

White is new green for building roofs in Queens to reduce cooling costs

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BY: [SAM LEVIN](#)

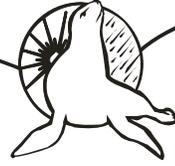


Christie Farriella for News

Variety Boys and Girls Club members stand on newly painted, energy-efficient white roof in Long Island City with club executive director Terry Hughes.

Buildings throughout Queens are going green this summer by going white.

As part of the citywide Cool Roofs program, which mobilizes volunteers to paint roofs to reduce cooling costs, the [Long Island City Business Development Corp.](#) is creating a network of participants in the borough to join the cause.



The city launched the second season of the initiative last month. The goal is to coat 1 million square feet in the borough. In Queens, volunteers already have painted 14,000 square feet of the Sunnyside Community Center's roof and 8,000 square feet of the Variety [Boys and Girls Club](#) of [Long Island City](#).

"It's good for the environment, good for the city, and it's not hard to do," said [Dan Miner](#), senior vice president of the Long Island City Business Development Corp., which has reached out to nearly 15 buildings in Queens to connect them with Cool Roofs.

"These days everybody needs to lower their bills," Miner added.

White roofs reflect sun, allowing the building occupants to reduce air-conditioning costs and emissions, said [Danielle Grillo](#), executive director of community partnerships at the city Buildings Department.

Painting 1 million square feet of roofs white is equivalent to getting 50 cars off the road, according to Grillo. The opportunity is vast in parts of Queens, where there are a lot of large roofs.

"The outer boroughs are where we find we can make the biggest impact," Grillo said, explaining that painting it costs 45 cents per square foot and electricity usage can drop about 30% in the summer.

"It seemed like a no-brainer," said [Terry Hughes](#), executive director of the Boys and Girls Club. "We could never afford to do something like this on our own."

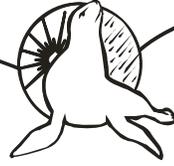
The city works with corporate sponsors to make the program mostly free for nonprofit groups. Other organizations throughout Queens are setting up partnerships with the city.

"This would reduce our carbon footprint and put us in a better position to run our facilities," said [Bob Osa](#), vice president of facilities for [Goodwill Industries](#), which is hoping to coat roofs at its two warehouses in [Astoria](#).

Supporters said the reflective roofs are also a good learning opportunity.

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"It was very bright. I couldn't even look down," said [Willie Britton](#), a 14-year-old member of the Boys and Girls Club who recently went atop the freshly coated roof.

Britton added that he was excited to learn that it could actually save the organization money. "It's cool. It's like a giant science project," he said.