We grow justice!

ANNUAL REPORT 2011

NORTHWEST BRONX COMMUNITY AND CLERGY COALITION
For more than 37 years the Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition has been a multi-cultural, multi-issue, leader-led coalition grounded in social justice community organizing. It is clear, after all these years, that our core values which are centered around “seeking social, economic, environmental and racial justice for our families, our communities and ourselves” still holds true today more than ever.

In fact, in 2011, Time Magazine revealed its person of the year as the Protester. From the Occupy Wall Street movement (inspired by the Egyptian Spring uprising), to Occupy the Bronx, we have amplified the national conversation of “class warfare”. We have protested against landlords, foreclosures, school closings, poverty wages, banks, and the 1%. We have stood together to boldly proclaim our right to freedom from corporate and political greed. We have come face to face with the reality that race matters and we will continue to fight for the working class. While protesting as a form of direct action and public mobilization has always been our life blood, the Coalition prides itself on its ability to strategically build an organization that can carry on this work for many years to come. This year, we not only made huge leaps in our organizing work in the areas of housing, education and jobs but we strengthened our ability to connect with our membership through the use of social media (facebook, twitter, blogging and multi-media) and a new database, Powerbase.
Perhaps most exciting for all of us is some of the new directions we have taken on, including moving to an Institution based-membership model, more clearly defining our Leadership Council and Clergy Caucus structures, ramping up our Civil Disobedience tactics and developing a racial justice analysis and framework. We recognize our strong issue organizing grounded in root causes, our growing membership base and our ability to tell Our Story as the pillars of our organization.

We are inspired by all that we have accomplished and we are motivated to stand stronger than ever on our history and tradition of being an organization of social justice values. So as a member of the Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition, I am proud to be honored by Time Magazine as a Protestor, the Person of the Year and you should be honored to carry this torch with me!

We Are Stronger, Together!
# Statement of Activities and Change in Net Assets

## For the Year Ended June 30, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporary</th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
<th>Restricted</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenue</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Government grants</td>
<td>$10,555,761</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$10,555,761</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>316,327</td>
<td>414,927</td>
<td>731,254</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Event</td>
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<td>60,845</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less: direct expenses</td>
<td>(6,134)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(6,134)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest and dividends</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>378</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total revenue</td>
<td>10,958,334</td>
<td>414,927</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net assets released from restrictions</td>
<td>460,986</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total revenue</td>
<td>11,419,320</td>
<td>(46,059)</td>
<td>11,373,261</td>
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## Expenses

### Program services

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<th></th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
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<tr>
<td>Community outreach and education</td>
<td>109,749</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>109,749</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weatherization</td>
<td>10,321,910</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10,321,910</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>247,863</td>
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<td>247,863</td>
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<td>Leadership Institute</td>
<td>34,947</td>
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<td>34,947</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total program services</td>
<td>10,714,470</td>
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### Supporting services

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<th>Unrestricted</th>
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<tr>
<td>Management and general</td>
<td>513,679</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>513,679</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fund raising</td>
<td>154,258</td>
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<td>154,258</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total supporting services</td>
<td>667,937</td>
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<td>667,937</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total expenses</td>
<td>11,382,407</td>
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<td>11,382,407</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
<th>Restricted</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change in net assets before capitalization</td>
<td>36,913</td>
<td>(46,059)</td>
<td>(9,146)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjustment for capitalization</td>
<td>91,223</td>
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<td>91,223</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change in net assets after capitalization</td>
<td>128,136</td>
<td>(46,059)</td>
<td>82,077</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net assets at beginning of year</td>
<td>157,365</td>
<td>366,331</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net assets at end of year</td>
<td>$285,501</td>
<td>$320,272</td>
<td>$605,773</td>
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MS 391: Our School IS a Transformation School

Last December, MS 391 was placed on the Persistently Low Achieving (PLA) List, meaning that the DOE would either designate the school for one of four options: closure, turnaround (firing half the staff and receiving additional federal School Improvement Grant money to improve over the next three years), restart (take-over by an Educational Management Organization and receive additional federal School Improvement Grant money to improve over the next three years), or transformation (school remains as is and receives additional federal School Improvement Grant money to improve over the next three years). MS 391, like other PLA schools, has doubled the citywide average of Special Education students, students in temporary housing, and students who speak English as a Second Language. They have doubled the citywide average of teachers who are teaching out of certification and class sizes that are higher than the citywide average as well.

