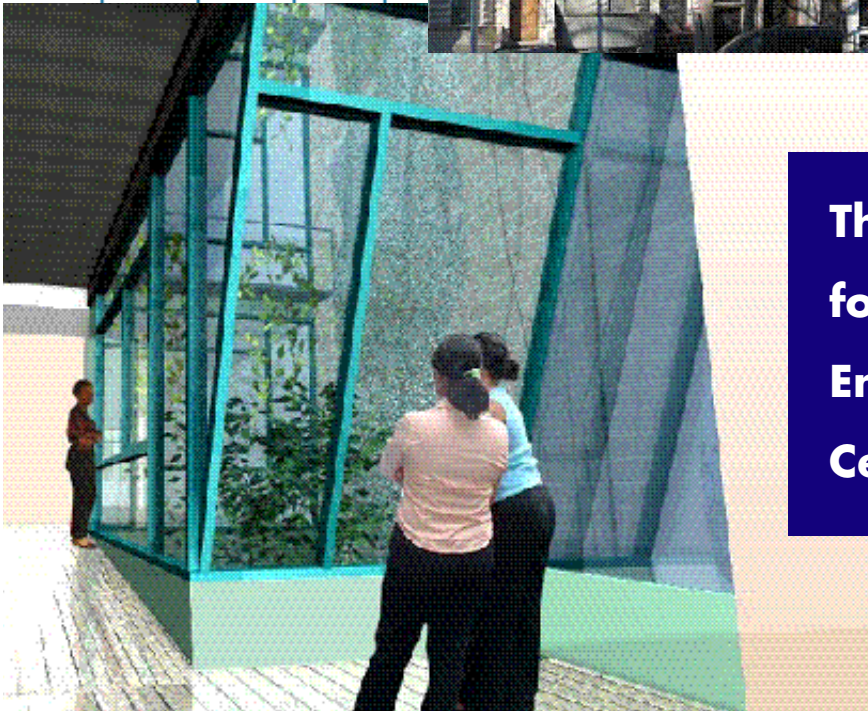
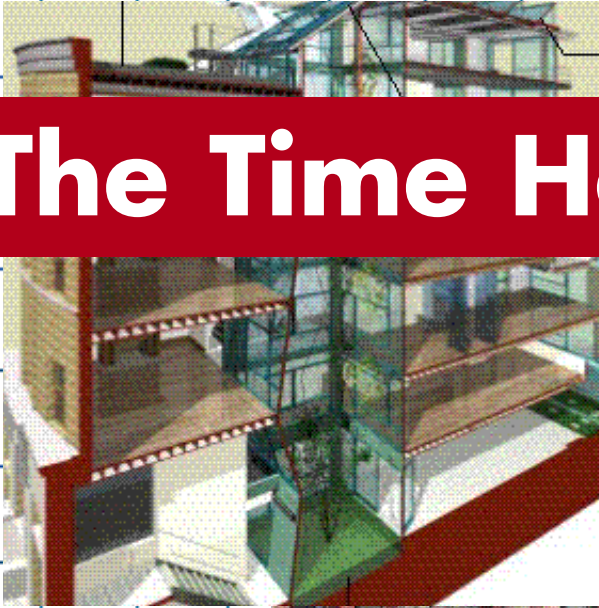




WEST HARLEM ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

**The Time Has Come...**



**The Capital Campaign  
for the WE ACT  
Environmental Justice  
Center of New York**

***A Magnificent Showcase for a Healthy "Green" Indoor Environment***

**Contact Information:**

WE ACT for Environmental Justice

271 West 125th Street, Suite 308

New York, NY 10027

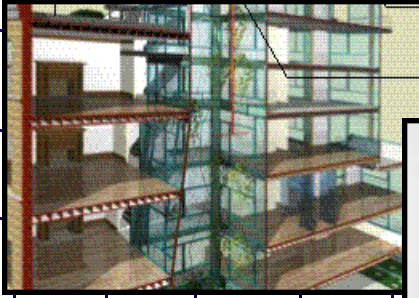
Phone: (212) 961-1000

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[www.weact.org](http://www.weact.org)

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AQ Crusor Architects and WE ACT

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**WE ACT THE TIME HAS COME...**

# SUMMARY

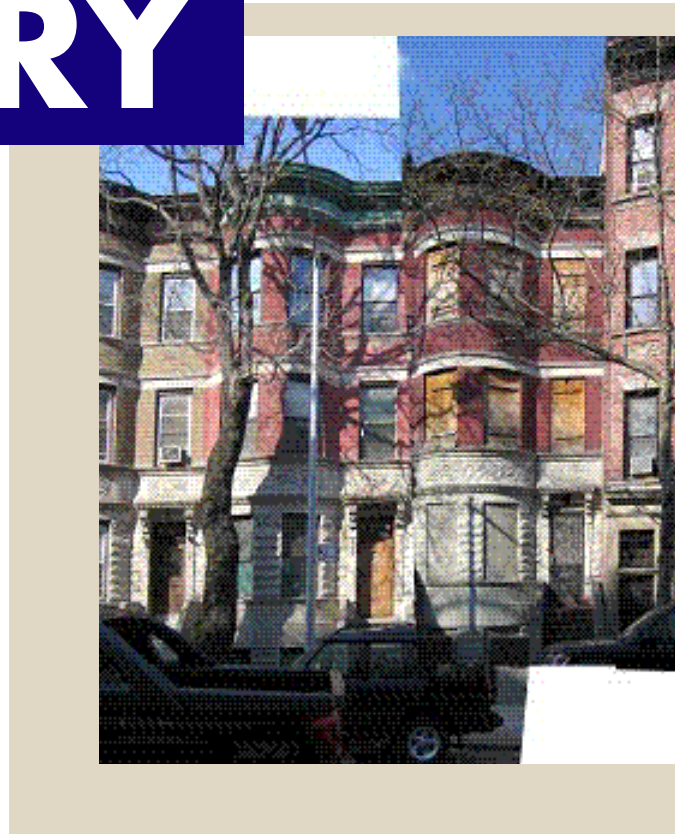
**F**rom its first confrontations with the City in the streets and in the courts to its current partnership in nationally important health, academic and environmental initiatives, **WE ACT has changed the landscape and impacted the public health of Harlem.** It has redefined the meaning of “environment” to include all the habitats where we live, work, play and learn. Hundreds of thousands of low-income families and neighborhoods of color – the businesses, developers, institutions too – benefit daily with cleaner air, new public amenities, and a voice at the table.

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It is quite possible – given the battles it has won, the thousands of people of color it has mobilized, the powerful people it has re-educated, the weight of the science it has developed, and the influential partners it has attracted – that WE ACT’s environmental justice work will be dramatically multiplied. That new strategic era could begin on a day in early 2007 when the WE ACT Environmental Justice Center of New York opens, a “green” building in West Harlem’s Hamilton Heights.

