



SOULARDARITY

MEMBER & VOLUNTEER

HANDBOOK

TO DEFINE OURSELVES

NAME OURSELVES

CREATE FOR OURSELVES

SPEAK FOR OURSELVES

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AHENWA

"Energy democracy" speaks to a soulful concept — that a utility is not just a company selling products; it's a tool of society that should serve society.

-Shimekia Nichols, Executive Director

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WELCOME

Executive Director Message

Thanks for being a member and volunteer. This is a huge step we take together on this journey of energy democracy. We are grateful for your efforts and valuable time as we take back the power and educate our community along the way. There are various ways we are diligently helping our community and there are multiple ways you can help us. We thank you for your membership and donation of your time.

Shimekia Nichols

Shimekia Nichols
Executive Director

This Handbook is subject to change outside of the annual print version. Digital version is updated regularly. For digital version go to www.soulardarity.org or email Caton Jones at caton@soulardarity.com.



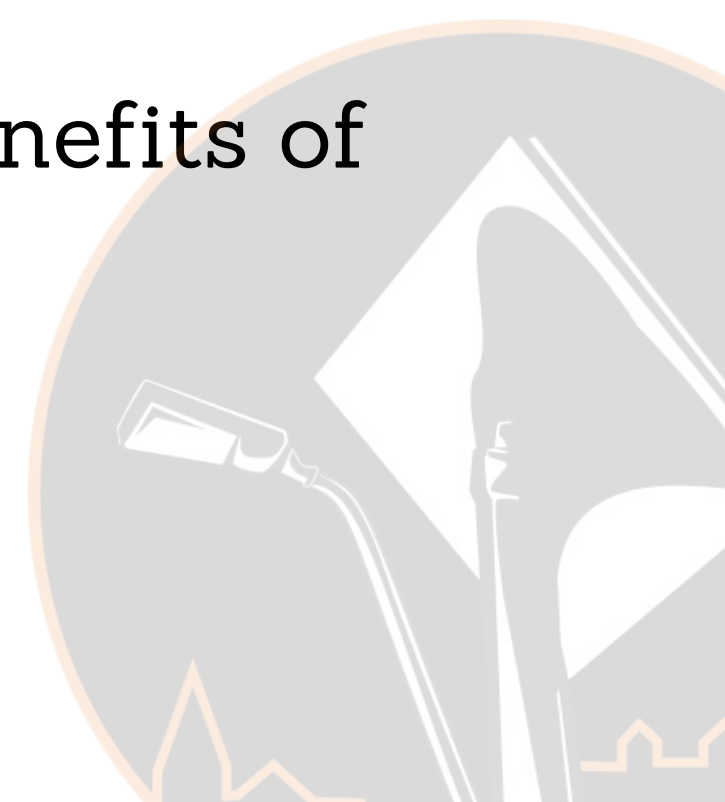
MISSION & VISION

Mission

Soulardarity is building a brighter future in Highland Park with education, organizing, and people-powered clean energy. We are working to install solar-powered street lights, save money on energy bills, and work together with our neighboring communities to build a just and equitable energy system for all. Learn more about our mission at www.soulardarity.org.

Vision

Soulardarity envisions a Highland Park that generates 100% community owned, carbon neutral energy through a mixture of local power generation, commercial and residential rooftop solar, and continuing to educate communities on the benefits of clean energy for vulnerable communities.



HISTORY OF SOULARDARITY

Soulardarity is building a brighter future in Highland Park with education, organizing, and people-powered clean energy. Through our Let There Be Light proposal and our Grow Solar Highland Park-Detroit program we are working to install solar-powered streetlights and promote residential and commercial rooftop solar to save money on energy bills, and work together with our neighboring communities to build a just and equitable energy system for all to enjoy.

The Beginning and History of Our Streetlights

The organization was formed in response to one of the many indignities within the Highland Park community fueled by decades of racial and economic injustice. In 2011, DTE Energy repossessed 1,400 of Highland Park's streetlights in response to a \$4 million debt owed to their investors. The City had a \$90,000 per month bill to DTE which they were unable to pay. In 2012, Soulardarity was founded by Highland Park residents and a campaign was started that helped raise \$6,540 to install Highland Park's first solar-powered streetlight, which is located on 150 Victor Street.

But after a period of time, our model and approach have changed.

Soulardarity realized that this wasn't just about a debt the city couldn't pay – this was about the people in the community. We didn't just want solar-powered streetlights. We wanted them to be planned and owned solely by the community of Highland Park. We believe that what you do for us, without us, is not for us and that's why community activism plays a big role in our organization.

Our Let There Be Light proposal to bring solar lighting to the entirety of Highland Park first went before the city's administration and council in 2016. One of the biggest barriers was the fact that DTE is able to install, own, and operate lights at minimal cost to the City, while the solar streetlight proposal required the City to purchase, own, and operate the lights themselves. To get over that fiscal and technical barrier, Soulardarity has been exploring the creation of a Lighting-As-A-Service business (LAAS) to offer the city the service of streetlighting, without the requirement to buy, own, and operate lighting themselves. We're using these charitably funded installations to experiment with building out this model and prepare ourselves to offer it to the municipality and, potentially, other communities that request the service.

Since then we have continued to fundraise, advocate, and build relationships. Through a partnership with the Southeast Michigan Regional Energy Office, we developed a proposal to finance and install 1,000 solar-powered streetlights to fully relight Highland Park and save \$3 million more than DTE's lighting options.

HISTORY OF SOULARDARITY

In addition to being more affordable, the solar lighting option proved to be better in terms of reliability, health, safety, inclusivity and community control. These city-owned streetlights will give citizens the benefits of accessing Wi-Fi that provides affordable internet service, improved emergency response, civic engagement tools, and other services. To this date, Soulardarity has installed seventeen solar powered streetlights that produce free Wi-Fi in Highland Park.

This spark of creating lights in the community supported our community driven non-profit. We have placed a high value on helping individuals, community organizations, and small businesses choose the path of sustainability and build financial and climate resilience.

Coinciding with our advocacy for streetlights, we started to understand more that the scope of the problem with DTE was beyond streetlights, but with our energy system as a whole.

The Fight for Energy Democracy

What is Energy Democracy? It is the idea that the people most impacted by energy decisions should have the greatest say in shaping them.

Expensive energy rates. High energy burden levels. Frequent, long lasting power outages. An energy grid well past its prime that is creating unhealthy communities. All the while, DTE is making record profits as a monopoly that sells a necessary public good.

It became apparent that regulatory energy policies coming from the state are there to benefit Investor Owned Utilities (IOUs) and not ratepayers. Giving large political contributions to both parties on the local and state level, using community philanthropy to whitewash their public brand, and throwing their weight around in Lansing to pass laws in their favor through powerful lobby firms, Soulardarity realized that solutions would not materialize on a local level without addressing these issues on a state level.