NWBCCC engaged parents and teachers from MS391 in weekly workshops around the school closure and school improvement grant process. Trainings included; how to conduct a successful campaign to win school transformation: outreach, meeting facilitation, negotiation, public speaking, and direct action.

Parent leaders and teachers met with Council Member Joel Rivera, State Assemblyman Nelson Castro, and staff from State Senator Gustavo Rivera’s office to solicit letters of endorsement for their school to be designated for transformation. Parents also petitioned other parents and surrounding community businesses to vouch for marked improvements in student achievement and attendance and school safety and environment.

In partnership with the principal, parents and teachers helped to craft a School Improvement Plan for MS 391 for the next three years.

In January, Coalition parent leader Sandra Thomas testified before a rally of students and parents from across the city convened to send an urgent message to the Department of Education: Fix Our Schools; Don’t Just Close Them. She and 20 other young people, parents, and organizers blocked traffic in front of the Department of Education.

In March, 40 parents and teachers attended a Community Forum with Cathy Black and secured her commitment to meet with them to discuss the future of their school. After her resignation, they met with incoming Chancellor Dennis Walcott to discuss their school improvement strategies.
In August, MS 391 succeeded in winning designation as a Transformation School. The school will receive $900,000 in School Improvement Grant money to transform the school. They will continue working with their principal to refine and implement this plan throughout the year.

Sandra Thomas: “My school IS a transformation school. We rolled up our sleeves and worked together. My son came out of MS 391 an Honor Roll student. My son’s story and my school’s story should be a lesson to the DOE. We need you to listen. We need you to give us the resources we need so that we can keep on climbing. DON’T cut us off at the knees when you haven’t even given us the chance to show you the heights we can reach.”

PS 51 Parents United to Protect their Children

Parents of PS 51 Parents United are at the forefront of conducting a visible and growing citywide campaign to have the Department of Education address the conditions of toxic waste contamination at both DOE owned and leased school sites throughout the city. Their mounting campaign is one that points to deeper systemic issues of the DOE’s disregard for parent involvement in critical decisions that impact their children’s future and also to environmental racism that has been deeply embedded into the toxic landscape of the Bronx and will continue to take a toll on the lives of Bronxites. Last January, the lease for PS 51’s former school facility on 3200 Jerome Avenue in the Bronx came up for renewal—triggering an environmental review that found trichloroethylene (TCE)—a common carcinogenic industrial solvent—at levels 10 times higher than the state standard within the facility and 10,000 times higher below ground. In spite of this alarming news, the DOE continued to hold classes in the contaminated school facility, which was formerly a lamp factory. They did not inform parents or staff until August—at which time they had made the decision to relocate the school to a new facility at 695 E 182nd Street.

At an August 18th public meeting with Chancellor Walcott and 300 parents, they were outraged to find that the DOE withheld this crucial information regarding their children’s health for 6 months and excluded them entirely from the decision-making
process to determine the future of the Bronx New School. Although the New York State Department of Health stated that there were "no immediate medical concerns for students and staff," they could offer no such assurances for what potential long-term impacts might be for students who had spent any length of time at the school. To add insult to injury, on the first day of school PS 51 parents and their students found that the new facility was ill-equipped and in disrepair—without internet and phones, with holes and leaks throughout the facility, and with windows so old that some shattered in classrooms during a storm.