There, WE ACT will have the space and resources to raise its five program areas to new levels. The building will crackle with the mixing of people who make things happen. The discovery there of viable “green” technologies and sustainable building design will jolt homeowners, business operators, and public and private developers into adopting cost-saving, environment-enhancing approaches. The environmental justice movement will have a unique physical and symbolic identity: a home, a headquarters, an accessible body of knowledge, a teaching facility, and a demonstration site in the Northeast region.

**Everyone reading this summary of WE ACT’s plans – environmental and social justice advocates, black professionals and other leaders of color, community residents and civic advocates – has a stake in the success of the WE ACT Environmental Justice Center of New York.**



**WE ACT needs your help** in securing the \$4 million needed to construct, equip, and maintain the Center, and to enhance its capacity to respond programmatically to the many opportunities the Center will spark.

## **WE ACT: IMPACT AND RECOGNITION**

WE ACT was founded in 1988 as a volunteer organization to advance West Harlem community struggles around poor management of the North River Sewage Treatment Plant and the construction of a sixth toxic bus depot in Northern Manhattan. It has won life-changing, precedent-setting victories on such injustices as the disproportionate share of air pollution and asthma in communities of color, unsafe buildings and lead poisoning, lack of waterfront access and deteriorating quality of life, and community development without community participation. WE ACT creates local environmental solutions that are replicated nationally through advocacy and technical assistance.

After seventeen years on the local and national environmental justice frontlines, WE ACT has a paid staff of fourteen, hundreds of community volun-



**The WE ACT Environmental Justice Center of New York (4th building from the right) in its context on West 140th Street.**

teers, an array of impressive strategic partnerships, and one of the largest, most heavily used collections of urban environmental and social action materials in the country.

In 2003, WE ACT's co-founder and Executive Director Peggy Shepard received the 10th Annual Heinz Award for the Environment in recognition of her years of leadership and effective action to secure environmental justice in communities of color. The Heinz Foundation also underscored the significance for the urban environmental movement of the partnerships WE ACT has developed with Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, and the actions it has undertaken with the Natural Resources Defense Council and Environmental Defense. **"Peggy Shepard raised her voice – and later a veritable army – against a systemic form of racism that wittingly or not, sacrifices the environmental health of poor urban areas,"** said Teresa Heinz Kerry.

Two thousand and four brought further high profile recognition of WE ACT and the environmental justice movement. Peggy Shepard was honored with Audubon's Rachel Carson Award and the

Dean's Distinguished Service Award from the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. Additionally, WE ACT was awarded a \$50,000 "green" building planning grant by the Kresge Foundation, one of the country's largest and most respected funders. And in 2005, the US Environmental Protection Agency selected WE ACT as one of only fifteen organizations nationwide to receive the Children's Environmental Health Excellence Award.

Peggy Shepard and WE ACT earned these awards from nationally prominent institutions because they exposed life and community-destroying practices. They mobilized people and facts to win a series of court and policy victories. In the process, Peggy Shepard and WE ACT have made environmental justice for communities of color an issue government and business can no longer ignore or dismiss. Attitudes, policies, and practices must still change in many centers of power. Today there are promising examples of negotiated agreements and even collaborative research and planning. The future is open to new thinking and strategic alliances.

# The Power of Organization and Ideas

**P**rofound change in attitudes, policies, and practices come slowly and rarely without controversy and confrontation. In fact, the struggle for environmental justice in New York will intensify in the next decade as:

- the needs for garbage and other waste disposal facilities, new and renovated housing, and transportation infrastructure grow;
- the cost of reversing existing environmental damage and injustices and the cost of responsible, sustainable development explode; and
- the resistance of long exempt, politically connected communities and groups in other parts of the City to accepting their fair share of the environmental burden stiffens.

In the first half of 2005 alone, the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority tried to renege on an agreement reached 5 years ago. The Mayor and the City Council attempted to reopen and expand a marine transfer station sited in Harlem. Columbia University continued its refusal to engage seriously in dialog around its plans for a huge expansion into Manhattanville in West Harlem. Each of these is yet another expression of injustice—whether intended or not.

The repercussions will be catastrophic if the government and many private developers are

allowed to continue polluting and uprooting what they consider to be a marginalized segment of society. Just imagine the asthma, low birth weight, and risk of cancer getting worse. No one living or working in West Harlem and Northern Manhattan, whether affluent and seeking a home in these diverse and congenial neighborhoods or long-time residents, will be spared. **The air does not discriminate.**

The hard-fought progress of the last twenty years could be erased with a few calculated, arrogant decisions by people in positions of public and private power. Environmental racism is a threat and an affront to all, including professional people of color. And for environmental leaders, the urban frontier should be both an enormous challenge and a matter of conscience.

The struggle ahead will be no less fierce, but the voice and the leverage of the environmental justice movement can be a far more potent force that will be heard and must be accommodated.

