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Crowdfunding campaign to solarize East Oakland church reaches goal in one day

Nonprofit RE-volv raises \$18K on Giving Tuesday to bring solar to community-based Faith Baptist Church

OAKLAND, Calif. – November 29, 2017- Supporters of solar across the country donated enough on #GivingTuesday to bring solar energy to East Oakland’s Faith Baptist Church through a [crowdfunding campaign](#) from the solar nonprofit [RE-volv](#). The campaign exceeded its goal of \$14,400 in less than one day, a first for the organization, with the support of matching funds from the [Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation](#).

“Lowering our electricity bill will add to the bottom line in our organization’s budget,” said Rev. Curtis Robinson, Pastor of Faith Baptist Church, which feeds over 300 hungry families every month and distributes more than 100 tons of food every year through their bi-weekly Food Giving Program. “With the savings from solar energy, we plan to better serve our youth and young adults and our seniors, some of our most underserved populations.”

The planned 5.8kW solar array will save Faith Baptist Church more than 30 percent on their electricity bill in the first year and over \$40,000 over the life of the system. In addition to Faith Baptist’s monthly savings, RE-volv’s unique revolving fund model means the church’s solar payments will be reinvested into more solar energy projects for nonprofits across the country.

“RE-volv is working to make sure that the benefits of solar can reach everywhere, including nonprofit organizations working to benefit underserved communities,” said Andreas Karelak, Executive Director of RE-volv. “Faith Baptist Church is an inspiring example of people in a community coming together to help their neighbors who are less fortunate.”

RE-volv is a grantee of the U.S. Department of Energy SunShot Initiative. This project is one of 10 that RE-volv aims to showcase as part of the DOE’s [Solar in your Community Challenge](#), a contest to identify new financial models for bringing solar to low-moderate income communities and nonprofits.

Yesterday’s campaign was bolstered by matching funds from the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation. The Foundation awarded RE-volv \$120,000 this year, which doubled individuals’ contributions. The solar panels were generously donated from solar manufacturer [Jinko Solar](#).

RE-volv supports solar energy projects for nonprofits that lack access to financing options. An estimated 1.5 million nonprofits in the U.S. face financial barriers to obtaining solar power, as they do not qualify for solar tax credits or are too small to attract traditional investors. These nonprofits miss out on the financial benefits of solar which they could use to further support the communities they serve. RE-volv bridges this funding gap for organizations that provide valuable public services to vulnerable communities, including homeless shelters, schools, community centers, and houses of worship, like Faith Baptist Church.

RE-volv’s unique crowdfunding platform is the first to employ a revolving fund for solar energy. Donors select a specific nonprofit to support - like Faith Baptist Church – and, as the project pays back dividends through a solar lease agreement, the user can then reinvest in new solar projects through the RE-volv

platform. This pay-it-forward model helps to accelerate solar energy deployment in local communities while keeping donors engaged in growing clean energy across the country.

To date, RE-volv has raised over \$300,000 from over a thousand people in 22 countries. It has crowdfunded 11 solar projects (150+ kW of capacity) in four states, include [Harbor House](#) in Oakland, which serves refugee, immigrant, and low-income families with after-school programs and ESL classes, and [Morris Chapel Baptist Church](#), the oldest African American Church in Philadelphia. Thanks to the solar installations, these nonprofits are expected to save between 15 and 40 percent on their electric bills. In total, these 11 nonprofits will save more than \$1.5 million over the life of their solar energy systems. RE-volv's solar revolving fund, the Solar Seed Fund, is now worth over \$700,000 in future lease payments from these 11 projects - payments which will be used to finance at least 20 more solar energy projects.

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About RE-volv

RE-volv empowers people to take direct action on climate change by crowdfunding solar energy projects for nonprofit organizations. Donations made to RE-volv's crowdfunding campaigns grow a revolving fund that provides solar financing for nonprofits across the nation. RE-volv also raises awareness about solar energy through its flagship Solar Ambassador Program, which trains college students to solarize nonprofits they care about. RE-volv is an inaugural member of the White House National Community Solar Partnership. Learn more at RE-volv.org.

About Faith Baptist Church

Faith Baptist Church of East Oakland, California, was formed in 1984 and plays a vital role in its community. Among the many services they provide, volunteers with their Food Giving Program distribute free food to families in need throughout the year.

About the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation

Founded in 1998, the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation ("LDF") works to protect the Earth's last wild places by implementing solutions that restore balance to threatened ecosystems, and ensuring the long-term health and wellbeing of all its inhabitants. Learn more at leonardodicaprio.org.

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