NWBCCC parent leader Ginette Sosa, deplored DOE officials for their negligence and acted fast to initiate the first independent parents meeting of 50 parents the following week. Though the DOE declared their new school site safe from contamination, parents decided to team up with the New York Lawyers for the Public Interest and the Center for Public Environmental Oversight to educate themselves about vapor intrusion in schools and do their own investigation into the environmental review of the current site. They discovered the presence of another industrial carcinogen called Perchloroethylene (PCE)—which went unreported by the DOE because its levels were lower than state’s acceptable level—which varies dramatically from state to state. Parents demand that the DOE install proper ventilation in their current site. Parents of former and current PS 51 students will continue to mobilize to create the establishment of a medical registry and monitoring program for all children who attended PS 51 and to demand the enactment of a comprehensive environmental review of leased school sites. By 2014, one third of all DOE schools will be located in leased sites. Parents believe that children deserve the same level of protection whether they attend school in leased facilities or facilities owned by the DOE. They believe that lasting, systemic change will require the State to shift its policy to equalize environmental oversight standards of leased and owned schools and will require the city to instate a clear protocol for how they will inform and involve parents in a timely and transparent way anytime they discover contamination in city schools.

The parents’ movement has gained the endorsement of State Senator Gustavo Rivera, Assemblymen Jeffrey Dinowitz and Jose Rivera, Borough President Ruben Diaz, and City Councilmen Oliver Koppell. They have also attracted coverage of their story from city and national media outlets, including CNN’s Special Investigations Unit. After Chancellor Walcott declined their request to meet with him, they held a decided to confront him personally at the October 12 meeting of the Panel for Educational Policy. There, parents and their students dressed in PS 51 school shirts with TOXIC painted across the chests held a press conference at the entrance and marched inside to testify publicly before the Chancellor. Chancellor Walcott committed to meet with the parents before the press and attendees in response. As a result of this first meeting, they established a workplan to ensure repairs and upgrades to the current school facility would take place in a timely fashion. The Chancellor committed to conduct further testing for contamination in the winter months.

**School Construction**

In July, NWBCCC parent and youth leaders, the Wakefield Taxpayers Association, and Community Board 12 packed the public hearing with 300 people. Community leaders testified alongside Borough President Ruben Diaz and allied elected officials on local, state, and federal levels. In spite of unanimous and adamant support the Mayor and his Deputy Mayors remained steadfast in their intent to keep the National Guard in it’s current location and derail plans for school construction at the Kingsbridge Armory. This has precipitated the launch of a legal campaign by the Bronx Borough President to sue the City for its negligence in the Base Realignment and Reuse process.
With the support of NWBCCC and their local churches, tenants began organizing against their landlords and banks, to address what has been some of the worst housing conditions seen in this neighborhood in a long time. NWBCCC leaders and member organizations built tenant organizations in close to 30 buildings; they forced banks and financial institutions to reduce the debt on their buildings, and worked hand in hand with city officials to create a new city program (the Proactive Preservation Initiative) that works with tenants and the community to address problem buildings before they fall into disrepair. Decent and Affordable housing is at the cornerstone of any stable neighborhood, and Bronx residents have shown that they will do what it takes to preserve theirs.
Community Prayer Walk

Clergy and congregants prayed before distressed apartment buildings, the Kingsbridge Armory and schools in which they organized. The prayer walk built solidarity between the congregations, the building residents and the larger community. As Pastor Joe Hernandez from Fordham Manor Reformed Church stated, “we want the community to know that we are here, not just for their souls, but for their homes too.”

The Milbank Portfolio

The foreclosure crisis hit the Bronx hard. Irresponsible lending and speculation by large financial institutions made it possible for private equity companies and real estate investors to purchase multi-family buildings in the Bronx at a value far exceeding their worth. This was done in the hopes of displacing low-income tenants and making a quick profit. When the market crashed so did the value of their loans. Bronx tenants were left to deal with the consequences. The Milbank portfolio, a portfolio of ten overleveraged buildings in the Bronx is one such example. Tenants had been living for months without heat and hot water, collapsing ceilings, mold infested walls, and non-existent security. They began organizing with NWBCCC creating tenant associations in each of the ten buildings and have since won victories that have shaken up the housing community in New York City.

The Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition held a press conference on January 13 in the gymnasium of Our Lady of Angels Church with Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Speaker Christine Quinn, Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) Commissioner Rafael Cesteros, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., City Councilman Erik Dilan, Assemblyman Vito Lopez, and State Senator Gustavo Rivera to announce the Proactive Preservation Initiative (PPI). This initiative addressed the conditions of deteriorating multifamily buildings, most of which are presently in foreclosure. PPI is a direct result of the tenant organizing of the buildings in the Milbank Portfolio in partnership with affiliated congregation, Our Lady of Angels. At the press conference Board President Desiree Pilgrim-Hunter said, ”We are here today because these Milbank residents organized tenant associations with the Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition and forced everyone to take notice.”