## THE TIME HAS COME.....

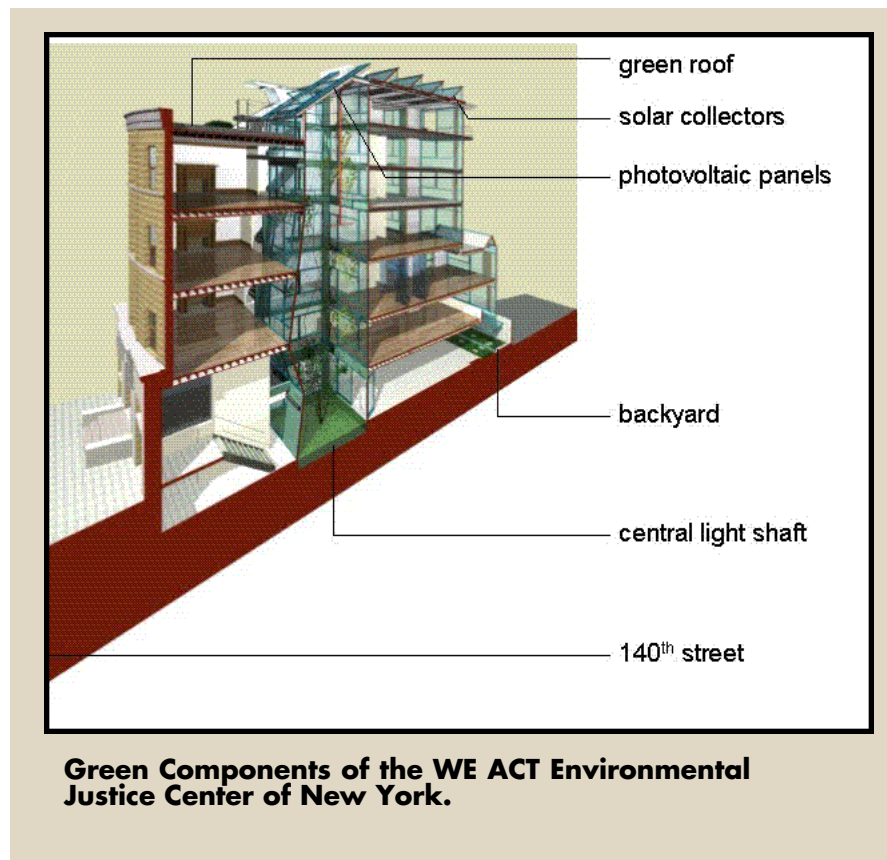


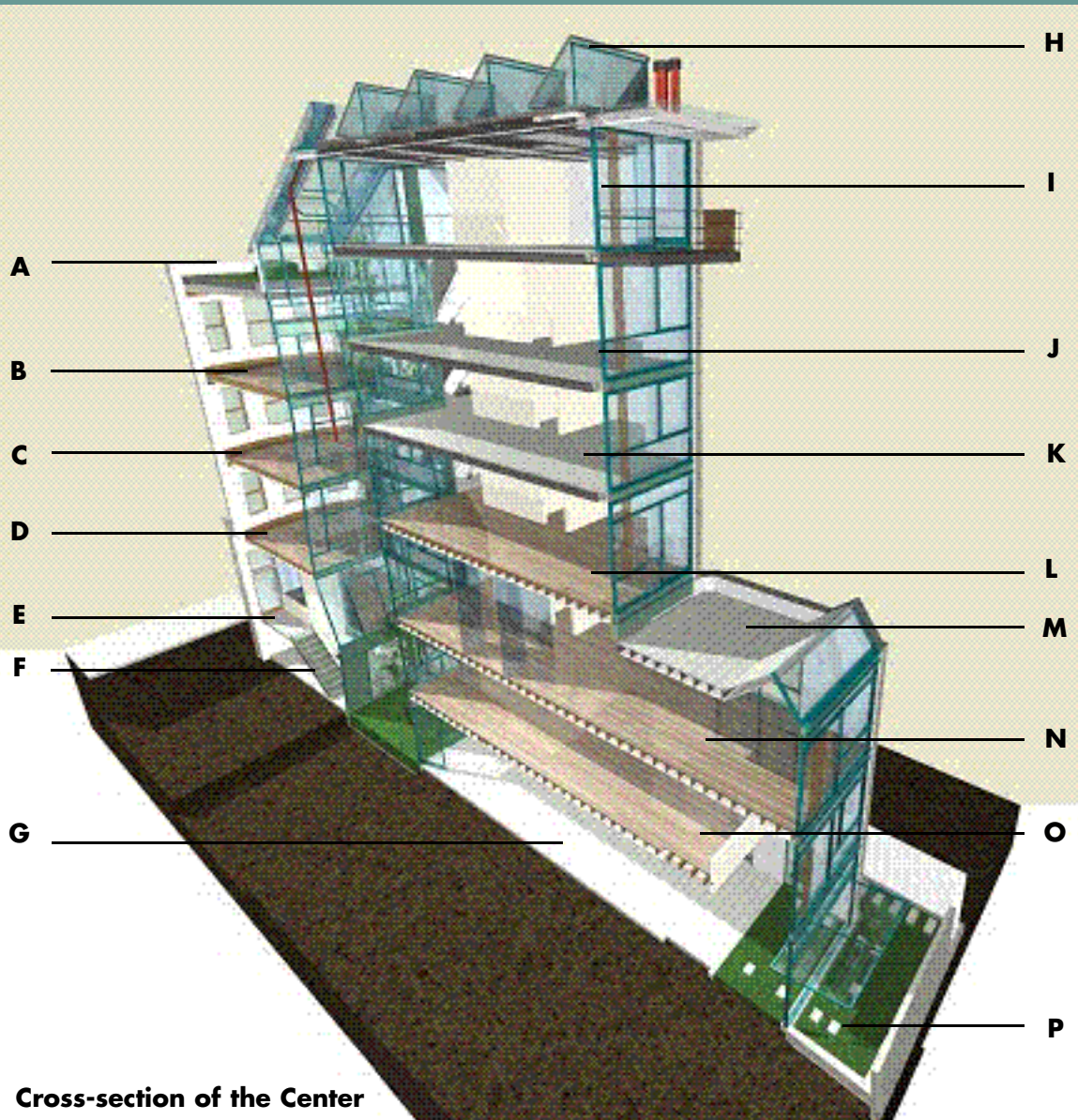
# The Human Cost of Environmental Health Disparities

■ 25% of children in Harlem are afflicted with asthma. Only 5% of children across the nation suffer, yet their plight is recognized as a health crisis while the City goes on virtually ignoring the pollution in Harlem. One life-long effect is reduced school attendance because of illness, resulting in poor academic performance.

■ Exposure of pregnant women to combustion by-products and some pesticides used in the City results in a 9% reduction in birth weight and a 2% decline in head circumference, which correlate with low I.Q. and poorer cognitive performance in childhood.

■ As many as 1,800 New Yorkers in communities of color are estimated to die each year as a result of the links between elevated air pollution and bronchitis, heart disease, and cancer risks.





### Cross-section of the Center

- A Green roof
- B Executive/Administrative area
- C Community Organizing and Movement Building Program areas
- D Sustainable Development Program Area
- E Foyer
- F Mechanical Room
- G Exhibition Space
- H Solar Collectors
- I Meeting Rooms
- J Executive/Administrative areas
- K Executive/Administrative areas
- L Youth Leadership Program and Communications Department areas
- M Greenery
- N Environmental Health Program area
- O Library
- P Backyard



# The Environmental Justice Center: A Platform For Change

**T**he next strategic era in the movement will be both symbolized and energized by the creation of the WE ACT Environmental Justice Center of New York. In what was once an abandoned West Harlem townhouse, the Center will make a defining, quite possibly revolutionary statement: the environmental justice movement is a permanent presence and a formidable force.

A four story, 7,100 square foot, state-of-the-art “green” building in West Harlem’s Hamilton Heights Historic District, the Center will embody WE ACT’s guiding principles:

- Community mobilization
- Knowledge-based action
- Leadership around environmentally responsible technologies
- Environmental Justice movement expansion

In addition to providing adequate room for growth in WE ACT’s five core program areas, the Center will include:

- A floor equipped and dedicated to Youth Leadership Development programs: field research techniques, civic responsibility, and life-time leadership skills will be cultivated.
- A fully catalogued and accessible library of hard-to-find environmental justice and environmental health publications, an archive, and multi-media materials for use by teachers, students, and researchers.
- Advanced communications and research technologies.

- Flexible community meeting spaces for workshops and trainings that facilitate policy development, strategy planning, and organizing.
- A meeting place where both community residents and environmental justice and public health advocates from around the City and the country can work together.
- Facilities for training and organizing around action initiatives.
- Private, comfortable space for bringing together WE ACT partners and protagonists to discuss solutions to issues.

## **A Magnificent Showcase for a Healthy “Green” Indoor Environment**

The “green” building itself will become a new WE ACT educational program. With all the real estate and commercial development transforming Northern Manhattan, only one environmentally advanced project has been built – 1400 on Fifth by Full Spectrum of New York, LLC.

