

STEPPING UP SUSTAINABILITY AT PEA

Every year, the senior class makes a parting gift to Exeter. In a distinct sign of the times, the class of '07 chose to donate solar panels.

“We saw the class gift as an opportunity to quickly put into action a real solution to the energy crisis that faces our world,” says Dieter Brommer '07, who came up with the idea of solar panels. “We decided to leave a mark that will remind future Exonians of the responsibility they have to a planet that has given them so much.”

Adds Jackson Salovaara '07, a member of PEA's Environmental Task Force, “Solar panel technologies—thermal and photovoltaic—will provide the energy of the future. Exeter has always led by example. This should be no exception.”

In another longstanding tradition, the 50th reunion class, the class of '57, doubled the value of the senior class gift with matching funds. It was a visit from a member of the class of '57 that helped inspire the solar panels gift. In February, Tim Wirth '57, president of the United Nations Foundation and a former senator from Colorado, delivered a stirring assembly talk about global climate change.

This summer, the panels are being installed on new faculty housing, and will help achieve the goal of a 50 percent reduction in utility consumption (based on energy use in existing, similarly sized faculty housing).

“The class of 2007 ties itself very closely to environmental issues,” explains Jennifer Wilhelm, Exeter's sustainability coordinator. “They have been involved in several major sustainability initiatives during their time at Exeter.” Four years ago, when the graduating seniors were preps, Exeter launched the Green Cup Challenge, a student-led conservation campaign that has grown from a small contest among Exeter dorms to an ambitious 15-school competition. This year's graduating class includes many of the leaders who helped make that growth possible.

The class of '07 also played a key role in other projects, including this spring's Step It Up rally (part of the National Day of Climate Action), the Green Flag Program (an environmental awards initiative targeting schools), recycling and composting.

Several seniors were also part of the 10-member Carbon Committee, which spent the winter and spring terms researching strategies to reduce the Academy's carbon footprint. In May, the Carbon Committee presented the Trustees with its findings in “A Proposal for Carbon Neutrality,” a 55-page report that includes a greenhouse gas inventory, mitigation strategies, recommendations for how to achieve carbon reductions by specific dates—and the signatures of 795 students supporting the Academy's efforts to commit to and work toward carbon neutrality.

—Nicole Pellaton



On April 14, the National Day of Climate Action, PEA's Environmental Action Committee joined with local organizations to host a Step It Up rally, part of a nationwide movement to promote climate change education and legislation.