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News From Soulardarity and Ryter Cooperative Industries



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Detroit Communities Invest in Community Solar Lighting

Local organizations spearhead project for making neighborhoods safer

DETROIT, MI – This summer, Detroiters and Highland Parkers worked together to bring light to their homes and alleyways through affordable, reliable solar power. Soulardarity and Ryter Cooperative Industries (RCI) collaborated to organize a bulk purchase of 50 battery-powered solar lights in neighborhoods throughout the city.

This program was organized in response to a community need for lighting in homes and alleyways. Soulardarity, a member-led community non-profit, partnered with RCI, a social impact enterprise, to provide a high quality lighting product and installation service at an affordable rate. The lights are motion-sensing LEDs, which are powered by built in solar panels and lithium ion battery banks, and designed to last more than 5 years without service.

“Education is the key,” said Cindy Mondy, a Highland Parker and Soulardarity member who is participating in the program. “We have been informing our neighborhood on affordable energy alternatives that keep us safe. It feels great to be a part of the movement towards energy independence.”

Soulardarity was formed after DTE Energy repossessed over 1000 streetlights from Highland Park, MI, leaving residents in the dark. Since forming in 2012, Soulardarity has installed 6 solar-powered streetlights and is now advocating for a fully off-grid municipal lighting system. Soulardarity also runs education programs on weatherization and community solar and engages with regional and statewide efforts to promote a just and equitable energy system that works for all communities. Several community partners are participating in the order, including the Avalon Village project in Highland Park, the North End Woodward Community Coalition, and the Oakland Avenue Community Garden.

Ryter Cooperative Industries (RCI), founded by Detroit native Ali Dirul in 2014, is a Metro Detroit community based engineering company that provides renewable energy designs and engineering solutions to community development organizations looking to improve the quality of life for its members and serviced communities. RCI has a network of clean energy engineers that have helped grow a portfolio of innovative solar designs including charging lawnmowers, cell phones, and most notably the Dirul Energy Station at D-Town Farm, a 7.5 acre urban farm in Rouge Park. This 3KW off-grid energy system powers lights, tools and other agricultural equipment. RCI has partnered with the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, Charles H. Wright Museum, University of Detroit Mercy, and other Metro Detroit institutions.

“This bulk purchase project is historic,” said Karanja Famodou, RCI Projects Co-Director. “We are very proud to be a contributor of technology solutions that work for our communities”

There will be a community BBQ on Sunday, October 16th at 750 W Euclid St, Detroit, MI from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. to celebrate the success of the program. It is hosted by the Euclid St Block Club, many members of which participated in this order. Program participants will share their experiences and RCI and Soulardarity will announce future rounds of the bulk purchase program. All are invited to celebrate, eat, drink, and learn about this project and what is coming next.

To learn more about Soulardarity, please visit soulardarity.nationbuilder.com, follow them on Facebook at “Soulardarity” or on Twitter at @Soulardarity. To learn more about Ryter Cooperative Industries please visit www.ryterci.com, follow them on Facebook at “Ryter Cooperative Industries”