

# Soulardarity 2017 Year End Summary



When I decided to join the fight for alternative energy in Highland Park, MI it was from the personal experience of dealing with gas and electric options that were not affordable, witnessing an accountability process that was not accessible to myself or others like me and to advocate for those who may not have understood the power their voice and involvement has in changing environmental decisions and outcomes in favor of those who are continuously impacted in negative and harmful ways.

This email is to serve as a review of our accomplishments and achievements of our organization and may also be shared with our supporters, partners and the community at-large.

Soulardarity believes in energy democracy, the concept that people impacted by energy decisions should have a seat at the table in making them. Unfortunately, the history of energy decisions in Michigan epitomizes the well-known saying in our communities: if you aren't at the table, you're on the menu.

In communities across the United States, people are seeking alternatives to conventional energy sources. Advances in solar technology, an increase in federal and state tax incentives, and creative new financing models have made solar projects including community solar projects, more financially feasible in Highland Park and surrounding communities like Detroit and Hamtramck. Highland Park is a city of innovation. Home of the first automated assembly line, the first mile of paved road, the first urban freeway, and the invention of the electric streetlight., Highland Park is a city that has shaped the world.



The best way to show appreciation or support for this work is to commit to its continuation and progress. A fellow organizer once said, ***"You don't need to be an endowed foundation to invest in an idea."*** As we share these achievements please understand that we are also in the process of growing our small but huge hearted organization.

## Become a Solarsational Supporter!



Our end of the year push is to gain fiduciary support to cover leasing costs for our new office space for 2018. Our monthly rent is \$250 per month and with your help we want to use your funds to alleviate this cost so that we may focus on the bigger picture tasks and organizing tasks.

Go to our donate page! <https://soulardarity.nationbuilder.com/donate>

Donations that cover an entire month of rent will be featured on our Facebook page (with your permission of course). In-kind donations and volunteer hours are also welcome as helpful donations. Give or not we hope you still join us at our **Annual Holiday Party** on **Sunday, December 17th at 4pm**. There will be food, drinks, entertainment, and great raffle prizes! RSVP here: [soulardarity.com/events](http://soulardarity.com/events)

***"We are experiencing trying, troubling times. But in our cities and municipalities, the promise of forward-thinking, tolerant and inclusive democratic values still stands strong."*** (Medium Article: Our Nation's Cities: Working Together to Provide a Better Alternative)

Forward ever!

*Shimekia Nichols*

Staff Organizer & Proud Soulardarity Member

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Building a brighter future for Highland Park and neighboring cities with energy democracy education, organizing and people-powered energy

## Here is a look at some of what we have accomplished in 2017:

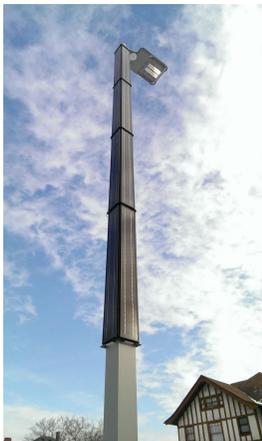
The following programs, events and collaborations were successful because we executed community input, maintained transparency and evaluated each step looking for ways they have been improved, which accounts for the awards and accomplishments listed below. We believe in keeping business local, so the majority of our initiatives involve our working with a Michigan manufacturer, Solartonic, and Detroit-based Ryter Cooperative Industries on the build and installation of our solar-powered lights.



### Power UP! Bulk Purchase Program <http://www.soulardarity.com/powerup>

We helped develop individual and community resilience and purchase power by coordinating a cooperative economic solar buying program. This was a major step forward in lighting the way for residents looking for high quality solar solutions such as home security lighting, phone chargers at affordable prices.

- In 2017, we were able to expand our program to include lighting options and offering solar solutions for other home and personal needs.
- 50 lights, solar generators, and solar phone chargers installed this year.
- This fall we hosted a Celebration Dinner for participants and received more than 40 rsvps and response to our feedback survey.



### Parker Village Shines <https://www.ioby.org/project/pvshines>

A successful campaign which raised \$11,535 on IOBY! Parker Village and Soulardarity came together to bring a state-of-the-art smart solar street light with wifi, LED signage, and on-site security to Highland Park. A small step in a big movement to reclaim the innovative legacy of a great city.

- Parker Village is a platform for Highland Park innovators like founder Juan Shannon, a long-time Highland Park resident and owner of Modern Tribe Communications, Inc. who bought the old Thompson Elementary School on the eastside of HP to start Parker Village, to be empowered, resourced, and networked into a powerful movement for Highland Park's revitalization.
- Installation is slated for April 2018
- The success of this campaign drives Parker Village forward as a model of community investment and innovation for a brighter future in Highland Park.



### Fitzgerald Creative Alley Revitalization Project

Adding solar-powered pole-mounted alley lights in the Fitzgerald Neighborhood of Detroit made the alleyway safer and more beautiful while providing clean energy that is accessible and affordable for everyone. This effort was coordinated in large part by Detroit Collaborative Design Center at the University of Detroit Mercy.

- This year 2 lights were installed by RCI at no cost to the residents (with the goal of 100 being installed in 2018!)
- These solar-powered streetlights are exactly the kind of clean energy innovations pushing the world towards 100% - block by block. Join us and help us shine more light in our city today!



