean Power To Low-Income Families, Connect With Solar Industry Careers

GRID Alternatives hosts 15 schools across U.S. in national alternative break program

OAKLAND, CA; March 2, 2017 – Nearly 200 college students from 15 schools across the country will spend their school break installing no-cost solar for low-income families, gaining hands-on workforce training, and connecting with solar industry careers through GRID Alternatives’ [Solar Spring Break](#) program.

GRID Alternatives, America’s largest nonprofit solar installer, will lead teams of students in solar installations across California, Colorado, and Washington D.C. from February 27th through April 1st. Now in its fourth year, the alternative break program is an opportunity for students to learn about the energy and environmental issues facing low-income and tribal communities while gaining a foothold in one of America’s fastest-growing industries.

Teams of 10-12 students from each school will travel to different project sites around the country and spend the week on a combination of solar installations, neighborhood outreach, renewable energy educational activities and recreation.

“Solar Spring Break gives students who are passionate about renewable energy the chance to see solar technology in action building more resilient communities,” said GRID Alternatives CEO and co-founder Erica Mackie, “We’re helping shape the climate leadership of tomorrow.”

Students who complete the program will also have access to mentorship opportunities, educational resources, and solar industry job openings through the [Solar Energy Industries Association](#), which is partnering with GRID Alternatives for the first time this year to help make career connections for students wanting to continue in renewable energy.

Solar Spring Break has grown from six schools and teams in 2014 to 15 schools and 17 teams in 2017. The effort is sponsored by the Wells Fargo Foundation, which has underwritten the program’s expansion with a focus on schools serving diverse populations.

“Solar Spring Break was deeply eye opening, mind opening, and heart opening,” said Jasmine Tan, an undergraduate at Duke University who participated in 2016. “I felt so much more connected, not only to the solar and sustainability industry, but also to a whole new community and network.”

2017 participants include Arizona State University, Beloit College, California State University – East Bay (two teams), Duke University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Michigan State University, Mills College, North Carolina State University, North Carolina Central University (two teams), Santa Clara University, University of California – Berkeley, University of Massachusetts, University of Michigan, University of Nevada – Reno, and University of North Carolina.

Past Solar Spring Break [photo albums](#) are available online.

The Solar Spring Break teams also provide interesting individual stories:

- [Arizona State University](#) is participating for its third year and team members are from the school’s [Solar Engineering & Commercialization Professional Science Masters’ program](#)

- Beloit College is participating for its second year and will visit the National Renewable Energy Laboratory
- California State University-East Bay is sending two teams and was organized through the school's sustainability curriculum
- Duke University was organized by the [Duke University Energy Initiative](#), is focused on social justice issues, and will explore the climate-water-agriculture nexus
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology was organized by the [MIT Energy Initiative](#), and will be meeting with Homeboy Industries, a Los Angeles-based nonprofit helping former gang members and incarcerated individuals join the clean energy industry
- Michigan State University is participating for its first year and was organized through the school's alternative breaks program
- Mills College is a majority-female team that will be installing on grange hall that supports farmers
- North Carolina Central University, America's first public liberal arts college founded for African Americans, is participating for its second year, sending two teams to install in a tribal community near San Diego.
- University of California-Berkeley is participating for its fourth year
- University of Massachusetts is participating for its second year and was organized through the school's alternative breaks program
- University of Michigan is participating for its fourth year
- University of Nevada-Reno is a majority-female team and was organized by the school's [Women in Science and Engineering Learning Community](#)
- University of North Carolina is participating for its third year, and students are part of Epsilon Eta, the first and only professional environmental-based fraternity, founded in 2007

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ABOUT GRID ALTERNATIVES

GRID Alternatives is America's largest nonprofit solar installer, bringing clean energy technology and job training to underserved communities through a network of community partners and philanthropic supporters. GRID has installed more than 8,000 solar electric systems for low-income families and affordable housing providers with a combined installed capacity of almost 29 megawatts, saving more than \$230 million in lifetime electricity costs, preventing nearly 634,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions, and providing more than 30,000 people with solar training. GRID has eleven regional offices and affiliates serving California, Colorado, the Mid-Atlantic, the New York tri-state area, Tribal communities nationwide, Nicaragua and Nepal. For more information, visit www.gridalternatives.org