**Although proven, affordable approaches are readily available for residential and commercial buildings, many developers, architects, and homeowners do not know about them. The WE ACT Environmental Justice Center of New York will demonstrate and showcase the possibilities and solutions.**

## WE ACT THE TIME HAS COME...

Well-promoted open houses, workshops, tours, and publications will raise awareness and show how such “green” features as these can be utilized:

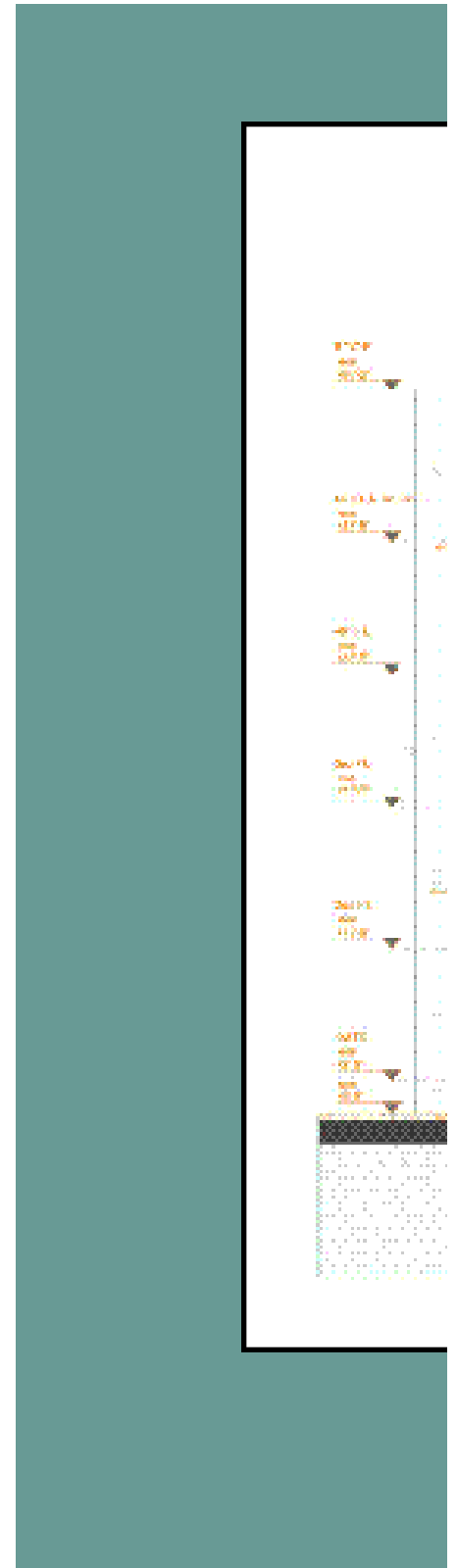
- An electro-magnetic elevator that reduces energy consumption;
- An atrium watered by roof runoff rather than tap water;
- Non-toxic paint and carpeting to promote healthy indoor air quality;
- Modular storage and organizing systems built from locally produced sustainable materials;
- A green roof to lower energy costs;
- Photovoltaic solar collectors to be used in an energy demonstration project.

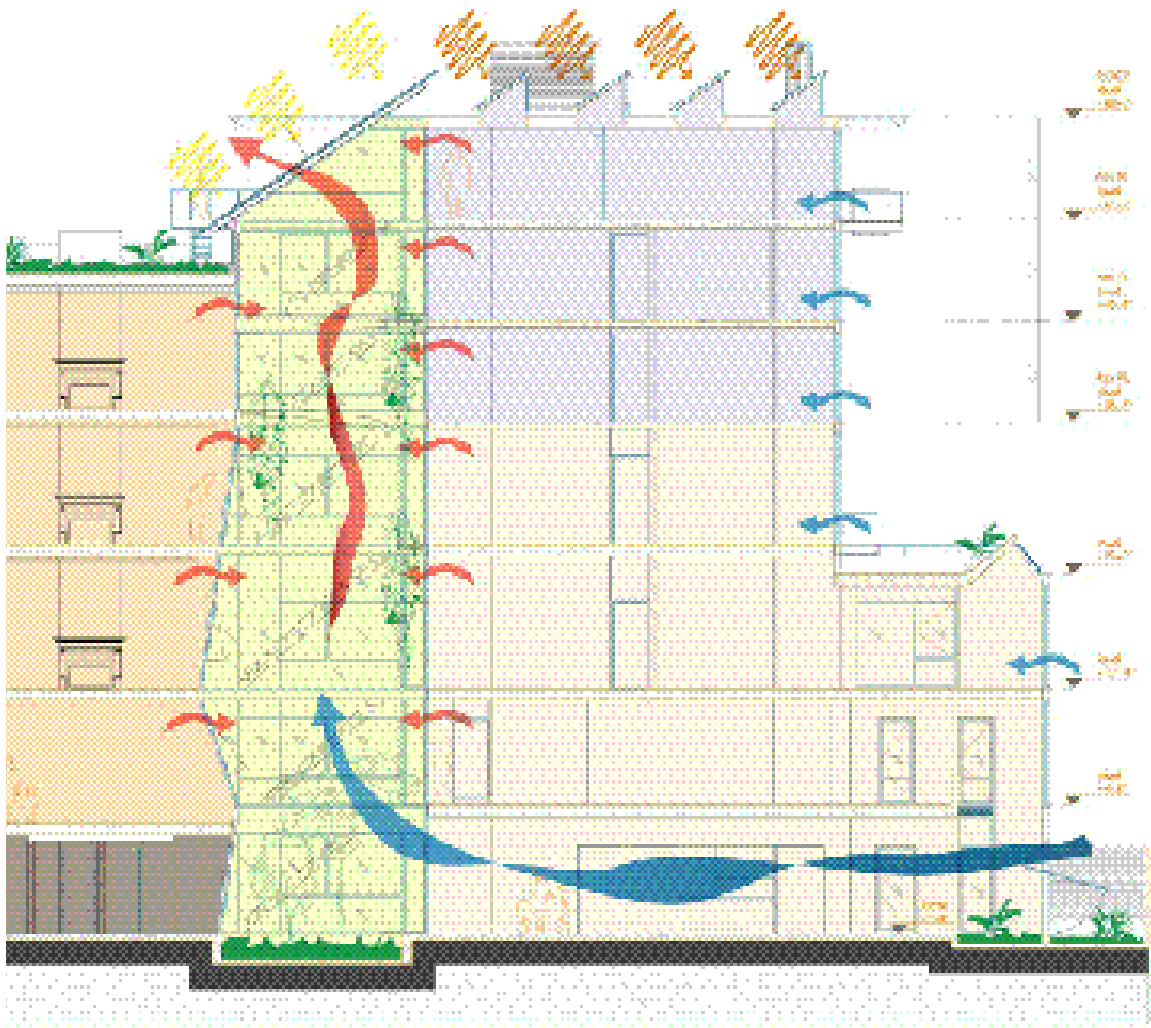
The long-term economic advantages of these and other emerging technologies are no longer surprising and should be an inducement to serious consideration. In addition, the WE ACT design team itself delivers a dual message: **the expertise needed to do “green” building is not only easily available but is available from outstanding firms headed by professionals of color.**

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Harlem-based firm AQ Crusor Architects has created a fascinating and compelling design that incorporates environmental principles and products. Its additional expertise in the revitalization of cultural city neighborhoods, the adaptation and rehabilitation of existing buildings, and in government regulations and approvals will steady the skeptics and demonstrate that “different” projects can be approved and get built. Complementing the architects is the international firm ARUP Engineering Corp. that provides a strong culture of social responsibility and with twenty years of experience with “green” buildings, is a noted leader in the field. With our outstanding design team in place, the goal is to develop the WE ACT for Environmental Justice Center of New York as a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver building.