Seeing that the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) is the state governing body that is supposed to regulate the utilities and consider their proposals, it was clear that things had to change through them. In 2018, Soulardarity and other Metro Detroit-based environmental/energy justice organizations launched the Work for Me, DTE! campaign as DTE prepared to submit their 15-year energy plan, called an Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) to the MPSC. After filing in 2019, it was clear that nowhere within their plan were there any real solutions to make the grid more resilient, reduce hazardous emissions, expand the use of renewable energy, and to make our rates more affordable.

HISTORY OF SOULARDARITY

Along with the Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition, We Want Green Too, and many others, Soulardarity advocated for a vision of a regenerative economy focused on community solar, energy efficiency retrofits, good jobs, and wealth creation in poor, working class, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. Utilizing our partnership with the Abrams Environmental Law Clinic at the University of Chicago and Great Lakes Environmental Law Center, Soulardarity filed legal interventions in the IRP case, as well as other high-impact cases, before the MPSC. Combined with public education and advocacy work, the coalition was able to influence the MPSC to send the IRP back to DTE's drawing board with recommendations that loosely reflected some of our demands. Eventually accepting the recommendations, DTE's IRP was approved. Even with the changes, it wasn't enough, making it necessary for our advocacy work to continue.

Since then, Soulardarity has continued to file legal interventions and advocate to replace extractive and harmful policies, including this year (2024) against their proposed gas and electric rate hikes. We continue to be guided by the community's vision of a more equitable and just future for Highland Park residents and beyond.

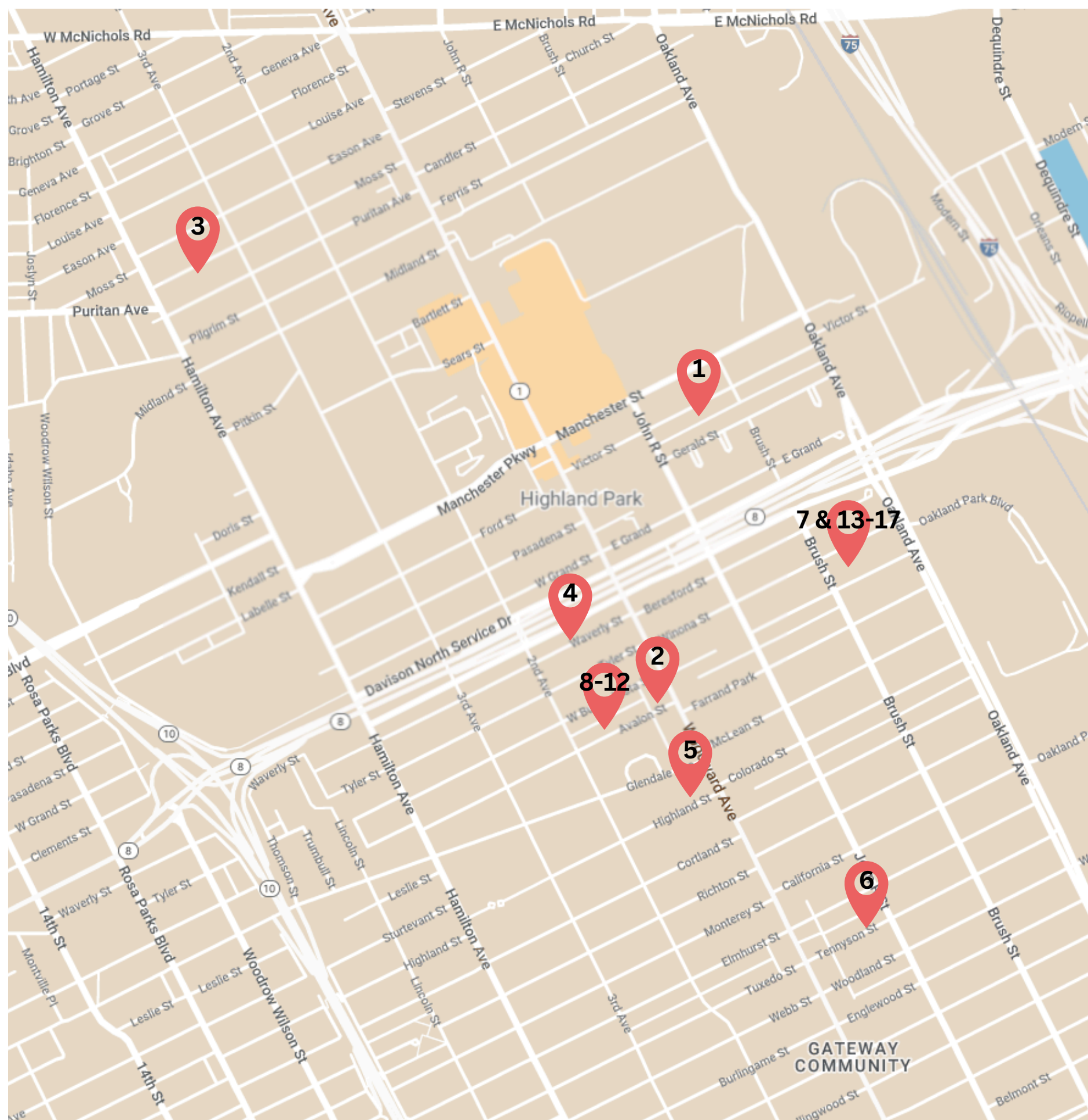


STREETLIGHT LOCATIONS & STORIES

Streetlight Locations

Our streetlight projects first started out with installing one light at a time. But as financial resources and opportunities started to grow, it has enabled us to install clusters of 3-5 lights. This has given us the chance to strengthen our mission to establish models of renewable energy powered streetlight infrastructure that is owned by the community. It is our hope that this will eventually lead to the implementation of a city wide plan to bring our streetlights back, which is becoming more of a reality with every step we take in our work.

The locations below are what have been successfully installed thus far at the time of the creation of this handbook.



STREETLIGHT LOCATIONS & STORIES

#1: Victor Streetlight

Location: 150 Victor St

Installed: November 2012

The Victor Streetlight is the first streetlight Soulardarity installed. At the time, Soulardarity only existed in the form of the online crowd-funding campaign to raise the funds for the installation. The light was purchased from SolarStreetlightsUSA out of Holland, MI and installed by local contractors. The purchase and install was primarily organized by AJ O'Neil, one of Soulardarity's co-founders. The light was installed on the private property of what was then an auto shop, which has since changed ownership to WHPR radio station. Soulardarity does not own or insure this streetlight, but has performed maintenance on it once to replace an LED that failed due to manufacturer error at the expense of the organization. Future maintenance will need to be handled through WHPR.



