



**Supporting Opportunities in
Advancing Renewable Resources**
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Doing Good By Going Green:

“Inspiring the next generation of green leaders by harnessing the power of solar energy to make communities a more sustainable place to live”

Project SOARR—Supporting Opportunities in Advancing Renewable Resources—is a nonprofit organization bringing together local communities, businesses, and environmental partners to create an innovative training and mentoring program to engage urban high school students with renewable energy. Project SOARR was founded in 2009 to promote a more sustainable future for Milwaukee-area communities by creating a sense of social responsibility, investing in renewable resources and inspiring the next generation of community leaders.

Collaborating with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee, SOARR employs student trainees to take part in green energy projects, giving participants a chance to support themselves and their families while demonstrating renewable energy’s multifaceted value to the community. To accomplish these objectives, SOARR developed an 8-week summer program using the technical training curriculum created by the Midwest Renewable Energy Association and its own “Model for Leadership” program.

SOARR trains and supervises the trainees to perform all the tasks involved in incorporating renewable energy systems into existing buildings, including system design, installation, system controls programming, and commissioning. Hot Water Products, a Milwaukee-based leader in energy-efficient water and hydronic heating products and solar thermal systems, provides technical training sessions to project participants.



Solar Thermal Specifications

- Panel Model: Solar Skies AET MSC-32
- Number of Panels: 8
- Total Collector Space: 256 sq. ft.
- Storage Volume: 238 gallons
- Gallon/day Hot Water Use: 400
- Utility: We Energies
- Year of Installation: 2011
- Incentives:
 - Focus on Energy rebate \$4,625
 - Hot Water Products donation \$7,727
 - Remaining costs covered by donations made to Project SOARR



Since its inception, SOARR has conducted three eight-week summer leadership and technical training programs. For its pilot summer projects in 2009 and 2010, SOARR participants installed their first two solar hot water systems atop fire stations in the Town of Somers (Racine County) and the Village of Pleasant Prairie (Kenosha County).

The summer 2011 project was much larger than the organization's pilot projects. Seventeen SOARR participants installed an eight-panel solar thermal system at Camp Whitcomb-Mason, the Boys and Girls Clubs' year-round training facility in Hartland, Wisconsin. Built in 1904, the camp continues to serve the greater Milwaukee area, hosting 14,000 youth each year during weeklong summer camping trips and weekend visits during the school year. SOARR selected Camp Whitcomb-Mason because of its continued support of youth groups from Milwaukee and throughout the Midwest.

The seventeen participants installed the 256 square feet of collector space atop the Friendship Lodge—a 300,000 square foot building that services thirteen of the camp's cabins. Solar Skies, a Minnesota-based manufacturer of solar thermal panels, produced the eight flat-plate collectors. Hot Water Products donated \$7,727 to cover the cost of the collectors and Focus on Energy provided \$4,625 of additional funding. The remaining costs of the project were covered by donations made to Project SOARR by supportive community members and businesses.





Project SOARR is a registered 501(c)(3) charity and is funded by the generous donations of charitable individuals, businesses, and other organizations.

Project SOARR greatly appreciates all the support it has received, and invites interested parties to make a tax deductible donation to help fund future renewable energy projects.

**Donations can be sent to:
2322 S. Kinnickinnic Ave.
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On an average day of operation, Camp Whitcomb-Mason facilities use approximately 400 gallons of hot water. A typical water heater uses natural gas to heat the water to desired temperatures. The eight solar collectors at Camp Whitcomb-Mason reduce fossil fuel use by converting the sun's energy into hot water for the camp's shower, laundry, and kitchen facilities. This clean, renewable alternative is used to heat 51% of the camp's water demand, and installation of the solar thermal system is estimated to reduce the camp's utility expenses by \$500 to \$600 per year. The financial benefit is appealing, but the true value of the project is derived from the educational opportunities it provides.

Sharon Alexander, a Solar Specialist at Hot Water Products, described the company's experience providing technical support to SOARR participants: "It is an honor to spend time sharing our expertise with the keen learners of Project SOARR. Teaching such highly motivated students about the principals of quality solar thermal product design and sound installation practices is a winning proposition all around. Not only are participants learning a marketable skill-set but are also gaining a real understanding and enthusiasm for a renewable energy source that will help protect the environment for future generations."

Following the summer project, fifteen graduated trainees became "Tech Mentors" and are continuing to work on additional green energy projects throughout the community. Tech Mentors also help educate future participants on renewable energy technologies and the environment in a structured after school program throughout the year. SOARR plans on utilizing Tech Mentors and volunteers to increase the next summer's training program to forty youth participants. The technical skills gained during the projects prepare SOARR trainees to pursue career opportunities in renewable energy industries of the future.

