



**For Immediate Release
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South Arlington family hosts area's first 'Solar Barn Raising'

*Arlington, Virginia--*On Saturday, Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment (ACE) and County Board Chairman Jay Fissette helped launch a new volunteer program dubbed Solar Raisers. Nearly twenty volunteers arrived early in the morning at the South Arlington home of Jeff and Kerry Ploetz to help install a solar hot water heating system. The volunteers were a diverse crew, ranging in all ages and professional backgrounds. Volunteers did everything from mounting the panels on the roof to installing a specialized tank in the basement.

Modeled after traditional Amish barn raisings, in which a family purchases the supplies and the community helps build the barn, the Solar Raisers program was able to cut the cost of the Ploetzes' energy-saving solar hot water system by more than 65% to just over \$3,000. Jeff Ploetz was excited to be the first Solar Raising host, saying that "by using the sun to heat our water, we're expecting to cut our water heating bill by about 80%. We had hoped to do this for a long time and ACE's Solar Raising made it financially feasible. We are also very pleased to be supporting the growing U.S. 'green manufacturing' sector as the entire system is made in America."

Elenor Hodges, Executive Director of ACE said that "this project embodies values that are central to the Arlington community: volunteerism, entrepreneurship, and a commitment to protecting our environment. As our planet faces global climate change, every bit we can do to reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions is critical. I look forward to seeing this program grow and expand, hopefully playing a significant role in kick starting a clean energy economy here in Arlington."

Also assisting with the installation were two local companies: Sunnovations, a McLean-based company that designed the system, and Continuum Energy Solutions, an Alexandria-based solar installation firm. An experienced Continuum crew worked with volunteers to teach them how to install the system.

In addition to working with homeowners to host volunteer raisings, Solar Raisers and ACE have secured group discounts for families that prefer to have a professional installation. People who are interested in volunteering or learning more about the program or solar water technology can contact Program Director Dan Conant at conantd@gmail.com or (571) 243-0745.

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