#2 & #8-12: Avalon Streetlights

Location: 26-87 Avalon St

Installed: August 2014, June 2021

The Avalon Streetlight is the second streetlight Soulardarity installed. At this point, Soulardarity was incorporated as a Michigan State Non-Profit and was fiscally sponsored by Grand Aspirations, a 501c3. Under their insurance at the time, Soulardarity could not own physical infrastructure. The light was funded and installed in partnership with the Moon Ministry, a 501c3 which is responsible for the light. This light also came from SolarStreetlightsUSA out of Holland, MI and was installed by Maintenance On Site, a local contractor. Soulardarity does not own or insure this streetlight. In our shift to start creating clusters of streetlights as the new model of our work, five more lights were installed in June of 2021. These new lights not only expanded the light footprint within Avalon Village, but also for existing residents on the street, stretching down the block. Using the newer and current wifi integrated streetlights we have to this day, we officially introduced free public wifi to the surrounding community as a part of our service, along with utilizing more efficient solar technology that is more aesthetically appealing than the original ones.



STREETLIGHT LOCATIONS & STORIES

#3-6: 2015 Streetlights

Locations: 209 Moss St, 74 Waverly St, 41 Highland St, 73 Tennyson St
Installed: December 2015

These 4 streetlights were installed concurrent with Soulardarity's transition to an independent membership-based 501c3. Each light was installed on the property of a Soulardarity member with a property easement allowing Soulardarity to own, insure, and maintain the lights. The easements were filed with the Wayne County Register of Deeds and will transfer if the property is ever sold. Memberships on the block sustain the maintenance and replacement reserves for each light. Soulardarity pays for property and general liability insurance on these lights out of the membership dues from those blocks.



209 MOSS STREET



74 WAVERLY STREET



41 HIGHLAND STREET



73 TENNYSON STREET

STREETLIGHT LOCATIONS & STORIES

#7 & #13-17: Parker Village Streetlights

Locations: 189 E Buena Vista

Installed: May 2018, June 2021

The Parker Village streetlight was funded and installed in partnership with Parker Village to demonstrate the impact of a high-tech smart streetlight and energize another Highland Park-led sustainable development. Soulardarity committed over \$15,000 to the light, fundraised through a campaign on IOBY. The light is owned by Parker Village and the funds Soulardarity committed were structured as a loan to Parker Village. The loan funds will be repaid over 10 years and reinvested in future Soulardarity endeavors. This install is our first since presenting Let There Be Light to the City of Highland Park and is intended to support that proposal to be successful within the city. Coinciding with the installations in Avalon Village, five more were installed in June of 2021 to expand the effectiveness of the light footprint within and outside of Parker Village.



Upcoming Installations

REVERB / The Solutions Project Streetlights / KIP:D+

To Be Installed: 2023-24

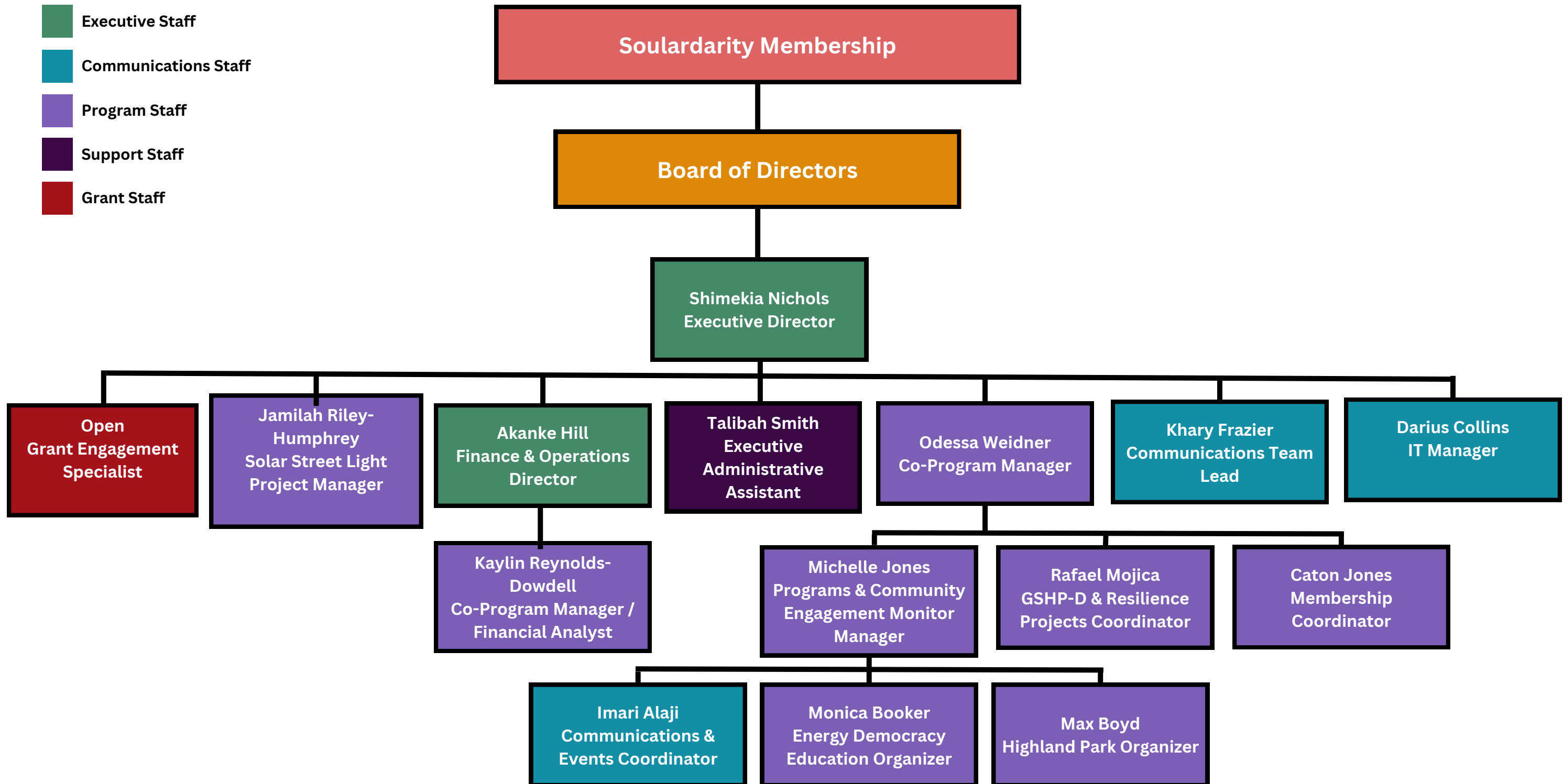
Near the end of 2021 and in 2022, Soulardarity was awarded grants from REVERB, The Solutions Project, and Kresge Foundation's KIP:D+ program to help us install 10 more streetlights in Highland Park. Following the ideals of Energy Democracy and the Jemez Principles, the Streetlight Committee was formed. Made up of Soulardarity members residing in Highland Park, they have taken on the task to democratically decide where those streetlights will be installed. Ryter Cooperative Industries (RCI), based in Highland Park, was selected as the contractor for installation. Solartonic, based in Ypsilanti, was selected for manufacturing the lights themselves. Thus far, we have begun exploring and collaborating with partners for potential site locations based on the selections of the committee. We expect the lights to be installed by late summer of this year.