WE ACT will set aside a special fund for top quality maintenance, timely repairs, and testing new environmental technologies and practices. The fund is essential, in part, because the Center will always be in the public eye. It will be heavily used six days a week. Sustaining showcase condition and a leadership presence will require considerably more than the usual nonprofit’s small budget line for maintenance and security.





**“Environmental Machine” (major components) of the WE ACT Environmental Justice Center of New York.**



# Building Powerful Programs



WE ACT is a \$1.2 million, multi-faceted institution. The current action agenda includes thirteen initiatives in five program areas. The staff of fourteen works with hundreds of community residents, students and teachers, health professionals and scientists, volunteers, and other advocates and organizers. Collaboration is vital to WE ACT's effectiveness, and the organization is a major partner in nearly a dozen joint projects and strategic alliances.

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**Within the broad environmental field, the Environmental Justice Movement is by far the least well funded.** WE ACT's precious resources must be and are invested in high payoff initiatives that:

- Produce broad and lasting change in public policy and programs.
- Realign private development projects.
- Create activities that mobilize large numbers of residents in communities of color.
- Mobilize, educate, and train hundreds of activists able both to take on future threats and to participate in creating "new vision" projects.

The strategic value of each of these WE ACT programs and activities is clear:

## Environmental Health and Community-Based Research

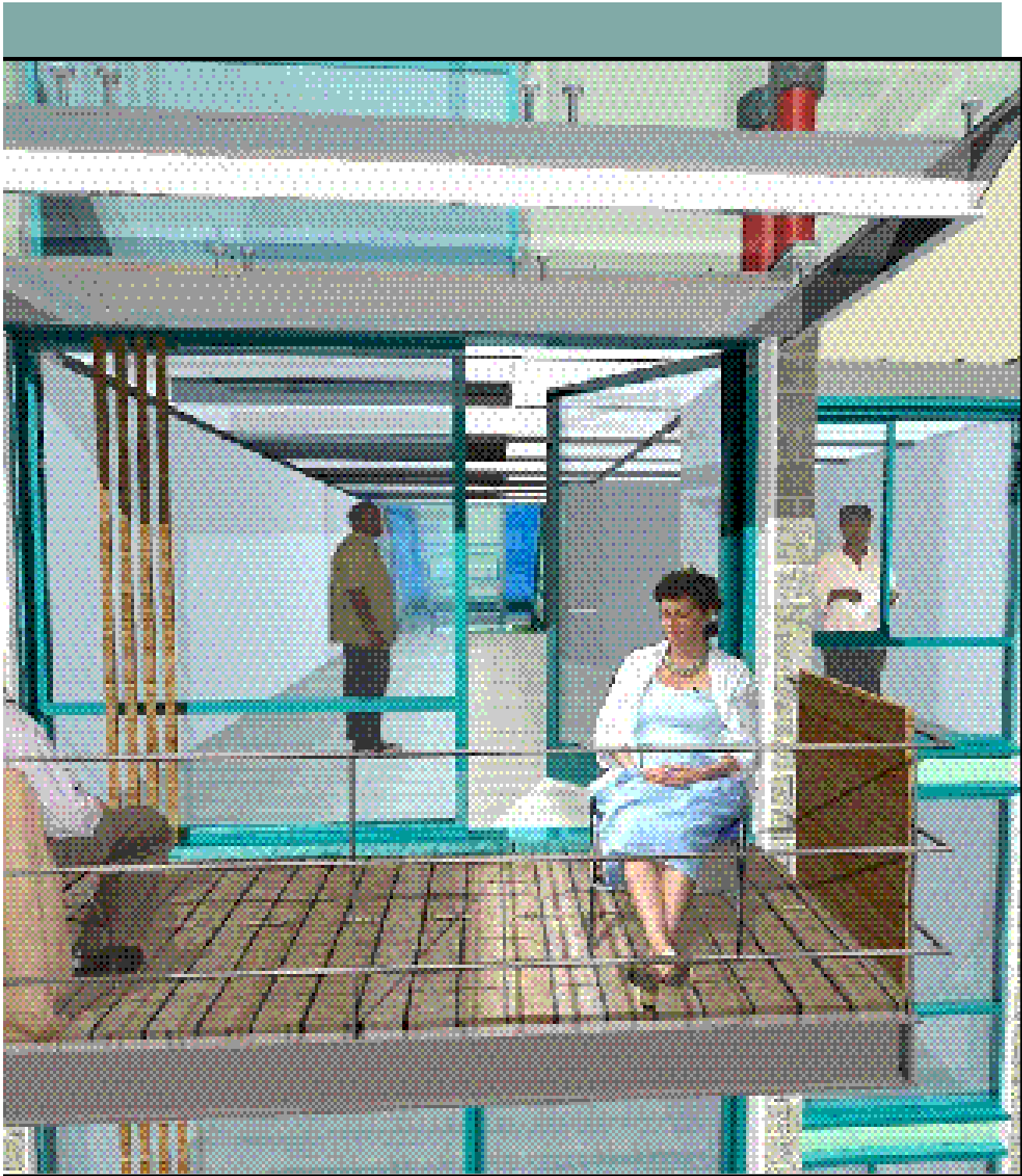
Science and technology are indispensable tools for creating a safe and sustainable environment. Acting as a bridge between community residents and the scientific community, WE ACT's Environmental Health and Community-Based Research program builds the capacity of communities of color to identify and reduce the disproportionate risks posed to their health by environmental hazards.

Driven by locally defined needs and priorities, the Environmental Health and Community-Based Research program addresses key community health concerns including asthma, childhood lead poisoning prevention and children's environmental health.

The program partners with Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) to bridge the gap between activism and academia through cutting-edge initiatives.

- As the result of an educational initiative, WE ACT and other environmental advocates ensured the passage of two pieces of legislation addressing pesticide use exposure and toxicity by the New York City Council.
- Coordinating a New York City-wide "Healthy Homes Project" in partnership with the Columbia Children's Environmental Health Center that will cultivate a cadre of motivated leaders and advocates trained in the science related to housing and health who will publicly advocate for lasting improvements in legislation and policy with regard to pollutants in the built environment.
- Developing, implementing and evaluating a replicable model for ensuring effective community review of gene-environment and non-therapeutic environmental health research.





Looking in to the 5th floor meeting room.

