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ENERGY SAVER: Wade Webb of A&M Solar Solutions, left, and Rodolpho Carrasco, executive director at Harambee Christian Family Center in Pasadena, install some of the 18 Sunpower solar panels at the center.

Harambee Ministries to unveil solar panels

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PASADENA — Installing solar panels to cut back on energy costs was not particularly high on the list of priorities for Harambee Ministries.

Harambee is mainly concerned with keeping kids off the streets by providing them with a safe learning environment through after-school and summer programs.

But when the Leadership Pasadena Class of 2008 approached Harambee Executive Director Rodolpho Carrasco with the idea of "going green," Carrasco said the solar move was a lot more doable than he first thought.

After a \$15,000 rebate from Pasadena Water & Power and another \$15,500 in donations, the \$33,000 project ended up costing Harambee just \$2,500.

The solar panels being installed this week will decrease energy costs for the private nonprofit organization by 70 percent.

Leadership Pasadena is a group of active leaders from the Pasadena area seeking to promote a stronger community. Carrasco said Leadership Pasadena

considered two other nonprofits before choosing Harambee as the project recipient.

Leadership Pasadena raised money for the project, bringing in \$10,000 from the Pasadena Community Foundation and \$5,500 from private donors.

In addition to saving the organization money, the solar panels will benefit the organization in several other ways, Carrasco said.

"This is a learning opportunity for the children," Carrasco said.

"We have to teach them differently now, how to manage and limit energy consumption."

Carrasco said he hopes the solar panel installation also challenges the whole community to think in the long term.

"The change that needs to happen in a neighborhood like ours isn't going to happen overnight," Carrasco said.

"This is a lifetime investment."

Harambee will publicly unveil the solar panels Thursday. Pasadena Mayor Bill Bogaard will be on hand. A community dinner and presentation by Leadership Pasadena and Harambee leaders will follow.

Residents are welcome to attend. For more information, call (626) 798-7431.