We have also been working with the city to update/adjust city ordinance language so that we may legally open the way for our lights to start being installed on public right of ways and potentially city owned property, a potentially major milestone for Soulardarity's mission. This part of the project will be a product of the Communities LEAP program, a Federal partnership between Highland Park stakeholders and the Department of Energy (DOE).



SOULARDARITY STAFF & STRUCTURE

Organization Chart



Staff (as of August 2024)

Executive Staff

Shimekia Nichols - Executive Director

The Executive Director is responsible for the entire operations and acting as an ambassador for Soulardarity's work with the public, elected officials, funders, partners, and membership. The Executive Director leads this work by facilitating the collective process of education and problem solving at the root of Soulardarity's organizational culture, while providing strategic and visionary leadership in support of advancing the vision of energy democracy. The Executive Director also acts as the critical link between operations and organizational governance as the primary contact for the Board of Directors.

Akanke Hill - Finance & Operations Director

The Finance & Operations Director manages day-to-day internal operations, ensuring efficiency and alignment with policy governance goals, and handles finance, HR, and administrative functions. This role develops and maintains robust financial systems that provide clear support channels for the board, staff, and members, enhancing their ability to perform their roles effectively.

Support Staff

Talibah Smith - Executive Administrative Assistant

The Executive Administrative Assistant directly supports the Executive Director and is responsible for assisting the organization with scheduling and administrative support.

SOULARDARITY STAFF & STRUCTURE

Program Staff

Kaylin Reynolds-Dowdell - Co-Program Manager / Financial Analyst

The Co-Program Manager/Financial Analyst assists the Finance Director in maintaining compliance with internal controls and protocols. Additionally, the consultant supports program staff with financial matters to ensure the successful implementation and sustainability of projects and programs.

Odessa Weidner - Co-Program Manager

The Co-Program Manager leads the development and implementation of membership, organizing, and resilience projects, ensuring these efforts align with strategic goals. This role manages daily program operations and fosters collaboration with community partners and stakeholders to drive the organization's mission forward.

Michelle Jones - Programs & Community Engagement Monitor Manager

The Programs & Community Engagement Monitor Manager plays a key role in driving the organization's outreach and campaign efforts. This position manages the development and impact of these initiatives while building coalitions with partners and allies to advance the organization's mission.

Rafael Mojica - GSHP-D & Resilience Projects Coordinator

The GSHP-D & Resilience Projects Coordinator plans and implements projects related to clean energy infrastructure and community resilience. This role is involved in disaster preparedness and response initiatives, contributing to the overall safety and sustainability of the community.

Caton Jones - Membership Coordinator

The Membership Coordinator is responsible for the growth and recruitment of members and volunteers. Using various outreach methods to increase the organizations community base and community awareness of membership/volunteer opportunities. The coordinator organizes the new members and volunteers into programs that allow interest to meet the needs of the various Soulardarity activities.

Monica Booker - Energy Democracy Education Organizer

The Energy Democracy Education Organizer develops and manages educational initiatives, working closely with schools, community groups, and local organizations. This role plans and implements programs to inform community members about building renewable energy systems that prioritize those most impacted by energy burdens, while also cultivating partnerships and building a base of advocates for a clean, equitable, and affordable energy system.

Max Boyd - Highland Park Organizer

The Highland Park Organizer plans and leads community engagement and organizing efforts, collaborating with volunteers and local leaders. As the driving force behind programs and initiatives that impact Highland Parkers, this role builds membership, fosters connections with residents, and participates in education and sustainability initiatives within the city.

SOULARDARITY STAFF & STRUCTURE

Program Staff Cont.

Jamilah Riley-Humphrey - Solar Street Light Project Manager

The Solar Street Light Project Manager is responsible for collaborating with stakeholders to manage, coordinate and facilitate planning and logistics to ensure successful implementation of the next round of solar-powered street light installations.

Communications Staff

Imari Alaji - Communications & Events Coordinator

The Communications & Events Coordinator manages social media accounts, while also fostering external and partner communications relationships. This role is responsible for planning events, driving member attendance, and supporting various marketing initiatives, including creating and maintaining social media posting schedules across all platforms.

Khary Frazier - Communications Team Lead

The Communications Team Lead is responsible for managing the development, growth, and overall communications strategy, including external communications such as Op-Eds, media talking points, and strategic messaging. This role also attends external policy and local project meetings, collaborates with staff to create video content that enhances the organization's visibility, and provides analytic reports to measure impact.

Darius Collins - IT Manager

The IT Manager leads the development and implementation of new technology to improve user experience and streamline operations. This role gathers and reports on feedback from staff, board, and members, and provides training to stakeholders and staff on how to effectively update and maintain technology platforms.

Grant Staff

Open - Grant Engagement Specialist

The Grant Engagement Specialist collaborates with the Executive Director and the Grants Group to secure programmatic and general operating funding through philanthropy and grant awards. This role updates designated databases, participates in regular communications and reporting to supervisors and funders, and supports staff teams in events and sponsorship campaigns that drive results for the organization.

COVID PROTOCOLS

Work During Covid

Soulardarity values the health and safety of our community, members and staff. With the constant changing levels of COVID community spread and emerging variants, we go above and beyond the latest state, county, and city recommended guidelines to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe. The following are recommended guidelines.

To ensure everyone's safety during indoor activities and gatherings, Soulardarity will have masks available if you do not have one and hand sanitizer available on site.

- Please wear a mask at all times unless you are actively eating or drinking. While eating or drinking, please try to maintain some distance while eating.
- Please confirm consent before hugging or other physical contact.
- Please use the hand sanitizer we will provide before collecting provided food or drinks.

Please reach out with any questions or concerns.

Please note these COVID safety measures and protocols are subject to change

- If you are at risk for severe illness, wear a mask or respirator that provides you with more adequate protection.
- Testing before a gathering can give you information about your risk of spreading COVID.
- Consider using a self-test before joining indoor gatherings with others who do not live in your household.
- Stay home if you test positive, even if you do not have symptoms.
- Stay home if you are sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID.
- Communicate with folks before meeting with them about prevention strategies.

SOULARDARITY PROGRAMS

Our programs are the vehicles toward achieving our goals for a better future, and members who participate in and guide them are the soul for them. Soulardarity is a build and fight organization. We work hard to create opportunities for ourselves that will bring better infrastructure for Highland Park and neighboring communities. We fight against policies that are harmful to vulnerable and marginalized communities and advocate for healthier communities. The programs that Soulardarity has built over the years are meant to fit those two forms of approach and they rely on the participation and leadership of our members, volunteers, allies and community.

