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Montessori School students Josiah Tarrant and Nico Lob show Congressman Jim Himes (foreground) and Senator Bob Duff the inverters for the school's solar panel, explaining how they work.

—Charisse Czaja photo

Montessori school goes solar

The Montessori School celebrated the recent installation of solar panels on Monday, May 24, when the full student body assembled in the company of dignitaries, including Congressman Jim Himes, state Senator Bob Duff (D-25), and Cindi Bigelow of R.C. Bigelow, Inc.

After a student tour of the school's composting and recycling systems, Mr. Himes addressed the students with congratulations and asked the school to keep up its "excellent stewardship" on behalf of "precious Mother Earth."

Upper Elementary student Nico Lob told how the school's solar project was conceived. It began in May 2008 with a class on how "everything in our world is connected." Both Nico and Chris Thomas, a parent at the school, had an idea for the use of solar panels. Nico got together with Mr. Thomas and learned as much as he could about solar energy.

Nico explained how Mr.

Thomas invited him to a regional town meeting in Fairfield and the school secured a grant from the town — even though the school is in Wilton — to be used for solar energy. The town representatives approved the town of Fairfield to act as the liaison to the state of Connecticut's Department of Revenue Services Neighbor Assistance Act.

The state 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 Ms. Bigelow. This clean energy project was also made possible by a grant from the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund.

The system is made up of 48 solar panels. This 10.32 kW system will generate 10,320 watts of electricity annually.