

## **Media Release**

**11/1/2009 – ARCA has New Power**

<http://www.ARCAOpeningDoors.org>

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## **ARCA Organics is Converting to Solar Power**

### **Partnerships take ARCA Solar**

*Albuquerque, NM* – ARCA's annual celebration at the La Paloma Greenhouses November 21<sup>st</sup> will be commemorating more than just the 7,000 poinsettias in bloom and the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the facility. Through a partnership with New Mexico Solar Energy Association (NMSEA), the ARCA Organics greenhouses will flip the switch to solar power on November 7, 2009.

ARCA operates six greenhouses on its Corrales facility at 181 E. La Entrada Lane. Four are dedicated to ARCA's La Paloma program, where over 15,000 Geraniums and Poinsettias are grown each year. Two belong to ARCA Organics, an entrepreneurial venture producing organic wheatgrass, pet grass and a variety of produce sold around town to companies like Keva Juice, Intel Corp., local health food stores, pet shops and through the Corrales Growers Market.

"Last February, PNM toured our facility," said Jim Douglas, ARCA Organics Division Director. "Marlene Brown, President of NMSEA was one of our guests. She was so impressed that she instigated conversation about our solar plans."

NMSEA offered to provide necessary volunteer labor, but the question of how to fund the \$30,000 materials cost was daunting. And then a group of 8 – 12 year-olds heard about the vision, liked it and got to work. Randall and Maya Pietrocci, Ricky and Alexis Aire and Audreanna Sims led the fundraising efforts and with the help of Don Chalmers, PNM and other local businesses and private Albuquerqueans got the job done.

Both programs employ individuals with developmental disabilities. “When we first thought about entrepreneurial program possibilities, we developed ideas that incorporated our mission of providing opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities,” said Elaine Solimon, ARCA’s Executive Director. “Being good stewards for our planet is so important – we are thrilled that ARCA Organics has achieved their goal so quickly and would love to be the first nonprofit in Albuquerque to be completely solar.”

“We strive to be a model of sustainability,” said Michele Cody, Development Director, ARCA Foundation. “We are not only reducing our annual energy costs by over \$6,000, but can sell unused power back to the grid. For 52 years ARCA has consistently created new and innovative programs for people with developmental disabilities. In these challenging economic times, it is our responsibility to assure alternate funding streams are in place to keep these programs available as long as the need exists.”

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*ARCA is a nonprofit organization founded in 1957 by a group of Albuquerque families who had children with developmental disabilities. The mission of ARCA has remained consistent for 51 years: opening doors for people with developmental disabilities to be valued members of our community. For more information, please call 505-332-6803 or visit our web site at [www.ARCASOpeningDoors.org](http://www.ARCASOpeningDoors.org).*