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New Fund Helps Nonprofits Go Solar

By: Jessica Gould // November 4, 2011



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Jessica Gould

A volunteer hands out groceries at the food pantry at The Spanish Catholic Center in D.C.

The [Spanish Catholic Center](http://www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/page.aspx?pid=357) (<http://www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/page.aspx?pid=357>) is a nonprofit organization covered under the umbrella of Catholic Charities D.C. that does social services and offers medical and dental services in the Washington Metropolitan area. The need for the center's services has never been greater, says Julieta Machado, the Program Director at the center.

In these tough economic times, however, funding for the center's programs has dwindled. Machado says she's looking to cut costs wherever she can: "Every penny that we can save to spend on our programs is worthwhile."

For example, she says she'd love to see the center go solar to save money on energy bills. That money that is saved can go towards more and better programs for the community that they serve. But Machado says the center simply doesn't have the capital to cover the upfront costs of installing a solar system.: "We have to make an investment and we don't have the money to make that big investment."

That's why Machado is working with a group called [D.C. SUN](https://sites.google.com/site/dcsolarunitedneighborhoods/) (<https://sites.google.com/site/dcsolarunitedneighborhoods/>), which just created a fund to help local nonprofits go solar.

"The idea of it is to gather donations from solar companies who are helping our members go solar to bring more people into the solar market," says Anya Schoolman, the group's president. Six installers have already signed onto the new EmPOWERment fund, and Schoolman expects more will follow suit.

Meanwhile, Machado says she hopes the Spanish Catholic Center will inspire more nonprofits to go solar. "I think these things are contagious and I think if we go solar the community will be more enthusiastic about going solar," she says.

After all, she notes, going solar isn't just about helping the planet. These days, it's about saving money to help people too.

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Thanksgiving is still weeks away, but the Capitol Christmas Tree is already on its way from Northern California.

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The state of Mississippi has the highest percentage of its population — 24 percent — on food stamps of any state in the country. The director of the SNAP program in Mississippi explains why.

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Baltimore Mayor Expected To Retain Office (/news/11/11

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Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake is expected to retain her position in Tuesday's general election, in the largely Democratic city.

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NPR

Members Of Anonymous Share Values, Aesthetics

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The online group Anonymous was in the news again last week when it threatened to unmask collaborators with a powerful Mexican drug cartel. That is just one of the attention-grabbing exploits by the group of cyber activists that is as mysterious as its name sounds. Journalist Quinn Norton talks to Renee Montagne about the profile of Anonymous that she has written for Wired.com.

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