Shortly thereafter, Mayor Bloomberg came to visit the Bronx again. This time, the press conference was held in front of 3018 Heath Avenue, one of the Milbank buildings, to announce that a new owner had agreed to purchase the Milbank buildings. Tenants, working with the city, were able to secure a 10 million dollars reduction in the principal loan amount of the building. This incredible step guaranteed that the new owner would have sufficient capital to make all the necessary repairs in these buildings. Since the new ownership took over, housing violations have been reduced by almost 90% and all the buildings have been removed from the alternative enforcement program, a program designed to target the worst buildings in the city. NWBCCC offers congratulations to the Milbank tenants and member church Our Lady of Angels, on an amazing victory.
Tenants working together through their congregations

This year, NWBCCC, tenants, and our member churches, worked together to hold three separate tenants' rights nights. They were held at St. Nicholas of Tolentine, St. Edmunds Court, and St. Margaret Mary. Working with housing leaders, and with the help of the University Neighborhood Housing Programs Building Indicator Project, we identified 100 of the most at risk housing in the Northwest Bronx area. With the help of interns from Fordham University and Manhattan College, organizers and tenant leaders, door-knocked each of these buildings and asked them to attend one of our 3 tenants' rights night. The buildings that had representation at the event would be able to work with an NWBCCC organizer to help organize their building. If we found the building to be in distress or at the brink, we would refer the building to the newly created Proactive Preservation program.

Each building we worked with has its own story. At 4619 Park Avenue, tenants recently had their landlord removed from their building and Fordham Bedford Housing appointed as their 7a administrator. Their 8 unit buildings averaged close to 35 violations per unit and tenant leaders were physically attacked more than once because of their organizing efforts, making the appointment at 7a a huge relief to the tenants and their families.

At 2490 Davidson Avenue tenants held a press conference with St. Nicholas of Tolentine church and then marched to their landlord's office and refused to leave until they had a meeting with him in their building. Their request was granted and resulted in many repairs, new security cameras, and a settlement with the city in housing court.

At 2910 Valentine Ave, tenants challenged new Major Capital improvements that would increase their rent close to 10 dollars a room per month. They held a meeting with their landlord, and agreed to drop the MCI challenge, in exchange for a new security camera, and a new roof with no MCIs attached. Through organizing they had a say in determining the direction of their building.

These are just a few case studies. In the first year of the Proactive Preservation initiative, there have been 145 referrals from community groups; NWBCCC has been responsible for 65 of these, far more than any other organization in the city. Of those 65, 41 were surveyed by HPD, while 14 were already in the Alternative Enforcement Program, and 7 were already in litigation. Of the 41 surveyed, 17 were accepted into the Proactive Preservation program, 17 were put on a watch list, and 7 were sent immediately to litigation. The total impact of our work this year has yet to be measured, but you can see it in the faces of the Bronx tenants who fought for their dignity, and won. We are continuing to work with the city and Bronx tenants, to ensure a decent, safe, and affordable housing stock in the Bronx.
The Bronx Green Jobs Roundtable promotes a green economy where Bronx residents access careers in energy-efficient construction, green product manufacturing, urban farming and food production, clean waste management, alternative transportation and fuels, and waterfront management. Since its launch in May 2009, the NWBCCC has continued to anchor the monthly roundtable, bringing together local environmental justice groups, work training programs, community organizations and labor & political allies to close the gaps in the existing green workforce development through access to entry level and advanced training programs; support existing and emerging local businesses, union recruitment, and economic and environmental justice campaigns; as well as expand local capacity to address environmental hazards from brownfields to asthma. In 2011, a greater emphasis has been put on working groups, including: cooperatives, workforce development, organizing, youth and food.