## Sustainable Development

The goal of WE ACT's Sustainable Development program is to develop and apply tools that empower the residents of Northern Manhattan to plan, design and achieve a healthy, sustainable and environmentally just community. WE ACT and the residents of Northern Manhattan are able to address irresponsible development proposals with community-based planning and development of sustainable, proactive initiatives. Current initiatives include:

- Organizing residents and environmental groups to ensure that Columbia University's planned expansion of its Harlem campus into Manhattanville has a positive impact on both the environment and public health.
- Creating the Harlem Waterfront Council – a community institution that will work to develop, monitor and fundraise for the programming, promotion, and maintenance of the soon to be built Harlem Waterfront Park, which was initiated by WE ACT and NYC Community Board 9.
- Ensuring that commercial development projects slated to take place in the Harlem Corridor (116th to 135th Streets, from the East to the Hudson River) are planned in ways that adequately take community and environmental needs into account through environmental scorecards and agreements.

## Environmental Justice Advocacy & Government Accountability

WE ACT's Environmental Justice Advocacy & Government Accountability program builds community power through organizing to impact policy and systems change. Monitoring key legislation on the state, local, and national levels, WE ACT alerts communities to developments that impact their health and quality of life. Interfacing with City Council members, state legislators, and federal officials, WE ACT facilitates access from the streets and barrios to hallowed halls and state houses and empowers residents to speak for themselves. Current initiatives include:

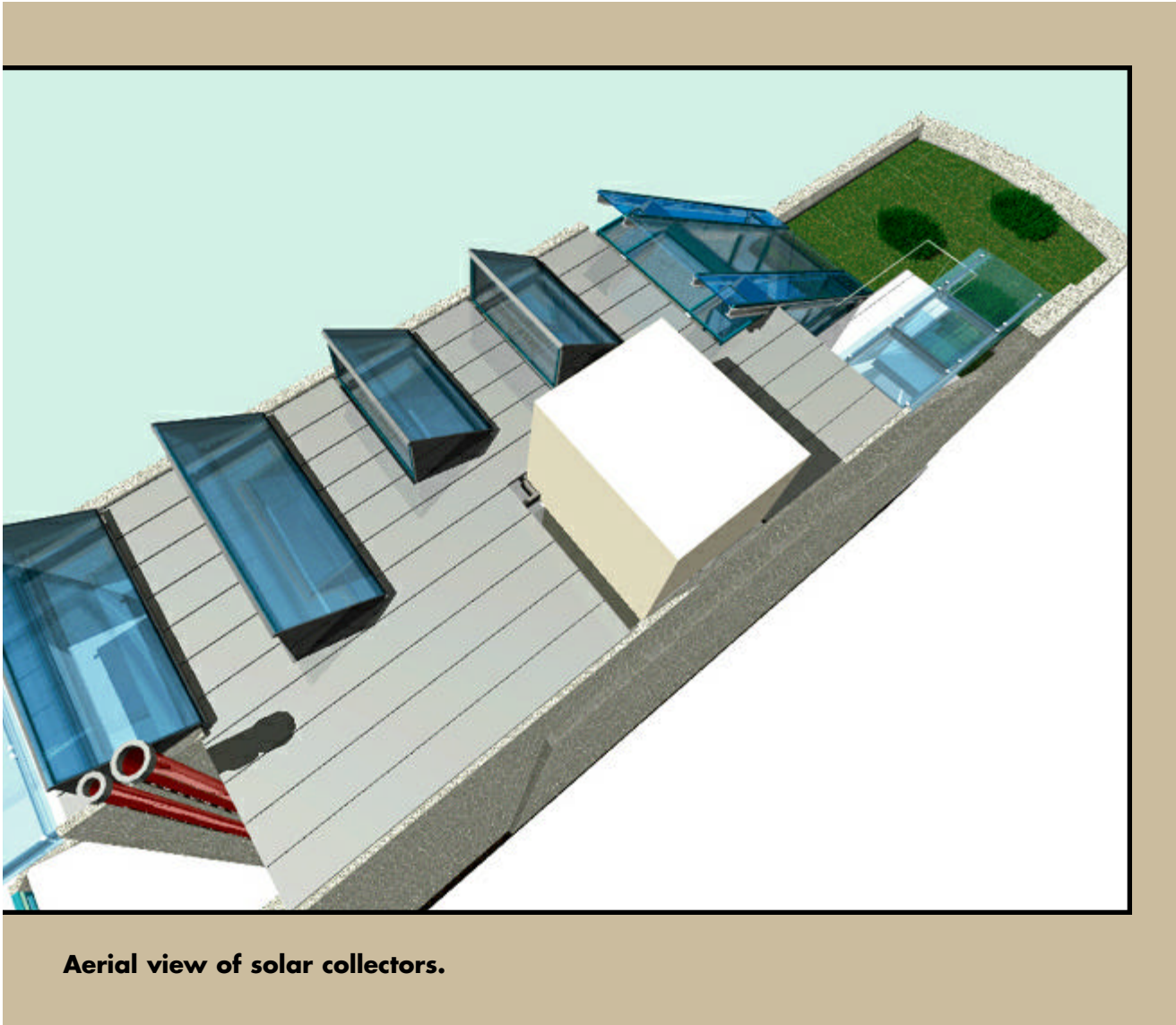
- Conducting an ongoing "Clean Fuel/Clean Air MTA Accountability" campaign designed to ensure greater accountability of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to the communities impacted by the location of its bus depots.
- Building on WE ACT's efforts that led to the first New York State Environmental Justice Policy in 2003, initiating a New York City Environmental Justice Policy with the New York City Council and other city-based environmental justice groups.

## Movement Building

WE ACT's Movement Building program is increasing the capacity of the environmental, environmental health and environmental justice movements to more effectively engage communities and policymakers. Through organizing and training, we build the foundation for research, advocacy and change. The program addresses capacity issues within environmental and social justice organizations, provides technical assistance to emergent groups, facilitates the development of strategic alliances and spearheads the continued effort toward reaching critical mass. Current initiatives include:

- Northeast Environmental Justice Network: WE ACT co-chairs the Northeast Environmental Justice Network (NEJN), which works with community-based organizations throughout the Northeast to create a common vision and strategy to address critical environmental health and justice issues facing their organizations, communities and the Environmental Justice Movement.
- Just Transition: Simply stated, "just transition" means fair compensation to impacted workers and communities for economic, environmental and health losses due to changes in production. It has also evolved from the single notion of a national fund to compensate displaced workers in the petrochemical industry, to include com-





**Aerial view of solar collectors.**

pensatory approaches (retraining, relocation, income support, and so on) for all parties affected by unavoidable job losses, property condemnation, and health and environmental damages from economic activities. In New York City, WE ACT staff have invested considerable energy in developing a worker-community partnership with Transportation Workers Union as a means of building power to address community concerns resulting from the operation of diesel bus depots in low-income and communities of color.

- **Climate and Justice Program:** Since 1998, WE ACT has participated as a member of the 23-member initiative known as the Environmental Justice Climate Change Initiative. The mission of the EJCC Initiative is to educate and activate the people of North America to drive the creation and implementation of just climate policies. The primary focus of our work is to change policies and practices in the United States, but our perspective and the context for our work is international.

