

Coating Roofs to Avoid Heat

QC, NYC Service and Con Ed team up to save energy

Source: [Queens Chronicle](#)

By: Kori Tuitt



PHOTO BY KORI TUITT

Queens College students, NYC staff and Con Edison employees coat the roof of Kiely Hall on the Flushing campus.

Queens College is following Mayor Bloomberg's mandate by participating in the [NYC CoolRoofs](#) program, one of the many plaNYC 2030 initiatives that aim to tackle the issue of climate change.

The college teamed up with the volunteer group NYC Service and [Con Edison](#) to coat the roof of the Kiely Hall building on the Flushing campus with white paint containing polymers.

According to Diahann Billings-Burford, chief service officer of NYC Service, the polymers in the paint stop the roof from absorbing the sun's heat by reflecting its rays. Depending on a building's structure, that can save between 10 and 30 percent of energy used to cool the building. The paint is also very adhesive, making the roof more resistant to wear.

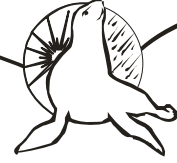
[Queens College](#) President James Muyskens discussed the initiative at a press conference Friday. "This college has been committed to green technology," Muyskens said. "We were just named in the Princeton Review as one of the Green Colleges in the United States."

Queens College is not the first campus in Queens to have a coated roof. Billings-Burford said the initiative was launched three years ago at [LaGuardia Community College](#) in Long Island City.

"We're really excited that since that launch we've completed so much," she said.

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Con Edison has coated two million square feet of rooftops and plans to coat 84,000 more, according to Frances Resheske, senior vice president of public affairs. Since the program started three years ago, the company has reduced its carbon footprint by half, she said.

Resheske said that the employees of Con Edison and [NYC Service](#) volunteer their own time since most of the roof coatings are done on weekends.

Volunteers are the key, and that is what Billings-Burford said is important. "I am passionate more about the opportunity to engage citizens," she said. "I think that to be a true democracy we have to take part."

Grace Magee, 21, a Queens College senior and head of the Environmental Club, is one of the many volunteers. Magee is also a part of the New York Public Interest Group chapter on the campus. "It just shows how much potential we have as a CUNY campus," she said.

Magee said after participating in Million [TreesNYC](#) on campus, another plaNYC initiative, she was motivated to do more.

Staci Hope Cohen, project and energy manager at Queens College, said she hopes the CoolRoofs program makes its way to all the CUNY campuses.

"It's just a simple way to be able to save 30 percent energy — a cost-efficient way when funding is such an issue," Cohen said.

She said the college plans to coat the other 15 roofs on campus that meet the criteria, which is that they are relatively older and do not need repairs. NYC CoolRoofs targets existing buildings because most were built with black roofs that do not aid in conserving energy.