

# CLIMATE CORNER

## Harnessing the sun to combat climate change



Shanti and Zachary Brien and Harry the dog are pictured below their home's solar panels. Their home's solar PV array collects sunlight to supply electricity for their family of five. The Brien family has used sunlight to generate their electricity and heat their pool water for more than five years. Learn more about solar panels and other steps you can take to address climate change by joining the Piedmont Climate Challenge at [www.piedmontclimatechallenge.org](http://www.piedmontclimatechallenge.org).

By Hope Salzer and Ronna Kelly

The 262 Piedmont households currently participating in the Piedmont Climate Challenge are about one-third of the way toward reaching the Challenge's goal of reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 450 tons.

To join the effort to combat climate change visit [www.piedmontclimatechallenge.org](http://www.piedmontclimatechallenge.org).

With spring on the horizon, this fourth Climate Corner article focuses on solar power. The Brien family in the St. James Woods area installed rooftop solar panels to generate electricity and a solar hot water system for their pool and spa. They are among more than 400 families in Piedmont who have installed solar panels since 2001.

Doug Brien minored in environmental science at UC Berkeley, influenced by his father who was an early water conservation advocate. When he and his wife, Shanti, moved into their 1936 Mediterranean-style home with a pool, they reduced the size of the pool by half and installed a pool cover, along with a solar hot water system to make their pool as carbon neutral and efficient as possible.

When they did the math, they found it also made financial sense to install solar panels on other sections of their terracotta-tile roof to provide electricity for their house. Burning fossil fuels to supply electrical power is a leading contributor to climate emissions.

Thanks to the leadership of the Piedmont City Council, 89% of Piedmont residents and

businesses now purchase 100% renewable energy from East Bay Community Energy.

But there still can be significant benefits to installing solar panels on your roof. One consideration is cost. Advances in solar technology mean that residential rooftop solar power can break even (cost vs. benefit) in as little as seven years. Residents who switch to electric vehicles and electrical appliances, like heat pump furnaces, water heaters, and induction stoves, can make a solar power system "pencil out" substantially faster.

Solar power can have the added benefit of protecting communities from the likelihood of fires because it reduces the power transmitted over high-voltage electrical lines and towers. The chances of overloading lines, which then can sag into vegetation and start fires, are significantly reduced. Additionally, when more home appliances operate on local renewable electric power, there is lower risk of leaks, fires and explosions from gas fixtures.

Lastly, residential solar combined with a battery storage system can enable a homeowner to keep their lights on without increasing emissions during blackouts, which some residents experienced last year when PG&E shut off power to prevent fires. Gas generators, the other option during blackouts, create more air pollution and greenhouse gases and also can be dangerous, ironically posing an additional fire hazard.

As a result, Piedmont city

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# CSL HOUSE TOUR

## Stunning Spanish Colonial with breathtaking views

By Jan Howland

The 32nd and final Children's Support League's Heart of the Home Tour returns April 24 and 25. Tour attendees will view five remarkable homes in Piedmont and Oakland, enjoy a festive lunch served by gourmet food trucks, and shop at the Popup Boutique at the Piedmont Community Center. Purchase a VIP Ticket and attend the Gala Kickoff at a stunning estate in Piedmont, as well as the VIP breakfast in one of the loveliest gardens in Piedmont.

Featured this week is a stunning 1938 Spanish Colonial that was remodeled by reimagining the existing, reusing the discarded, and restoring the forgotten. A fallen tree was made into a pergola, broken handmade terracotta roof tiles are used as decorations in flower beds, and both new and second hand furniture and fixtures make this a delightful, "one of a kind" home.

The living room is filled with light and awe-inspiring views of San Francisco and Oakland. Throughout the first floor of the home, access to nature has been a major goal of the homeowners. Walls changed to windows, windows to doors, and finally gardens and patios were created where there was concrete and Astroturf.

Each reflects only part of this four-year renovation.



