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## NEW PARTNERSHIP PROVES SUCCESSFUL FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY JOB PLACEMENT FOR ECONOMICALLY MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

Asheville, NC – May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021

On April 26<sup>th</sup> two local non-profit organizations, Green Opportunities and the YMI Cultural Center, began a three-week long training program with trainees interested in employment in solar energy and plumbing. The program, funded in part by a grant from the Dogwood Health Trust, provided the trainees with a \$15 per hour wage for the entirety of the program.

After first attending a week of “soft” skills workplace training that included resume building, practice interviews, and OSHA-10 certificates, the trainees were primed to move forward with on-the-job training. SolFarm Solar Co., a local solar energy installer, partnered with the non-profits to provide three trainees with real world experience. Weeks two and three were spent working alongside Solfarm Solar Co.’s seasoned crew. Trainees were introduced to installation processes, equipment, and tools commonly required for solar energy projects.

In the last days of the program, SolFarm Solar Co. decided to extend full-time living wage employment to two of the three trainees. As a growing company, SolFarm is constantly evaluating the expansion of its staff and plans to continue this relationship with Green Opportunities. “The program was a great success, and we couldn’t be happier with the outcome. Diversifying the solar industry and supporting our neighbors with good paying jobs is very important to me. I’d like to encourage other local companies and industries to see where they may be able to make a difference as well.” Said Mike Diethelm, Owner and President of SolFarm Solar Co.

SolFarm Solar Co. is certified as a living wage employer by Just Economics of Western North Carolina.

Those interested in participating in future programs can learn more by calling Green Opportunities at 828-398-4158 or visiting [www.greenopportunities.org](http://www.greenopportunities.org). Women, minorities, and those with barriers to employment are encouraged to apply.

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