For immediate release

Over 200 College Students Provide Clean Power to Low-Income Families, Connect With Solar Industry Careers Through "Solar Spring Break"

GRID Alternatives hosts 23 teams in international alternative break program

OAKLAND, CA; March 4, 2019 – This spring, over 200 students, representing 22 colleges and universities from 15 states, will get hands-on with renewable energy and 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, a national leader in making clean, affordable solar power and solar jobs accessible to low-income communities and communities of color, will lead teams of students in solar installations across California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Nepal from March 4 through May 10. Now in its sixth year, the alternative break program is an immersive, service-learning opportunity for students to learn about the energy and environmental issues facing low-income and tribal communities in the United States and abroad.

Throughout the spring, teams of 10-12 students will travel to different project sites in the United States and Nepal 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 how solar power technology's real-world benefits make more resilient communities," said GRID Alternatives CEO and co-founder Erica Mackie. "We're helping shape the climate leadership of tomorrow."

Solar Spring Break has grown from six schools and teams in 2014 to 22 schools represented through 23 teams with an international reach in 2019. This year's program includes teams from:

- Arizona State University
- California State University, East Bay
- California State University, San Bernardino
- Duke University
- Fort Lewis College
- Georgia Tech
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Miami Dade College
- Michigan State University
- Navajo Technical University
- North Carolina State University
- Penn State University
- University of California, Berkeley (two teams)
- University of California, Santa Cruz
- University of Michigan (three teams)
- University of Nevada - Reno
- University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill
- Rice University

- Villanova University
- Intercollegiate Team

“What started as a solar installation project has become a phenomenal opportunity for hands-on community engagement,” said Alexis Thompson, a senior mechanical engineering student at University of Michigan-Dearborn, describing her experience participating in Solar Spring Break in 2018.

Alexis is one of the many student leaders from the University of Michigan making an impact again this year. Students from University of Michigan have participated in every Solar Spring Break and this year have three teams of students traveling to Los Angeles, San Diego, and Nepal. In the first international Solar Spring Break, students are traveling to Nepal’s Chitwan National Park to bring solar power to the Kumal Tower, a recently constructed off-grid wildlife observation tower.

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

Solar Spring Break effort is sponsored by the Wells Fargo Foundation, which has underwritten the program’s expansion with a focus on schools serving diverse populations.

Photos and b-roll from 2018 are available for download here.

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ABOUT GRID ALTERNATIVES

GRID Alternatives is a national leader in making clean, affordable solar power and solar jobs accessible to low-income communities and communities of color. Using a unique, people-first model, GRID develops and implements solar projects that serve qualifying households and affordable housing providers, while providing hands-on job training. GRID has installed solar for more than 13,800 families to-date and helped households and housing providers save $344 million in lifetime electricity costs, while training nearly 30,000 people. GRID Alternatives has nine regional offices and affiliates serving California, Colorado, the mid-Atlantic region, and Tribal communities nationwide, and serves communities in Nicaragua, Nepal, and Mexico. For more information, visit www.gridalternatives.org.

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