

Reenergize Teams With Christmas In April

ReEnergize East Bay has found a way to encourage the installation of energy-saving measures in Christmas in April projects undertaken in Northern California. Christmas in April is the leading national volunteer organization that provides home repair and improvement services to low-income senior and disabled homeowners. (See Partner Update, January-February 1999.)

ReEnergize and its parent organization, Community Energy Services, Inc. (CESC), jointly coordinate volunteer projects year-round with the Albany-Berkeley-Emeryville chapter of Christmas in April to augment their other home repair activities on behalf of low-income seniors and those with disabilities.

Recognizing the potential for increasing expendable income for this population through reducing utility costs, ReEnergize East Bay has developed the *Home Energy Guide for Volunteer Workers*, a simple guidebook that details 15 residential energy and water conservation opportunities. The improvements can be performed by semi-skilled and unskilled volunteers working with Christmas in April or other similar assistance programs. Dr. Lisa Gartland of Positive Energy wrote the guidebook, which includes a description of the energy-efficiency measures and how they work, a list of materials and estimated costs, installation instructions, expected cost savings (annual and lifetime), and other benefits of each measure. The measures include:

- Weatherization of doors, windows, and other leaks
- Water heater and pipe insulation
- Compact fluorescent lamps
- Low-flow water devices
- Appliance cleaning and adjustments

National Rebuilding Day is observed each year on April 24 and the Albany-Berkeley-Emeryville (CA) chapter of Christmas in April rose to the occasion this year by providing home repairs to 39 Bay area homes. Dr. Gartland organized an energy-efficiency team to install energy and water conservation measures in addition to the safety and repair work typically performed by Christmas in April volunteers. Twenty-six volunteers (nine of them from Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory's Energy & Environmental Technology Division) comprised six teams that traveled from site to site, installing energy-saving measures at 30 locations in a single day. Team members collected over \$4,000 in donations to assist the effort.

In addition to Christmas in April, ReEnergize East Bay's Richard Flood says he expects the guidebook to be used year-round by construction groups installing energy-efficiency measures in Community Development Block Grant projects.

"CESC provides construction services in about 200 homes per year," Flood notes. "We will also extend the project through the Alameda County Housing Department which serves about 800 homes per year in Oakland, Alameda, Hayward, Fremont, and other East Bay municipalities."

ReEnergize plans to revise the guidebook based on this year's experiences and post it on the Rebuild America website so it is accessible to Rebuild America and Christmas in April participants across the country. *For more information, contact Richard Flood at (510) 644-8546 or e-mail richflood@aol.com.*