The original random plank oak floors, which are throughout the home, will lead you through the dining room, past the newly created stone deck and into a true cook's kitchen featuring an 8-burner La-canche stove and period Paonazzo marble.

On the second floor, the original 1930's bathroom suite, complete with wavy peach tile and mirror-topped serpentine vanity, as well as the "Tree House" sitting room with a vaulted beamed ceiling, add to the charm of this home. The Master Suite has gorgeous views of San Francisco, downtown Oakland and the South Bay.

Outside, edge-installed stone

"mosaic carpets", immense succulents, walled areas with seating and a wide variety of plantings create a serene garden space.

To purchase tickets to CSL's 32nd Tour, see the website: [ChildrensSupportLeague.org](http://ChildrensSupportLeague.org). Tickets are also available at several local East Bay stores, with a list on the website. The Tour homes are open Friday and Saturday, April 24 and 25, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Boutique at Piedmont Community Hall is free to the public and is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday. Lunch prepared by local food trucks will be available at the Piedmont Community Center from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Tour days.

## Red Cross urges healthy individuals to give blood

The American Red Cross strongly urges healthy, eligible individuals who are feeling well to give blood or platelets to help maintain a sufficient blood supply and prevent shortages as concerns about the outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019, or COVID-19, rise in the U.S.

Cold and flu season has already impacted the nation's ability to maintain its blood supply. As the number of coronavirus cases grows in the U.S., the number of people eligible to give blood for patients in need could decrease further.

"We're asking people to help keep the blood supply stable during this challenging time. As communities across the country prepare for this public health emergency, it's critical that plans include a readily available blood supply for hospital patients," said Chris Hrouda, president of Red Cross Blood Services. "As fears of coronavirus rise, low donor participation could harm blood availability at hospitals, and the last thing a patient should worry about is whether lifesaving blood will be on the shelf when they need it most."

Make an appointment to donate blood now by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org), or calling the Oakland Blood Donation Center, 6230 Claremont Avenue, at 510-658-6456. Donating blood is a safe process

and people should not hesitate to give or receive blood. There are no data or evidence that this coronavirus can be transmissible by blood transfusion, and there have been no reported cases worldwide of transmissions for any respiratory virus, including this coronavirus, from a transfusion.

The Red Cross only collects blood from individuals who are healthy and feeling well at the time of donation – and who meet other eligibility requirements, available at [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org). At each blood drive and donation center, Red Cross employees follow thorough safety protocols including wearing gloves, routinely wiping down donor-touched areas, using sterile collection sets for every donation, and preparing the arm for donation with an aseptic scrub. These mitigation measures will help ensure blood recipient safety, as well as staff and donor safety in reducing contact with those who may potentially have this respiratory infection.

The Red Cross has implemented new blood donation deferrals out of an abundance of caution. Individuals are asked to postpone their donation for 28 days following:

Travel to China and its special administrative regions, Hong Kong and Macau, as well as Iran, Italy and South Korea;

Diagnosis of COVID-19, contact

with a person who has or is suspected to have the virus.

As the situation evolves, the Red Cross will continue to evaluate all emerging risks in collaboration with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and industry partners to determine if additional intervention strategies are needed. Together, we stand ready to keep the American public informed and prepared.

### Blood donation process

A blood donation takes about an hour from start to finish, but the actual donation itself only takes about 8-10 minutes. Donors can also save up to 15 minutes at the blood drive by completing a RapidPass®. With RapidPass®, donors complete the pre-donation reading and health history questionnaire online, on the day of donation, from a mobile device or computer. To complete a RapidPass®, follow the instructions at [RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass](http://RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass) or use the Red Cross Blood Donor App.

To donate blood, individuals need to bring a blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification that are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by

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CSL Presents  
**Our Grand Finale Tour**  
 Save the Date! April 24 & 25, 2020

[ChildrensSupportLeague.org](http://ChildrensSupportLeague.org)  
 32nd Annual Heart of the Home Tour

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