For more information or questions on any of the program areas below, please contact our Programs Team at programs@soulardarity.com.

Note: Soulardarity is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that is restricted from participating in certain political/electoral related activities such as endorsing a political candidate or partisan ballot initiative, along with making financial contributions, carrying out any campaign, or Get Out The Vote (GOTV) efforts that favors a candidate. But we are empowered with the ability to advocate for issues that include engaging elected officials and certain non-partisan election related activities.



SOULARDARITY PROGRAMS



SOULARDARITY

Membership Program

Soulardarity, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, operates with a board elected by its members, the majority being Highland Park residents. Membership includes Highland Park members (residing within the city and paying full dues), who engage in local committees (like the Highland Park Campaign Team and Solar Streetlights Committee) and General Members (non-residents paying full dues), who can be involved in Energy Democracy Action Groups and relevant committees. We actively seek input and feedback from existing members on Soulardarity's initiatives. We create opportunities for members to be directly involved in decision-making processes and projects. Fostering a sense of ownership and inclusivity which leads to increased engagement and commitment.

Initiatives:

- Weekly Virtual or In-Person Open House events
- Quarterly Membership Meetings - an opportunity for members to come together in person and virtually to stay up-to-date on current work, get further involved, and cross-collaborate
- Donor Fundraising - brainstorming and executing activities that generate funds from individuals and organizations
- Member Leadership Development & Action Groups - asking our members to volunteer by taking on a more active and ongoing commitment through leadership roles within our action group structure
- New Member Recruitment & Membership Retention - Our members will serve as Soulardarity ambassadors by focusing on recruiting new members, aiding in onboarding, facilitating Action Group participation, and retaining and empowering current members to foster outreach and organizational growth
- Educational Curriculum - assisting in the other Action Groups & initiatives that aid in membership education
- Recruitment and Engagement Strategies - working with our communications team and others to facilitate and roll out membership recruitment and resident awareness of Soulardarity and its actions

Point of Contact: Caton Jones
Email: caton@soulardarity.com



SOULARDARITY PROGRAMS



Highland Park Campaign Team Program

The Highland Park Campaign Team (HPCT) is a collaborative group of residents and Soulardarity members in Highland Park. They focus on campaigns for community self-determination and ownership. HPCT aims to connect residents, community leaders, and officials to address city issues and achieve goals in five key areas: Accountable Government, Equitable Development, Healthy Homes, Sustainable Infrastructure, and Jobs & Careers, as outlined in the Blueprint for Energy Democracy. Our approach to Renewable Energy Transition means urging legislative decisions to invest in renewable energy sources, given that current energy production in Southeast Michigan disproportionately impacts BIPOC communities, contributing to climate change disparities.



Initiatives:

- Working with HPC3 - Highland Park's Community Crisis Coalition (HPC3), comprising Soulardarity, Avalon Village, and Parker Village, aims to establish Community Resiliency Hubs to develop sustainable solutions for current and future crises in Highland Park. This year, we're building on C-LEAP's 20223 work in energy grid mapping, residential energy burden assessment, and mobility sustainability, focusing on improving access to assistance for Highland Park residents.
- Whole Homes, Whole Communities Outreach & Collaboration Efforts - funded by the DTE IRP Settlement (see Resilience = Action below) is fueled by perspectives planted in Highland Park. It is not just a program for Highland Park, but from Highland Park in shaping the process, promotion, and execution.
- Highland Park Resident Relationships & Leadership Training - in line with our membership goals, we build and sustain relationships with Highland Park residents, recruit and train members, and organize actions for effective solutions.
- Just Transition Planning Workshop Series - educating on Climate Justice Alliance's Just Transition Education Series, guiding a shift from extractive to regenerative economies with a focus on local, sustainable, and just practices.
- Canvassing & Recruitment - for our programs, we coordinate and train members for canvassing, gathering data, and promoting projects through both physical outreach and media content.
- Keeping up-to-date on the Highland Park City Council & Government structure for initiatives, programs, and resolutions that affect Highland Park, its residents, and its ecosystem

Point of Contact: Max Boyd
Email: max@soulardarity.com

SOULARDARITY PROGRAMS



Energy Democracy Education Program

The energy challenges of communities are a diverse yet shared experience. Soulardarity works to address these challenges through education and action that targets the Michigan State Legislature, Michigan Public Service Commission, and local city governments and allows our voices to be heard on energy policies that impact our communities. We educate members through community town halls, canvassing, energy democracy workshops, and dynamic long-term fellowships. Acknowledging a substantial gap for BIPOC communities being engaged in energy-related educational programs, we emphasize the need for targeted outreach initiatives.

Initiatives:

- Utilities 101 Workshop - Educating members & residents on the People's Utility Commons on the history of utilities, the Public's Case against DTE Energy, and other resources to ground them in the history, current landscape, and mobilize them in what can be done about it
- Summer In Detroit (SID) Fellowship - Creating a partnership with UofM for an internship and fellowship for SID students to select to be a part of the Energy Democracy organizing
- SCOC Fellowship - Soulardarity's Community Organizing Collaborative trains member-leaders in the art and science of organizing, grounds them in education applicable to the organization and its vision, and mobilizes them inside of actions
- Legal Education Clinics and Referral Network - In collaboration with our coalition partners we have to educate members and residents on their customer rights if they're experiencing issues related to shutoffs, DTE payments, outages, and more. Collaborating with the Sugar Law Center for legal courses of action past just education.
- Member & Coalition Partner Education - connecting our members with coalition partner events and education so that our reach is beyond just our own organization
- Anti-DTE Call to Action: Recognizing that BIPOC communities are underrepresented in decision making processes, with so few actively participating in energy-related discussions, emphasizing the importance of inclusive community engagement.



Point of Contact: Monica Booker
Email: monica@soulardarity.com

SOULARDARITY PROGRAMS



Resilience = Action Program

Delivering social, economic, and ecological justice to Highland Parkers and neighboring communities through moments of crisis and beyond. Working in tandem with our Highland Park Campaign Team, our resiliency work focuses on making residents and members supported in moments of crisis as well as looking to the future to be independent from extractive sources of power into sustainable, local, community-owned sources of power.