# **Sustaining And Expanding Programs**

**T**he third goal of WE ACT's \$4 million campaign, after the construction and maintenance of the Center, is the development of a Program Fund. It will sustain WE ACT's momentum by building financial reserves and investment funds to smooth cash flow and funding cycles and expand fundraising capacity. These new resources will provide financial stability and flexibility during the next three transitional years.

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## **Building Youth Leadership**

Set up, staffing, equipment and resource materials will be essential for the Youth Leadership Program, for example, until an annual stream of grants and donations has been cultivated. (WE ACT's youth program is currently on hiatus due to space limitations.) Another essential, currently unfunded initiative will be the development of "green" building tours and educational programs. Materials will need to be written, designed, and produced. School groups, teachers, and building and construction professionals require their own kinds of activities and materials developed by a curriculum specialist. In time, these activities will be revenue and grant producing.

***A Magnificent Showcase  
for a Healthy "Green"  
Indoor Environment***





**View into the exhibition space from the backyard.**



# Launching WE ACT'S New Era

The goal for this special campaign is \$4 million:

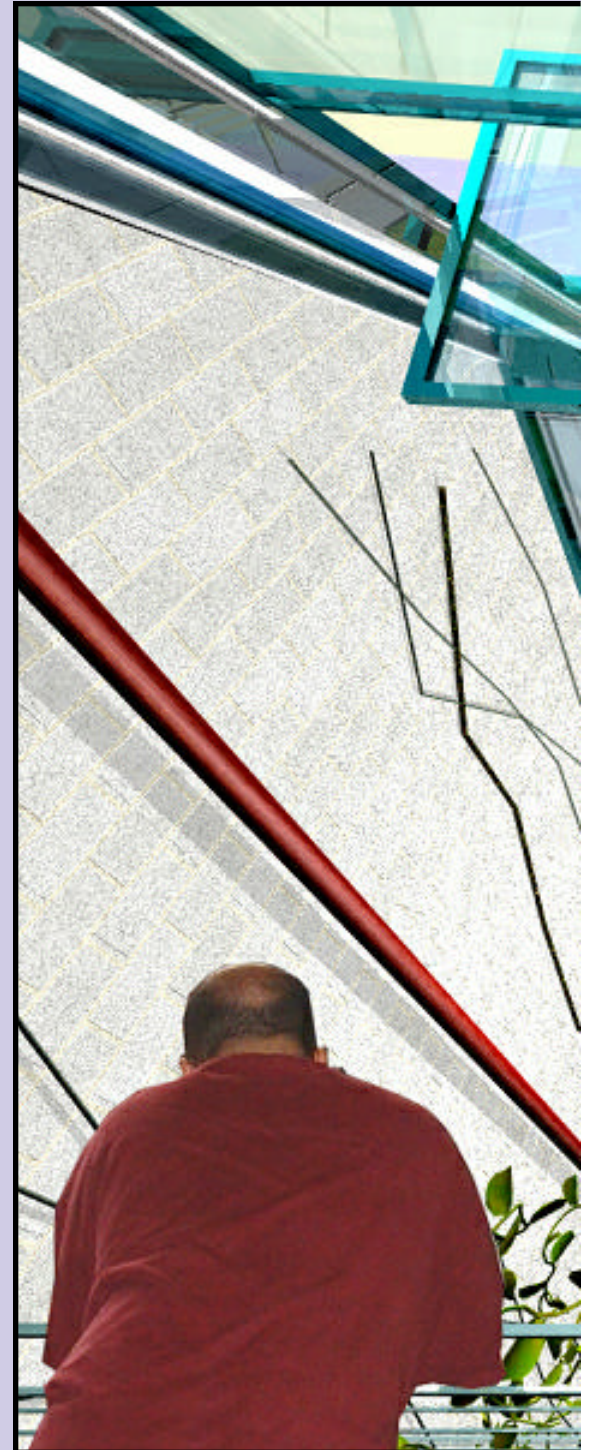
- \$2.5 million for capital costs of the Center building
- \$500,000 for interiors and office equipment
- \$500,000 for “green” building maintenance and upgrades
- \$500,000 for program support and fundraising expenses

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Over the past seventeen years, WE ACT could not have achieved all that it has without the encouragement and support of its diverse base of more than 500 individual, government, foundation, corporate, and institutional donors. Their belief in WE ACT's leadership and the breadth and importance of its work has strengthened the resolve of the Board and staff to undertake this ambitious campaign. The campaign committee of sponsors and leaders is a practical expression of faith in WE ACT's growth and long-term necessity.

The financial news is already good news: as of October 2005, \$1.7 million of the \$4 million was already in hand or pledged. WE ACT's Board is 100% behind the campaign. WE ACT itself will invest \$275,000 from the sewage treatment plant lawsuit settlement, which it has been saving for this moment.

**WE ACT enters this period of investment and transition with its financial house in good order.**





**View from the top of the light shaft.**



**WE ACT THE TIME HAS COME...**

# To Build This Magnificent Center, Your Help is Needed

With your participation now, the WE ACT Environmental Justice Center of New York will open in 2007.

**Several hundred gifts of all sizes are needed. Several hundred names should decorate the stoop, the walls, the rooms, and the building.**

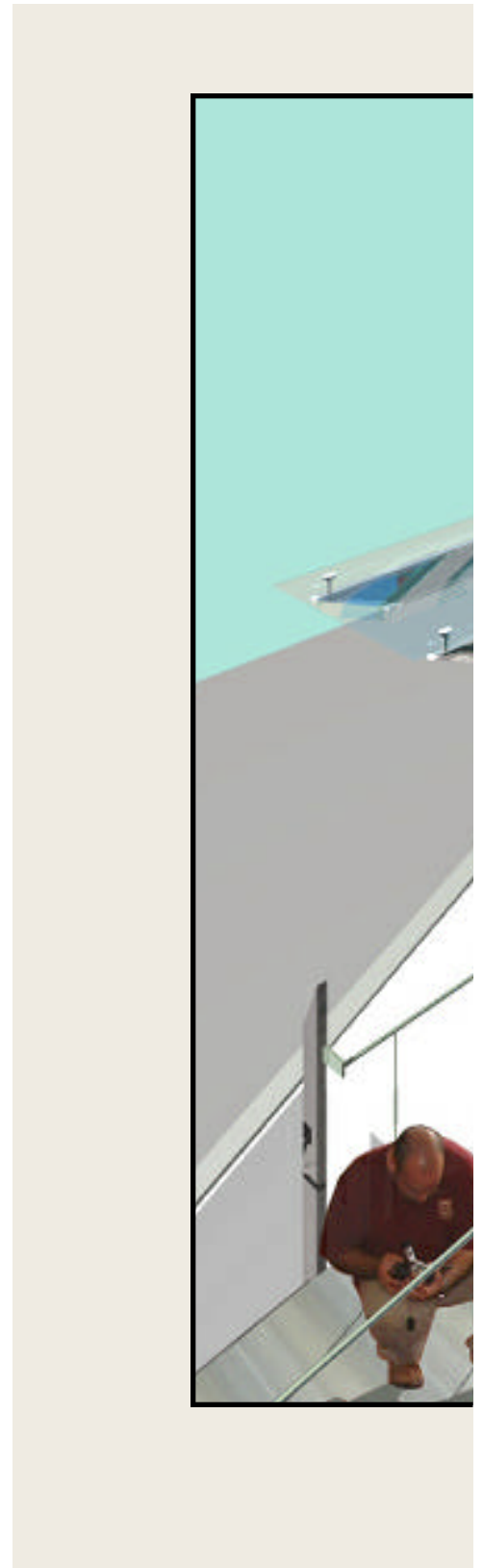
**There is a place in this structure waiting for your contribution.**

We are available at your convenience to discuss our plans and programs. We would be delighted to show you our community and the Center's historic neighborhood.