The Bronx Green Jobs Academy:

Together with other roundtable members dedicated to youth development, we graduated two more cohorts of Bronx youth, ages 16-22 from the Bronx Green Jobs Academy, now hosted by Bronx Community College’s Collaborative Education Program under advisory by the CUNY Center for Sustainable Energy. The curriculum, ROOTS of Success (rootsofsuccess.org), introduces students to the environmental science and vocabulary within different urban industries such as Energy, Transportation, Waste, Water, Buildings and Food. Students problem-solve solutions to current climate and environmental issues, and develop job-readiness skills such as marketing, sales, public speaking, resume building, excelling at interviews and how to access union training.

The 2011 Academy evolved beyond curriculum to offer hands-on experience in bike repair, canoe safety & tours, waterfront clean-up, CFL installation, fresh juice blending, and compost project design. Students participated in the NYC Gardeners’ Forum, attended a CUNY Grad School panel on climate change, toured a local Biodiesel company, and received a Center for Sustainable Energy solar panel demonstration.
Graduate Successes:

- 3 cohorts, 57 graduates
- One found seasonal work at the Bronx Zoo instead of at a parking lot
- One led bike tours over the summer through Velocity, a bike advocacy non-profit
- 3 gained part-time contracts to perform CFL installation and energy efficiency education for the NWBCCC WAP’s pilot project with CITGO Petroleum.
- 14 became certified green wall & roof installers through Green Living Technologies.
- Interviews with TriState Biodiesel, REI, Naked Pizza, Association for Energy Affordability
- One received a scholarship from NWBCCC to study the math of Solar Photovoltaics at the Center for Sustainable Energy for Elisabeth Ortega’s class

On the Horizon...

- In response to the BCC Earth Day Challenge to create a sustainable food system on campus, the Bronx Green Jobs Academy designed a dual-system compost project for yard and food waste on campus, integrating the school administration, maintenance department, cafeteria vendor, and students. 70% of the materials will be salvaged from the waste stream. Construction & Implementation will be part of the Spring 2012 Academy.
- **Bronx Green Jobs Conference**: building upon the momentum of the Bronx Green Jobs Summit in 2010, this conference will promote green job opportunities for Bronx residents, including Green Jobs Green New York.
- Broker partnerships between local schools and Green Living Technology to use certified Bronx youth to install edible green walls.
- **La Canasta**: Roundtable partner and coalition member Mary Mitchell Center is launching a healthy food buyers Cooperative, which will distribute bulk vegetables and offer opportunities for food preparation and delivery.
- **Research**: Green Job Creation potential within Clean Transportation & Waste Management & the Health Equity Project: Bronx youth are mapping produce availability through surveys of local bodegas, supermarkets, & green carts
Stimulus Successes:

Selected by the Obama Administration as a model program to create green jobs while reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions, WAP funding quadrupled under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. In 18 months, we have weatherized almost 2,000 units; a significant dent in our 3,000+ unit waiting list that existed before ARRA! This enabled us to take on some of the larger high-rises in our neighborhood that would have been impossible to finance within the usual annual WAP budget. These buildings include Keith & Kelly Towers, two of the four River Park Towers on the Hudson River, and also several New Settlement Housing buildings on Walton and Townsend Avenues. WAP investments reduce tenants’ utility bills, improve health and safety conditions, and require landlords to address outstanding violations. By reducing 20-30% of energy consumption, WAP enables landlords to continue to provide affordable housing to low-income Bronx residents, including elders, disabled, single mothers and the formerly homeless, even during these times of heightened economic crisis. Beyond these immediate benefits, during 2011 our WAP program saved the country approximately 50 metric tons of carbon dioxide; a byproduct of burning fossil fuels that contributes to climate change. If the world continues to consume fossil fuels at current rates, millions of people will be put at risk of starvation, drowning, homelessness, disease or death. In the Bronx we know the poor, people of color and immigrants are overly burdened with environmental injustice, and we intend to contribute to local and global solutions.
We hired 12 additional staff, including a youth graduate of Green City Force; and have invested in professional development, now boasting 3 certified Building Analysts, 2 Building Envelope Professionals, 1 Multifamily Building Specialist, 2 Heating Professionals, as well as workers certified in Lead remediation, pest management, ROOTS environmental literacy, Cool roofs and green wall installation. We forged a community partnership with housing and environmental justice organizers Mothers on the Move to qualify multi-family high-rises for the program and offer education in climate change and energy conservation. We participated in the NYS Department of Labor’s Green Jobs research project; and advised NYSERDA on the implementation of Green Jobs Green New York. We partnered with CITGO Petroleum to launch an Energy Efficient Lighting pilot program to distribute 36,000 CFLs to 3,000 low-income Bronx residents. We continued to connect our local work with global initiatives by participating in a research project on Climate Change and Public Health in Cuba.

