

New Science Barge Solar System

Posted on: October 12, 2016. Posted by: Kathy Welsh

YONKERS – As if it were determined to cooperate, the sun shone brightly as 90 people gathered to flip the ceremonial switch on the new energy system aboard the Science Barge.

Mayor Mike Spano did the honors, with the help of dedicated young Science Barge volunteers and several representatives from the Green Mountain Energy Sun Club, donors of the new equipment.

The \$50,000 system, which includes 12 state-of-the-art solar panels and an Iron Edison 48 volt battery bank, will double the capacity of the Barge to produce and save energy to power its greenhouse growing systems.

“This donation from the *Sun Club* propels the Barge into the next era, totally updating the energy system that powers our hydroponic farm,” said Bob Walters, director of the Science Barge, a program of Groundwork Hudson Valley.



L-R GME Sun Club ED Jason Sears, Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano. Background: Yonkers City Councilman Michael Sabatino, Former Yonkers City Council Pres. Chuck Lesnick, Doug Semmes, VP of Res. Sales for GM. Photo provided

Sixteen Science Barge volunteers were in attendance, ranging in age from 10-20. The volunteers are all Yonkers Public School students, except one, Leslee Ramos, who is a paid intern from the College of Mount St. Vincent in Riverdale. Also on hand for the festivities were 15 Yonkers high school students, all members of Groundwork’s Green Team; representatives of the Center for the Urban River at Beczak (CURB); and many local Science Barge fans.



L-R-Leslee Ramos, Santiago Orozco, Julian Ortiz, Mayor Spano, Barge Director Bob Walters. Photo provided

“The *Sun Club* loves working with unique nonprofits, and the Science Barge is an excellent demonstration of renewable energy and environmental education,” said Mark Parsons, president of the Green Mountain Energy Sun Club and vice president and general manager of Green Mountain Energy Company. “We’re proud to support the Science Barge by helping the sustainable urban farm operate completely off the grid.”

This week, Science Barge educators are rolling out new climate change curricula, thanks to a \$470,000 grant from the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Association (NOAA). Groundwork was one of only six organizations in the country to receive this prestigious grant to provide cutting-edge education in climate change and resiliency to Yonkers school students. New signs and exhibits will be installed on the Barge, spreading awareness about climate change among thousands of visitors each year. The program, called “Global, Local, Coastal — Preparing the Next Generation for a Changing Climate,” will also be conducted at CURB and Groundwork’s EcoHouse.

Besides Green Mountain Energy’s *Sun Club*, the Science Barge is funded by grants from the City of Yonkers, ConEdison, Domino Sugar, NOAA, the EPA, and the Hudson River Foundation. The Barge is located at 99 Dock Street, Yonkers, NY 10701.