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UI provides assistance to Hall Neighborhood House to cut energy costs

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Bridgeport, CT Running a non-profit community center out of a facility built nearly 60 years ago presents unique operational challenges, oftentimes equating to wasted resources. After years of excessively high energy bills, the historic Hall Neighborhood House on Bridgeport's east side has been able to cut approximately \$15,000 in annual operational expenses by making energy efficiency upgrades. Those cost savings can be redirected into the facility's daycare, pre-school, after-school care, adult and senior programs.

United Illuminating (UI), a subsidiary of AVANGRID, Inc., provided technical assistance to help Hall tap available resources through the Energize Connecticut initiative to update lighting, heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. The Hall received over \$50,000 in gas and electric incentives from the Small Business Energy Advantage program and also qualified for \$100,000 in zero percent financing offered through the program. The energy savings achieved each month will offset the monthly zero percent loan installment.

"Any change that helps us run more cost effectively is appreciated by our donors; we are responsible to them and to the community we serve to direct funds to programs, not to unnecessary maintenance," said Hall executive director Robert Dzurenda.

During the upgrade process, Hall took the opportunity to educate its student communities, integrating lessons as changes were made. After school students learned about technology, the benefits of energy cost savings and being socially responsible through energy conservation.

"Maintaining efficiency is essential for the cost-conscious operations of any non profit," said Dennis O'Connor, small business program administrator at UI. "The custom energy solutions we offer are intended to make necessary improvements to aging facilities, updating the building and creating real long-term cost savings. Equipment upgrades help reduce operating costs and will ultimately help Hall Neighborhood House better serve the community."

The building, which was constructed in 1957, can now better serve the community that has come to depend on it as a major resource center. Roughly 290 pre-school students, 300 after school students and 50 seniors use the facilities each day, making Hall Neighborhood House not only a community home, but a resource center for those residents who would otherwise have no resource for their child's education or care.

The installation and upgrades were done when rooms were not being used, minimizing the impact the construction work had on day-to-day schedules and students' lives. In addition to energy savings and increased safety, the upgrades helped improve the building's overall look as well. Their next step, according to administration, is to assess the viability of installing solar panels at Hall.

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