



Women's Housing & Economic Development Corporation

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URBAN HORIZONS

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Issue # 8

Spring 2009

WHEDCo OPENS LARGEST ENERGY STAR AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN THE U.S.

"This is the last time my children will see me cry," said Christine, as she wiped away tears of joy. Christine and her three young children had just moved from a mold infested homeless shelter into WHEDCo's Intervale Green, the largest affordable Energy Star multi-family high-rise housing development in the nation.

Built on an abandoned lot in the South Bronx where President Carter's historic 1977 visit shed light on the devastation of the borough, Intervale Green brings over a half acre of vegetation to the community, including three green roofs for vegetable and flower gardens, (continued on pg 3)

"I have struggled for so long and worked so hard, you don't even know what living here means for my family," Christine explained. "This is the beginning of a new life."

Christine and her family are among the nearly 400 low-income and formerly homeless residents moving into Intervale Green this month. Intervale Green proves that healthy, sustainable building techniques and beautiful design can both be achieved in affordable housing.



Intervale Green, WHEDCo's newest green, affordable housing development.

WHEDCo's ENERGY RETROFIT IN PLANYC MUSEUM EXHIBIT

WHEDCo's community development work was recently featured in the exhibit "Growing and Greening New York: PlaNYC and the Future of the City" at the Museum of the City of New York.

From December 11, 2008 through April 22, 2009, the exhibit examined New Yorkers' average daily energy use and waste production and discussed Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC to reduce the city's carbon footprint. The *Housing and Home* section featured WHEDCo's 1997 renovation of the abandoned Morrisania Hospital building in the South Bronx into our award-winning Urban Horizons Economic Development Center. The architecturally stunning building provides high quality homes for 132 low-income and formerly homeless families and stellar social service initiatives to the community.

The exhibit also featured Urban Horizons' on-going basement-to-ceiling energy retrofit, which began in 2007. WHEDCo's initial energy efficient upgrades, such as Energy Star refrigerators, compact fluorescent light bulbs, and low-flow shower heads, have already cut tenants' energy usage by nearly 13%, creating savings for both the environment and our residents' wallets.

- WHEDCo's Retrofit Goals:**
- Lower costs for the low income and formerly homeless tenants
 - Create a replicable model for retrofitting aging buildings
 - Improve the environment by reducing building emissions

"Growing and Greening New York" took the pulse of New York's struggle for sustainability--exploring the costs and opportunities of pursuing a more environmentally responsible future," said Sarah Henry, the museum's Deputy Director and Chief Curator. "WHEDCo's work with low-income families in the Bronx speaks to this point precisely and is an excellent example of the many ways New Yorkers are stepping up to the challenge."

WHEDCo is currently exploring the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of "big ticket" upgrades to Urban Horizons, including adding a green roof, upgrading boilers and installing a highly efficient combined heat and power co-generator.

Find out more online at: www.whedco.org/energy_retrofit.php

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LETTER FROM NANCY BIBERMAN

Dear friends,

The crisis in this country's financial institutions is palpable on the streets of the Bronx. The direction of the Dow and the level of consumer confidence mean little to families losing jobs and facing eviction. WHEDCo has been tackling enormous challenges in the Bronx for nearly two decades. No one needed an economic crisis to be reminded how little money folks were earning here in the poorest urban county in America. Today, hopelessness is the most worrisome of all problems.

Bold interventions are required and we know crisis can lead to opportunity. In a jobless national economy, the growth of home-based businesses is skyrocketing. For over 13 years WHEDCo has helped low-income women to sustain themselves through home-based child care. Today, scores of women are signed up and are waiting for this training. Our energy retrofits and green affordable housing are protecting the environment, reducing energy costs and setting new standards for energy efficiency, affordability and design. The good news is that WHEDCo's work on the ground is increasingly aligned with policy at all levels of government: Mayor Bloomberg's recently-announced initiative to support green building and energy retrofits has federal backing as well. New federal appointees who know the enormous value of our work will be vital in the coming months and years. We are thrilled that Adolfo Carrion, former Bronx Borough President, is now Director of the White House Office of Urban Affairs, and Shaun Donovan, also a long-time colleague and New Yorker, is the HUD Secretary. Having friends in many places is always important. These days it is critical. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Nancy
President

HON. ANALISA TORRES: FAMILY ROOTS, FAMILY DEDICATION

WHEDCo Board Chair and Bronx native, Hon. Analisa Torres, is a third-generation lawyer and public servant. Her grandfather, Felipe N. Torres, served in both the New York State Assembly and as a Judge on the New York City Family Court. Her father, Frank Torres, was a Bronx District Attorney, a State Assemblyman, a Family Court Judge and a New York State Supreme Court Justice. Analisa Torres serves as an Acting Justice on the Bronx Supreme Court, a position she has held since 2004. Justice Torres received a Bachelor's Degree from Harvard University and a Juris Doctor from Columbia Law School.

But her lineage only tells part of the Torres' family's inspiring story. The family was part of the first generation of Latino immigrants to come to New York City—in the early years of the 20th century. The family's roots in the Bronx run deep, and their dedication to the community has never wavered.

"The Torres family is unique," says Murray Richman, a criminal defense attorney who has known the family since 1959. "They always have reached out to make the Puerto Rican community—and the Bronx—a better place."

Justice Torres' grandfather, Felipe Torres, immigrated to the Bronx from Puerto Rico in 1919 with ten dollars in his pocket. By the 1930s, he was running a thriving law practice. "My grandfather's goal was always to overcome the racial and gender inequities in our community," said Justice Torres, whose father and grandfather helped establish the Puerto Rican Bar Association.

