

Six local heroes whose work is having ripple effects – at home and far away – in making the world a better place.

Photographs by LAURA BARISONZI

The **TEACHER**

Sajed Kamal has energized a generation of students, not to mention all those solar panels.

Sajed Kamal makes connections: between learning and teaching, between global and local, and – perhaps most fatefully for him – between peace and sustainable alternative energy. As a student at Northeastern in the Vietnam era, Kamal, now 64, says he started to wonder, “What do we have to do to avoid going to war for oil?” For him, “it became a reason to learn about alternative options.”

Forty years later, he is a lecturer on sustainability at Brandeis University and has spent his career leading renewable-energy projects around the world, including his native India and his childhood home of Bangladesh, as well as in the Fenway, where he now lives. Recently, two solar electric systems were installed in his neighborhood – one at Boston Arts Academy and another at a mixed-use complex of affordable housing and condominiums run by the Fenway Community Development Corporation – thanks to his efforts with Solar Fenway, a committee of the CDC.

“It’s almost like a celebration of the neighborhood and joining it with a vision of sustainable living,” says Ross Gelbspan, a Brookline writer specializing in global-warming issues. Stephen Lee, a former student now working on infrastructure projects in Guatemala, has a similar take: “He approaches even the most technical issues from a human perspective, with sincerity, warmth, and creativity.”

– Michael Prager