Initiatives:

- Resilience Kits and the Mobile Energy Library - proposal aims to fund blackout/shutoff kits containing essential elements for power and beyond for community residents in need, distributed via the Mobile Energy Library.
- Whole Homes, Whole Communities - born out of the IRP Settlement from DTE, a program that will be carried out over the course of 4 years, \$8 Million has been secured by Soulardarity & We Want Green Too for weatherization, home repairs, electrification, and solarization of residents with high energy burden.
- Grow Solar Highland Park-Detroit (GSHP-D) Solar Bulk Purchase Program - expanding access to affordable residential solar in Highland Park, Detroit and the surrounding area. Provides resources and workshops on Residential Solar Consumer Protections
- Utility Assistance - working to help residents who need monetary and resource support to be able to manage the energy burden placed upon them from DTE. Highlighting the economic burden on BIPOC households, which spend more on average of their income on energy bills, underscoring the urgent need for affordable energy solutions and policy reforms.
- Racial Healing Workshops - developing, attending, and encouraging workshops that build resilience in the community through racial healing and real solutions.
- Grid Resilience: Demonstrating that BIPOC communities are more vulnerable to energy infrastructure disruptions, necessitating resilience measures that prioritize their needs and well-being.
- Grid Equity Midwest (GEM) - a collaborative effort among partners in Michigan, Illinois, and Minnesota, offering technical support and shared analysis to advance a just and equitable grid with transformative community benefits in the Midwest.



Point of Contact: Rafael Mojica
Email: rafael@soulardarity.com

SOULARDARITY PROGRAMS



SOULARDARITY

YEA! Program

There are so many children around the world who are denied the gift of education right now. Not because they lack motivation or potential, but because energy poverty, shutoffs, and blackouts stand in their way. This is the harsh reality for countless kids, leaving them trapped in a vicious cycle of illiteracy and limited opportunities. The Youth Energy Democracy Advocacy Program is an empowering initiative designed to engage and mobilize young leaders in advocating for sustainable, equitable, and community-driven energy practices. This program seeks to harness the passion and creativity of youth to drive positive change in the energy sector, promoting environmental justice and community resilience. Bridging the clean and community owned energy gap by advocating for fair access, particularly in Southeast Michigan, where so many residents inside of BIPOC communities face barriers to clean and affordable energy compared to the regional and national average.

Initiatives:

- Storytime with Soulardarity
- Solar Power Education - involving ourselves in public schools, after-school programs, and homeschooled students for hands-on education in solar energy
- YEA! Solar Reading Book & Energy Democracy Coloring Book - Enabling students to craft a children's book on Clean Energy and Democracy, introducing the concept of Energy Democracy to young readers through engaging illustrations and narration.
- YEA! Leadership Program - Empower youth through involvement in campaign training and management, exposing them to non-profit management and funding processes, fostering leadership development. Through fun and collaborative partnerships such as ESTF and Hood Camp we confront the stark reality that BIPOC populations in the region experience higher rates of health issues due to environmental factors linked to energy production and burden, DIY solutions, advocacy and resiliency planning.

Point of Contact: Monica Booker
Email: monica@soulardarity.com



SOULARDARITY PROGRAMS



Solar Streetlights As-A-Service

Our Streetlights are what originally launched Soulardarity into action more than 10 years ago when DTE repossessed every Highland Park residential streetlight to settle a municipal debt. Introducing Soulardarity: dedicated to restoring light in Highland Park sustainably through solar solutions and prioritizing the community first. We have installed 17 streetlights thus far, largely due in part to our members, and it is still one of our priorities today to continue this vital work.

Initiatives:

- Installing Solar Streetlights in 2024 - work on placement, community awareness and engagement in successfully installing 10 more solar streetlights thanks to generous funding from Reverb and KIP:D+ through the Kresge Foundation.
- Being a Bridge between Contractors & the Community - being an advocate for the community and go-between for contractors, manufacturers, community leaders, and Soulardarity
- Solar Streetlight Adoption Program - working to fund the maintenance of the already installed and the future installation of these streetlights by providing businesses, organizations, and others to adopt a streetlight for advertisement.

Point of Contact: Jamilah Humphrey
Email: jamilahumphrey313@gmail.com



SOULARDARITY PROGRAMS



MPSC Legal Intervention

Through co-organizing the Work For ME, DTE campaign with MI Environmental Justice Coalition, we challenged the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) to reject our local energy monopoly DTE Energy's Integrated Resource Plan, which laid out 15 more years of pollution, unaffordable rates and unsafe infrastructure. We galvanized over 3,000 public comments via email and in-person hearings to create the pressure to demand accountability, transparency and inclusion of ratepayers most impacted. Decisions at the MPSC have a huge impact on Michigan ratepayers and communities, including coal plant closures and the future of renewable energy in our state. We urged the MPSC to stand up for ratepayers and push DTE to invest in clean, renewable energy and energy efficiency to reduce dangerous pollution in our air and water and fight climate change. Thanks to our advocacy over the past 2 years, the MPSC has blocked over \$200 Million in rate increases, fixed fees and accounting schemes that hurt low income ratepayers, and plans to invest in fossil fuel infrastructure.

Initiatives

- DTE Gas Rate Case #U-21291 - This year, we are entering into a gas rate case, where we will be advocating against a proposed increase on DTE residential ratepayers.



