



Clean Drinks

Marin Residents and Local Nonprofits Team Up to Bring Solar Energy to Recent Immigrants

Nonprofit GRID Alternatives to lead the installation of solar on 12 low-income apartments in San Rafael operated by nonprofit Canal Alliance

San Rafael, CA ---- May 7, 2018 --- GRID Alternatives Bay Area and Canal Alliance are teaming up with Marin community leaders to address the housing affordability crisis that is hitting immigrants and other low-income families the hardest. The collaboration will put no-cost solar electric systems on 12 newly renovated apartments operated by Canal Alliance, generating \$13,000 each year in energy costs savings for low-income residents.

“Canal Alliance serves immigrant families in our community who are motivated to achieve their dreams,” shares Omar Carrera, Executive Director of Canal Alliance. “With this project, we want to challenge the conversation around what affordable housing can be. Beyond just providing living space, we want to reduce costs, increase energy efficiency, and provide families with safe and healthy housing. The savings provided by this project will have a huge impact for the families in these units, and for the planet as it moves energy use to a clean, renewable source.”

The project, led by a group of Marin leaders calling themselves “Clean Drinks” who meet regularly to solve problems and take action in the local community, will provide 33 kilowatts of solar capacity, generating \$300,000 in lifetime energy cost savings and preventing 670 tons of greenhouse gas emissions over the system's lifetime. Inspired by the current political climate, the Clean Drinks group not only brought the two nonprofit partners together, but also led the fundraising efforts towards the project's costs.

“Our frustration with the current administration made us realize we had to take action on a local level,” said Jon Wank, co-founder of Clean Drinks. “We are fortunate to live in Marin, but there are people in our community fighting to prosper. This isn't just a donation towards helping the environment, it shows that clean energy saves a lot of money and benefits the community no matter where you live.”

GRID Alternatives Bay Area, the country's leading non-profit solar installer, coordinated the project and will lead all aspects of the solar installation. Residents will be invited to participate in the installation to gain hands-on skills training for careers in the growing renewable energy industry.

“Low-income families spend four times or more of their income on energy bills than average households,” said Renée Sharp, Bay Area Regional Director for GRID Alternatives. “Solar power provides long-term relief so families can invest their limited resources in other things like healthy food, schooling and healthcare. We are proud to be involved in this impactful and community-centered collaboration.”

The partners will host a community event on Saturday, May 12, to celebrate the completion of the installation with local community members, donors, politicians and supporting businesses. Key corporate sponsors of the project include Trina Solar, MCE and Cenergy Power.

Donations are still being accepted [here](#), and supporters can receive their name on back of a solar panel that will be installed on the Canal Alliance apartment buildings.

About Canal Alliance

[Canal Alliance](#) is a nonprofit champion of immigrants who are challenged by a lack of resources and an unfamiliar environment. By educating, empowering, supporting, and partnering with motivated immigrants to best meet all their unique needs—from putting food on the table, to becoming U.S. citizens, to learning English, and graduating from college – Canal Alliance is working to make Marin a place where *everyone* can live, work and succeed.

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 10,000 families to-date and helped households and housing providers save \$320 million in lifetime electricity costs, while training over 36,000 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.

About Clean Drinks

Clean Drinks was started by Marin-based renewable energy leaders Jon Wank and David Williams, to encourage people to step away from their Facebook feeds and take positive action in our community. For more information, visit <http://CleanDrinks.us>.