



Photo courtesy of
Portland Rescue Mission

PORTLAND RESCUE MISSION TURNS SAVINGS FROM SOLAR INTO DREAMS COME TRUE

SHEPHERD'S DOOR, AN ADDICTION RECOVERY COMMUNITY, GENERATES \$12,000 WORTH OF ENERGY ANNUALLY

For years, Portland Rescue Mission dreamed of installing a solar electric system that would help keep electricity costs down and allow more money to go toward social services. But the cost was prohibitive for the nonprofit, which provides shelter and services to break the cycle of homelessness, addiction and despair.

That changed when a Portland Rescue Mission advisor connected with Twende Solar, another Portland nonprofit, which develops solar projects in communities around the world by leveraging donated materials and volunteer labor. Twende Solar worked with Energy Trust of Oregon trade ally, Elemental Energy, and several other contractors to design and install a 100.6-kilowatt system on the roof of Shepherd's Door, Portland Rescue Mission's addiction recovery community for women. The system generates 40 percent of the building's electricity, saving an estimated \$12,000 a year.

"We've brought solar to communities in Cambodia, Guatemala, Tanzania and more," said Marissa Johnson, executive director, Twende Solar. "When we heard about Portland Rescue Mission's desire to go solar, it was a perfect opportunity to install a system locally and support a highly respected nonprofit addressing critical needs. Plus, Shepherd's Door has a perfect roof for solar panels."

True to its name, which means "let's go" in Swahili, Twende Solar activated its network of solar professionals, manufacturers, suppliers and volunteers. More than a dozen companies, including eight Energy Trust of Oregon trade allies, donated products or labor. "We were able to purchase the solar panels at a deep discount," said Johnson. "Other solar suppliers made generous donations of inverters, transformers, racking and transportation."

PROJECT-AT-A-GLANCE

- 100.6 kilowatt roof-mounted solar system
- \$38,300 Energy Trust cash incentive
- 120,000 kilowatt hours generated annually
- \$12,000 in avoided energy costs annually

Project contributors

- Twende Solar
- Shepherd's Door residents
- Energy Trust solar trade allies
 - Elemental Energy
 - Imagine Energy
 - LightSource Energy
 - Neil Kelly
 - Sunbridge Solar
 - Sunlight Solar Energy
 - Synchro Solar
 - True South Solar
- Additional Contributors
 - Bonneville Environmental Foundation
 - CED Greentech
 - EATON
 - Form 7 Productions
 - IronRidge
 - New Legacy Construction
 - Platt Electric Supply
 - RRC Companies
 - SunPower
 - WESCO Distribution
 - Yaskawa Solectria Solar



Sharing and caring up on the roof

After all the supplies were in place, 130 volunteers dedicated almost 1,600 hours to install the system, which includes 296 panels. Most of the volunteers were solar professionals—competitors who worked side by side, often discussing and comparing solar installation best practices.

Other volunteers included residents of Shepherd's Door, a place for women and their young children who are seeking a way to move into a healthy lifestyle while dealing with the pain of addiction. "Everyone at Shepherd's Door pitched in a little, either providing hospitality for other volunteers or helping with construction," said Mike Deckon, director of marketing, Portland Rescue Mission. Two Shepherd's Door residents enthusiastically accepted an invitation to volunteer on the roof alongside solar contractors, receiving hands-on construction experience that turned out to be life-changing. "As a result of this experience, both resident volunteers enrolled in pre-apprenticeship training with Constructing Hope, a Portland nonprofit that helps rebuild the lives of people in our community by encouraging self-sufficiency through education in the construction industry," said Deckon.

"I didn't even know installing solar power was an industry," said Brittany, one of the residents, who later enrolled in the 10-week Constructing Hope program and now works in a living-wage job, pursuing a new career as an electrical apprentice.



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Over the 25-year expected life of the system, we'll save at least \$300,000. That's money we can put into additional services feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless and helping those overcoming addiction change their lives.



Mike Deckon, director of marketing,
Portland Rescue Mission

Turning savings into services

An Energy Trust cash incentive of \$38,300, combined with donated materials and labor, helped make this project possible and results in no impact to Portland Rescue Mission's budget. Twende Solar asks organizations to pay up to five years of their avoided cost to ensure their commitment to the project and its continued maintenance. Portland Rescue Mission will therefore pay its first five years of savings back to Twende, and after five years Portland Rescue Mission will reap all the benefits of free renewable power.

"Over the 25-year expected life of the system, we'll save at least \$300,000," says Deckon. "That's money we can put into additional services feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless and helping those overcoming addiction change their lives. We operate 100 percent on donated money and receive no government funds. Cutting electricity costs by 40 percent makes a big difference for our community and shows our donors that their resources are going directly to support our mission of service."