

Congregation Kol Ami in White Plains Gets \$85,000 from Con Edison to Go Green!

Congregation Kol Ami announces contract with Bright Energy Services and Atlantic Westchester to improve the synagogue's energy efficiency, realize electric bill savings, and secure an \$85,000 grant from Con Edison to help pay for the upgrades!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

White Plains, NY, April 22, 2016 - Congregation Kol Ami formed their Green Team in May of 2015. Led by Executive Director, Jessica Lorden, and comprised of seven congregants who either work in the environmental field, or are interested in environmental initiatives, the team set out to reduce the synagogue's carbon footprint in multiple ways, including addressing energy conservation and minimizing the impact of skyrocketing energy costs.

The Green Team learned that Congregation Kol Ami officials were concerned about the high cost of replacing some of their energy inefficient HVAC equipment that was nearing the end of their useful lives. "Thinking about the air-conditioning equipment in the Chapel breaking down on a hot summer day, while having a bar mitzvah or another event, keeps me up at night" stated the Treasurer, Jonathan Litt – a construction industry expert, continuing, "As the current equipment is about thirty years old, we expect that we will need to buy HVAC equipment sometime in the near future, but because of the extremely large expense, we are delaying the purchase, and keeping our fingers crossed that it won't break down until we are ready." Mick Gilbert, the Con Edison representative working on the Kol Ami project notes that many facilities are in this position, "This is quite the conundrum because running old HVAC equipment negatively impacts the environment, draws excessive energy from the grid, and unnecessarily inflates the facility's electric bill. I am proud to help Con Ed implement the Demand Management Program to provide financial incentives to help facilities supplement the cost of these necessary upgrades and effectively reduce their energy bills."

Bonnie Hagen, a Green Team member, and COO of Bright Energy Services (an energy efficiency firm specializing in LED lighting and other energy efficient technologies) led the efforts, bringing in HVAC veterans, Atlantic Westchester, and together they conducted an energy audit, performed engineering analysis, specified the new equipment, and worked with Con Ed to secure the \$85,000 rebate to help pay for the cost of these upgrades. The project involves all three buildings on the Kol Ami campus, replacing old HVAC units, upgrading the newer HVAC units, retrofitting all the fluorescent and incandescent lighting to LEDs and installing controls.

The engineering analysis shows that this project will result in an annual energy bill reduction of \$81,000 (based on reduction of 69.27 kW & 449,231 kWh). After the rebate and the first year's energy savings, the cost of the project will be \$357,000, with a payback period of a little more than four years. Board President, Hank Rouda, brought this project to the Board and, with financials like this, it unanimously passed. Rouda told the Board "We need to buy this equipment anyway, why wait until it is an emergency? Then we will have no purchasing leverage and the price will be inflated, incurring rush fees. It just makes good financial sense to plan in advance and take advantage of this utility program now. It is the responsible thing to do."

Rabbi Shira Milgrom, one of the temple's spiritual leaders, is in favor of this project stating, "While no single individual, organization or community can complete the task of Tikkun Olam, repairing and transforming the world, we all must take responsibility and play our part." She continues, "Reducing our congregation's carbon footprint and living with lightened impact on God's earth through the vision and ingenuity of the Con Edison (energy) Demand Management Program not only makes economic sense, but also represents a sacred act of both responsibility and hope in the future."

Rabbi Tom Weiner, also one of the temple's spiritual leaders explains, "This year, our Congregation is placing special emphasis the various Jewish values that lead us to raise our awareness of conservation, and in particular energy conservation and the use of renewable energy. We are very fortunate, that we have an amazing group of congregants willing and capable of addressing this issue and partnering with Con Edison."

Jessica Lorden is excited about all of the projects the Green Team members have brought to the table, "Right now we are investigating solar energy options, a recycling and composting program, and we just held our "Green" Shabbat to usher in Earth Week." Her enthusiasm for the work being done by the Green Team is contagious, "We have a team of really interested, experienced people leading the way for such an important project, both financially and spiritually, as it will help improve the sustainability of our synagogue and our community."

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About Congregation Kol Ami:

Congregation Kol Ami is a vibrant, diverse Reform Jewish congregation with more than 700 families from all over Westchester. Kol Ami has an award-winning Early Childhood Program serving children ages 2 through Pre-K and a nationally-recognized Religious School for students kindergarten through 12th grade. Our synagogue offers a wide range of inspiring adult education programs and activities for all ages. Kol Ami is intellectually open, spiritually honest and joyful. Our community is based on inclusiveness where everyone is welcome regardless of age, marital status, sexual orientation, Jewish by birth or by choice and families with members from different religious traditions. In fact, in 2015 Kol Ami was recognized by the URJ as an Exemplar congregation based on our exceptional proven track record in inclusion. For more information regarding Congregation Kol Ami, please visit our website at www.nykolami.org

About Bright Energy Services:

Bright Energy Services is an award-winning energy and environmental consulting firm. The firm's services focuses on providing owners and managers of commercial, industrial, and institutional buildings with environmental improvements by cutting energy costs, meeting regulatory requirements, deploying the latest technologies and reducing their carbon footprints. Bright Energy Services is headquartered in Brooklyn, New York, with a satellite office in White Plains, New York. For more information about Bright Energy Services, please visit www.brightenergyservices.com.

About Atlantic Westchester:

Located in Bedford Hills, NY, Atlantic Westchester has been providing service to its valued customers since 1961. They offer a wide range of commercial/industrial HVAC solutions for businesses, institutions and local government. Each project is customized for all clients across the NY Metro Area. Atlantic Westchester has the experience, qualifications and industry certifications to properly maintain the long-term efficiency and integrity of HVAC systems. Not only do they service HVAC systems, but they provide maintenance programs, remediation services, intelligent control systems, and help owners to find energy-efficient solutions. For more information about Atlantic Westchester Inc., please visit www.atlanticwestchester.com.

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