Similarly, Justice Torres is dedicated to building opportunities, especially

educational opportunities—for those growing up in her family's community. "Our City sends more young men

of color to prison than to college," she said.

In 2003, Justice Torres launched the Felipe N. Torres Summer Fellowship, a writing seminar for 9th

and 10th grade students interested in pursuing a career in law.

A long time WHEDCo supporter, Analisa Torres has served on the Board since 1998 and has led the Board since 2007.

Justice Torres' advice to the 950 young people who participate in WHEDCo's youth programs? "Read! Read! Read! It can transport you to any place in the world."



WHEDCo Board Chair Analisa Torres and her daughter Elena Torres.

INTERVALE GREEN: AFFORDABLE, BEAUTIFUL, GREEN

(continued from page 1) two lush courtyards, a public sculpture garden featuring local Bronx artists, and 33 new street trees.

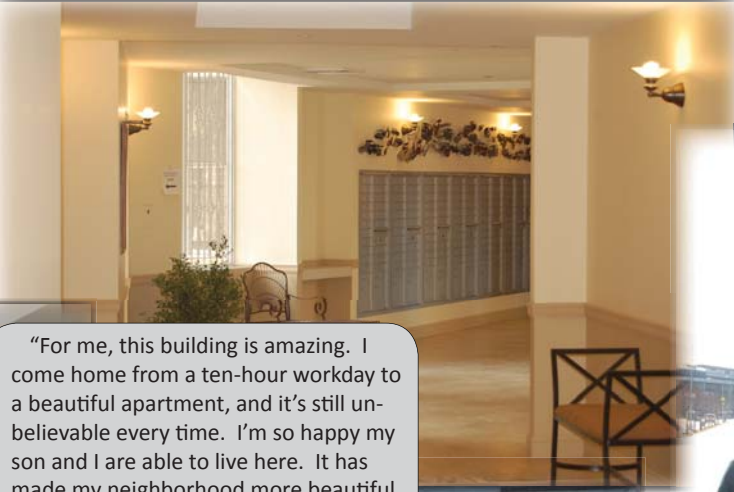
Offering 128 apartments for low-income and formerly homeless families, the complex was built with environmentally friendly, healthy materials and boasts energy-efficient appliances to help keep utility bills low for the new residents. Tenants will save up to 30% annually on electricity bills, easing the burden on families, like Christine's, already struggling during these difficult economic times.

It Pay\$ to Go Green:
Families at Intervale Green will save up to 30% on their utility bills. Each dollar saved is another dollar for food, clothing, education and medicine, which can make the difference for families struggling to get by.

Unlike typical affordable housing, Intervale Green was designed with as much emphasis on aesthetics as affordability. The common areas display high quality tile, wood, and marble, while the apartments boast sconces, pendant lighting, and imported high-end donated ceramic tile kitchen backsplashes. The exterior of the building features red brick, decorative cornices, stone and ironwork, and

multiple courtyards in honor of traditional Bronx architecture.

"We hope that Intervale Green sets a new standard for affordable housing developers everywhere, proving that green, healthy building can be done affordably and supported by very low rents, and that attention to beautiful design and respect for the community must take place in in both high and low-income communities," said Nancy Biberman, WHEDCo's president. "In a neighborhood as systematically devastated as the South Bronx, living somewhere beautiful, like Intervale Green, can have a profound effect on a family's and a community's mental and physical health."



"For me, this building is amazing. I come home from a ten-hour workday to a beautiful apartment, and it's still unbelievable every time. I'm so happy my son and I are able to live here. It has made my neighborhood more beautiful and has allowed me a better life. This is a big step for the Bronx." - Carolina, a new resident at Intervale Green



WHEDCo youth who attended the 2005 ground breaking return to tour Intervale Green.



Beautiful lobby design and roof garden at Intervale Green.

Learn how you can help,
donate online at
www.whedco.org

INTERVALE GREEN IS MORE THAN HOUSING

WHEDCo is working to help bridge the digital divide in the Bronx, where thousands of families lack access to computer technology, by providing every family at Intervale Green with a computer and low-cost, high-speed internet access. Additionally, WHEDCo launched an interactive web site, MovingDay.org, which successfully raised donations to help furnish apartments for families moving into Intervale Green with little or no belongings.

With more than 16 years working to build a more beautiful, prosperous Bronx, WHEDCo knows that housing alone can-

not lift families and neighborhoods out of poverty. With that in mind, we have raised funds to provide a full time, on-site social worker and family support worker to help families settle into their new community and connect to additional WHEDCo services – including an after-school enrichment program staffed by WHEDCo located a few blocks from Intervale Green. At the same time, WHEDCo's community project manager, Kerry McLean, is working with community members, local non-profits, businesses and elected officials to continue improving business development and community safety in the neighborhood.



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Youth from WHEDCo's after school program explore the green roof at Intervale Green.



Excess high-end tile, donated by Artistic Tile and used throughout Intervale Green, is unloaded in New Orleans to help families affected by Hurricane Katrina rebuild their homes. Read more about the gift that keeps giving in the New York Times in the press section of www.whedco.org.



WHEDCo Head Start students giggle in anticipation during a winter magic show and celebration. More than 20 volunteers from Central Synagogue teamed up with 30 Head Start families for a day of food, fun and laughs! (left)
 (below) Head Start students enjoy a delicious meal with their friends during International Day.

