

Fairfield Citizen <http://www.fairfieldcitizenonline.com/news/article/Fairfield-boy-leads-the-way-in-school-s-solar-516686.php>

Fairfield boy leads the way in school's solar upgrade

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Fairfield resident Nico Lob, age 10, with the rooftop solar installation he helped get installed at Montessori School in Wilton.

The Montessori School in Wilton celebrated the recent installation of Solar Panels on Monday, May 25. The full student body assembled in the company of dignitaries including Congressman **Jim Himes**, state Sen. **Bob Duff** and **Cindi Bigelow** of **R.C. Bigelow Inc.**

After a student tour of the school's composting and recycling systems, Himes addressed the students with congratulations and implored the school to keep up their excellent stewardship on

behalf of "precious Mother Earth."

Upper Elementary student **Nico Lob** spoke on behalf of the school's solar project reviewing its inception.

"I remember very well how it all started. The day was May 2, 2008. School Director **Mary Zeman** told us a story about how everything in our world is connected," he said. "The next day I wrote her a letter and asked her if we could get solar panels for our school."

Coincidentally, **Chris Thomas**, a parent at the school, had suggested the same thing to Zeman, who put the two in touch with each other. They became instant e-mail partners,

"[Thomas] helped me greatly with all the questions I had," Lob said. "I attended the Earth Day celebrations at **Fairfield High School** and educated myself on Solar Energy in a variety of different ways."

The plan involved installing a system made up of 48 solar panels that will generate 10,320 kilowatt hours of electricity annually. The system is estimated to reduce 15,422 pounds of CO2 emission, the equivalent of planting 4,228 trees.

Thomas then invited Lob to a Fairfield Representative Town Meeting to give a presentation, appealing to the town to act as a liaison for the state of Connecticut's Department of Revenue Services Neighbor Assistance Act.

Lob reported: "It was a long night and there were a lot of questions as to why a school in Wilton would come to Fairfield for help with a state grant."

However, after a long discussion, the Fairfield RTM decided it would help out, regardless of the school's location.

The state of Connecticut approved the use of tax credits and the school received donations from local companies, including R.C. Bigelow Inc.

"As part of our emphasis on sustainability, we were happy to support the Connecticut program to help The Montessori School install solar panels on its roof," said Bigelow. The clean energy project was also made possible by a grant from the [Connecticut Clean Energy Fund](#).

"I will always remember that day and that's how it all got started. We are proud of our school and how we can make big changes by using small methods," Lob said.

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