Contact Peggy Shepard, WE ACT's Executive Director, at 212-961-1000, ext. 306 or via e-mail at [peggy@weact.org](mailto:peggy@weact.org).

## **NAMING OPPORTUNITIES**

There are many opportunities in the Center to honor a person, a family, a business or an institution. The building and the most prominent parts of it can be dedicated. The environmental education and youth leadership floor, the community training center, the Environmental Resource Library, the exhibition space, as well as the building itself are examples of the more prominent spaces that will be available. A list of all the possibilities is available from the Director of Development at WE ACT.





**Top of the light shaft.**





**View from the 5th floor meeting room.**



## **To Make A Gift**

So that you can be as generous as possible, WE ACT will be pleased to accept pledges payable over three years. A gift may be paid annually, bi-annually, quarterly or monthly. We will send reminders in advance of each payment.

### **GIFTS OF CASH:**

Gifts of cash are the most common form of gifts. Please make your checks payable to WE ACT and mail to:

Ursula N. Embola  
Director of Development  
WE ACT for Environmental Justice  
271 West 125th Street, Suite 308  
New York, NY 10027

### **MATCHING GIFTS:**

Some companies double or triple their employees' contributions to non-profit organizations and many include gifts from spouses. You should obtain the proper forms from your employer and forward them to WE ACT with your gift. You will receive credit for both the original gift and the amount of the match, and the matching gift company will be listed as a donor.

### **SECURITIES:**

Gifts of appreciated securities may offer significant tax advantages to the donor and are simple to arrange. For information on how to arrange a gift of stock, please contact WE ACT's Board Chair, Dennis Derryck via e-mail at [DerryckD@newschool.edu](mailto:DerryckD@newschool.edu).

### **GIFTS IN KIND:**

Donations of specific equipment, furniture and other valuable items are often important gifts. Acceptance of these gifts is subject to usage and space constraints. WE ACT's Development Office can provide further information. Contact Ursula N. Embola at (212) 961-1000 ext. 305, or via e-mail at [ursula@weact.org](mailto:ursula@weact.org).



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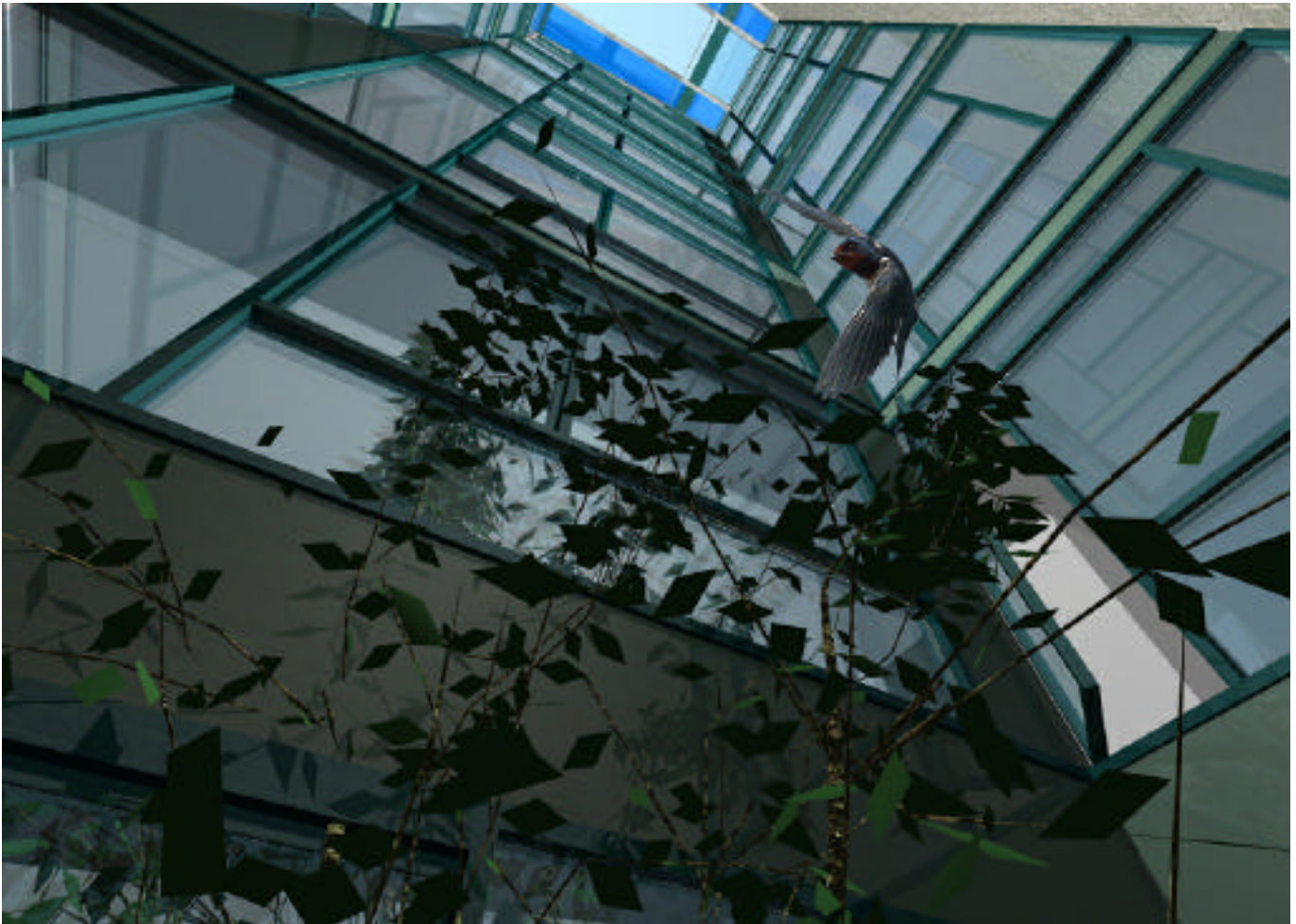
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Executive Director, WE ACT

**Patricia A. Terry**  
CEO, Pat Terry Associates



**View from the bottom of the light shaft.**



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