SOULARDARITY PROGRAMS



Communities LEAP Justice40

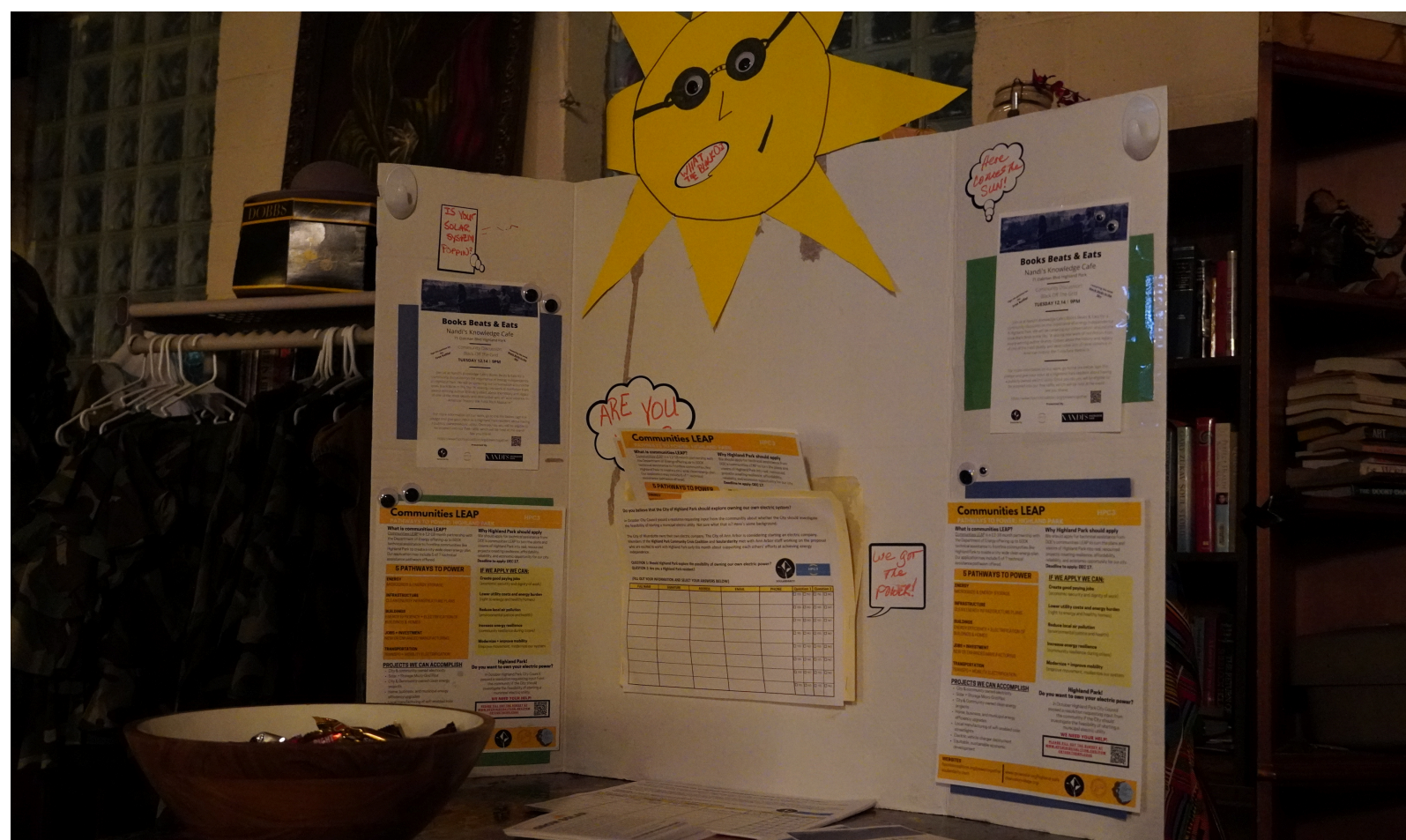
In 2022, Soulardarity worked with the Highland Park City Council to form a Sustainability Task Force with the purpose to help advance ordinances and initiatives that will strengthen the city's resiliency, such as community owned clean energy and resiliency hubs. Another milestone for our work was the city being selected to be one of twenty four participants nationally for the Communities LEAP (C-LEAP) program, a partnership with the Department of Energy (DOE) to provide technical assistance to assist frontline communities develop a citywide clean energy plan. We have successfully created a scope of work that focuses on energy efficiency, analyzing our electrical grid, creating a city wide solar streetlight plan, and improving transportation & mobility. Throughout 2023, C-LEAP progressed through stakeholder sessions and Department of Energy workgroups, producing technical assistance reports on four key areas. Final reports have been completed and released for the public.

To read the reports visit

www.energy.gov/communitiesLEAP/highland-park-michigan

Initiatives

- Community Engagement - Soulardarity is working with community partners to share with residents our findings and utilize input to guide next steps.
- Leveraging C-LEAP Work - Utilize reports for further exploration, funding, program creation, and more inside of Soulardarity, with our HPC3 partners and the city of Highland Park.



JEMEZ PRINCIPLES FOR DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZING

Soulardarity works to build energy democracy in Highland Park, MI and our neighboring communities through education, organizing, and community-owned clean energy. To be sure we are executing our mission to the community, Soulardarity abides by the Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing:

1. Be Inclusive
2. Emphasis on Bottom-Up Organizing
3. Let People Speak for Themselves
4. Work Together in Solidarity and Mutuality
5. Build Just Relationships Among Ourselves
6. Commitment to Self-Transformation

On December 6-8, 1996, forty People of Color and European-American representatives met in Jemez, New Mexico for the “Working Group Meeting on Globalization and Trade.” The Jemez meeting was hosted by the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice with the intention of hammering our common understandings between participants from different cultures, politics and organizations. The above listed Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing were adopted by the participants.



MEMBERSHIP

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY

Go to www.soulardarity.org/join

Soulardarity is a membership-based 501(c)(3) non-profit. Our board is composed of and elected by our members and must consist of a majority of Highland Park residents.

While volunteering has different tracks to choose from, membership has two categories. The first category is Highland Park members. These individual's primary legal residence should be located within the city of Highland Park and whose membership dues are paid in full. Highland Park members are able to participate in committees and Action Groups that address specific Highland Park issues (ex. Highland Park Campaign Team, Streetlights Committee).

The second category consists of General Members. These individuals are those who do not qualify as Highland Park residents, but also must pay their membership dues in full. General Members are able to participate in Energy Democracy Action Groups and other appropriate committees.

Membership Benefits

Benefits of becoming an energy resilience warrior!

- Access to our Soulardarity Newsletter (Members Updates, Local News & Resources, Anti-DTE Campaigns and Alerts)
- Advance notice of local, state-wide and national energy policy or utility changes that impact you and your family
- Access to Job placement & training opportunities
- Sponsorship Opportunities (conferences, events, etc)
- Discounted admission to paid events
- Attend, participate, and vote for Board Members during our Annual Meeting activities
- Attend, participate, and engage in Participatory Budgeting Activity
- Provide organizational input using Jemez Principles small groups

Quarterly Membership Meetings

Go to www.soulardarity.org/events to stay up to date, RSVP to the Membership Meetings and all Soulardarity events.



VOLUNTEERING

SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER TODAY
Go to www.soulardarity.org/volunteer

HOW DO I BECOME A VOLUNTEER?

If you are interested in learning more and joining the fight by donating your time, please visit the link below and fill out the online form.

www.soulardarity.org/volunteer

If you are unable to do so online for whatever reason, or you just want to get in touch to ask questions/share ideas, please contact
Caton Jones, Membership Coordinator at caton@soulardarity.com.



VOLUNTEERING

The Value of Volunteering

With thousands of cause-driven organizations around the world, there is an opportunity to choose a non-profit that aligns with your passions and interests, such as Soulardarity. The experience you gain can transform your future in the best way possible, creating a new outlook on life learning about the benefits of safe clean energy. If you believe volunteering could bring more positivity and joy into your life, learn more about the benefits of volunteering with Soulardarity below.

Expanding Your Personal and Professional Network

Volunteering with a cause-driven organization like Soulardarity could provide a chance for you to meet like-minded people. Surrounding yourself with folks who share similar passions is a great way to make new friends and professional connections. By expanding your experience with a few volunteer events, you can grow and foster these relationships for many years to come.

Learning New Skills

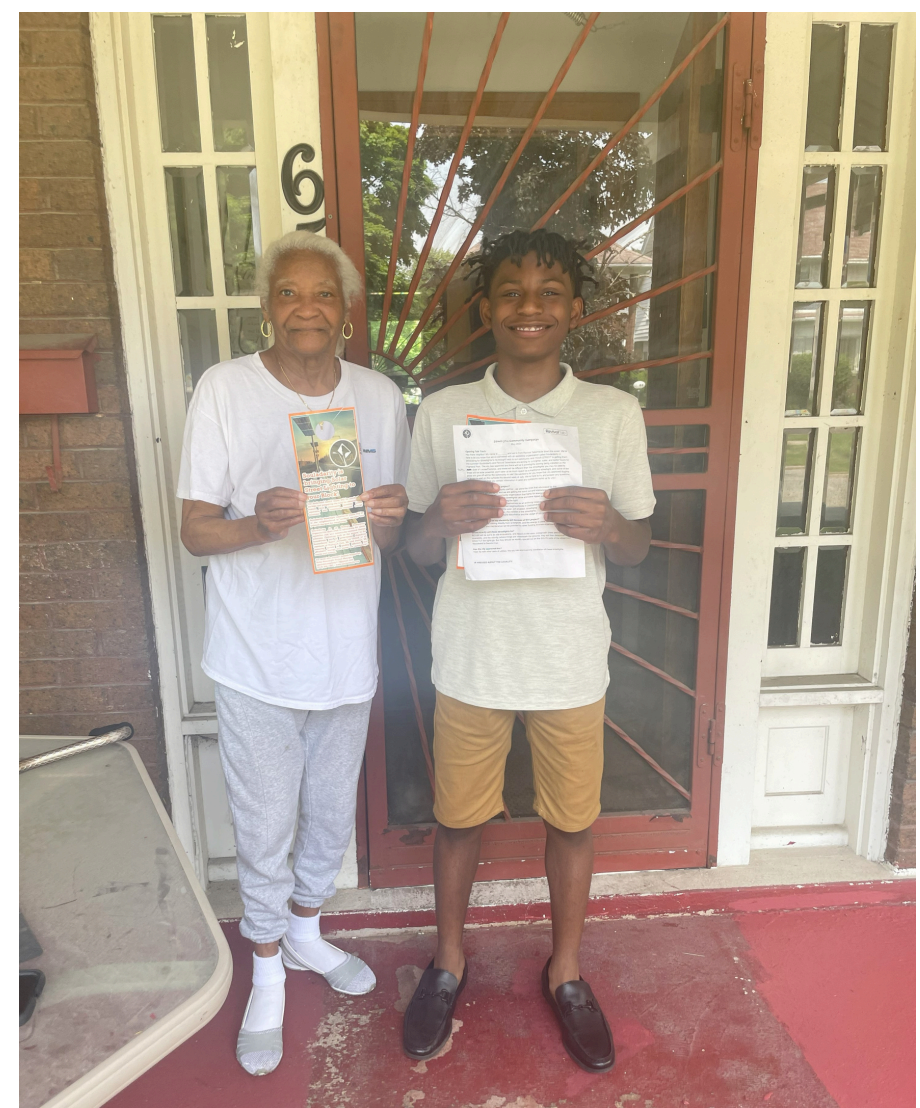
You can learn a lot about yourself by volunteering with a non-profit organization. It can also aid in acquiring new skills and enhance existing ones. Volunteering centers around compassion, empathy, and developing relationships by working with others. With Soulardarity, you can gain or improve skills learning how to recruit, fundraise, host, canvas, and much more.

Understand the Organization Better

Another benefit that comes from volunteering is gaining the education and increasing knowledge to fully understand the work and impact the organization has on the community. It provides opportunities to experience firsthand, the type of commitment and responsibility that goes into running a non-profit organization. Soulardarity provides many opportunities to learn more about what we do and Energy Democracy.

See the Organization's Impact Firsthand

A 2011 study found that volunteering locally has an incredible social impact on local communities. Being active in your community provides opportunities to witness the outcomes and transitions personally. This makes your experience meaningful because you can observe the effects of your time contribution in creating a real difference. It also creates a stronger sense of belonging within your community because you are demonstrating that you are looking out for one another.



VOLUNTEERING

Volunteer Agreements

To ensure volunteers and staff are safe, Soulardarity volunteers must abide by these agreements.

Use of personal contact information - Only use it for the purposes of this work. Anything outside of that should come with the explicit, enthusiastic consent of the staff person. In general, don't contact staff or other volunteers or partners after 7pm unless there is an urgent item to communicate about your volunteer responsibilities, or unless you have made plans to do so. Don't share staff's personal contact information with anyone without their consent to do so. If you don't have consent, share the Soulardarity phone number 313-349-1063 or work emails.

Be professional, be respectful - Staff, fellow volunteers, partners and community members deserve to be treated professionally and with respect. Of course, we want this work to build strong relationships between people and contribute to the overall strength of our community, not just Soulardarity. But we also want people to feel confident that their contribution to Soulardarity will be valued and their participation supported. When you're doing volunteer work for Soulardarity, remember that everyone you work with has a shared commitment to the work we're doing. Please refer to the Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing listed within this handbook as a guide.

Report problems to staff - We aim to provide an environment that is conducive to following the Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing in its most complete form as possible. If you feel that you are not being allowed this right within Soulardarity, please report this issue to the appropriate staff member, including Caton Jones, Membership Coordinator at caton@soulardarity.com or Shimekia Nichols, Executive Director at shimekia@soulardarity.com.

Harassment Policy - We will not tolerate any conduct that violates this policy, and will promptly investigate and resolve all alleged complaints and take appropriate action against employees, contractors, members, and volunteers who violate our policies. Soulardarity will not tolerate harassment of any employee, contractor, member, and volunteer by any other employee or contractor, supervisor, vendor, member, volunteer or community member. Harassment for any discriminatory reason, such as sex, race, color, national origin, disability, age, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other protected category, in addition to those unprotected, violates Soulardarity in good faith and is subject to immediate termination or dismissal from the organization.

GLOSSARY

Environmental Justice Glossary

Energy & Environmental Justice TERMS

EJ - Environmental Justice

EnDem - Energy Democracy

POGO- Policy Governance

IRP - Integrated Resource Plan

EBE - Equitable Beneficial Electrification

EV - Electric Vehicles

LMI - Low-to-Moderate Income

CBP - Community Benefits Plans

MPSC - Michigan Public Service Commission

DER - Distributed Energy Resources

IOU- Investor Owned Utility

POU- Publicly Owned Utility

Co-op - Cooperative

CJ - Climate Justice

ToC - Theory of Change

IIJA = Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

General Non-Profit Language

BoD - Board of Directors

ExComm - Board of Directors Executive Committee

ED - Executive Director

BIPOC - Black, Indigenous & People of Color

NPO - Non-Profit Organization

NGO - Non-Government Organization

501(c)(3) - Nonprofit organization for religious, charitable, scientific, and educational purposes.

Donations to 501(c)(3) are tax-deductible. 501(c)(3) vs 501(c)(4): Key Differences and Insights for Nonprofits go to www.donorbox.org.

501(c)(4) - A social welfare group, and donations are not tax-deductible.

RFP - Request for Proposal

RFQ - Request for Quote

MOU- Memorandum of Understanding