From Stimulus to Sustainability

The charge to “create green jobs” in the Bronx also moved us to use the resources and experience of our WAP program to strengthen community initiatives for economic and environmental justice and workforce development, as detailed in the “Green Jobs” Section.

As a social justice organization, we know that the issues that created poverty, unemployment and excessive contamination in the Bronx will take more than 18 months to overturn. We have recruited dozens of members and tenants for training opportunities with Laborers Local 10, the South Bronx Overall Economic Development Council, Consortium for Workers Education, Bronx Community College, and our very own Bronx Green Jobs Academy. Yet the majority of these trained workers have not found work, as the economy continues to slow and no local hire ordinance exists.

The current debate on our national budget threatens to drastically reduce or eliminate LIHEAP, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program: a pillar for WAP funding. Downsizing is inevitable, as production will at best drop to pre-stimulus levels, even if WAP’s bipartisan support restores some funding. We are exploring a myriad of options to diversify our funding and maintain this important program, from incorporating a fee-for-service component to learning to access carbon credits in an accountable and empowering way.

On the Horizon:

- Petition New York State Housing and Community Renewal department for remaining ARRA funding to complete two more River Park Towers high-rises, (800+ units)
- Begin work with the Aqueduct Homeowners Association, performing WAP services for qualified homes and negotiating favorable group prices with our contractors for other interested owners.
- Partner with the Department of Health to document WAP’s health benefits and streamline services
- Design a campaign to restore LIHEAP and green jobs funding
- Launch 2 year NYSERDA workforce development grant to ensure Bronx residents are hired to implement Green Jobs Green New York
- Develop a worker-owned cooperative with Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice to train community members in additional green building services including urban landscaping, green and cool roofs, rain capture, and solar energy.
Leadership Institute

Last winter, the Leadership Institute Student Government organized a school-wide Town Hall Assembly — bringing together all students, faculty, and staff to learn about the school’s history of organized youth-lead struggle and to identify key areas in which the school community would like to make improvements. From that Assembly, students and allied teachers secured the administration’s commitment to introduce a Community Action Projects program within their school to equip incoming freshmen with tools to be leaders in their school and community. This fall, the Leadership Institute introduced its Community Action Projects curriculum and trained 25 freshmen. In addition, the school unveiled a computer lab of 25 Mac computers and smartboards in each classroom—all attained through the dedicated organizing efforts of the previous Student Government.

Mary Mitchell Center

For three years, the Mary Mitchell Center (MMC) entered into leases with the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), on behalf of the City, at zero rent. In 2000, DCAS transferred the building to the Board of Education (BOE, now the DOE) against the will of the MMC, assuring MMC that it was a good deal since MMC would not be charged any fees to use the space. DCAS and MMC agreed that MMC would use the building during after school hours up until 9pm and on the weekends from 9am-9pm without any fees or rent. In July 2010, DOE breached this zero rent agreement and started charging the MMC to use the space. Our City Councilman, Majority Leader Joel Rivera and Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. came to their aid and got DOE to wave fees until they got a meeting with then-Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott. We decided that if the City was going to back out of their agreement, then we wanted them to give the Center back to the center. The Center is continuing to look for a way to regain control of the building and at the same time get the DOE to honor their agreement to wave the opening fees for our programs. Thanks to the Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC) the Center met with State Senator Gustavo Rivera, Public Advocate Bill Deblasio, Speaker Quinn’s staff and we were able to engage the City Comptroller John Liu at the NWBCCC October public meeting. Our Social Justice Club for teens has been working on a neighborhood improvement campaign. The Safe and Healthy Neighborhood Campaign was able to provide a week-long training for members from Gang Awareness Training Education. Our Family Health Challenge was promoted by BP Diaz and State Senator Rivera and over 1,000 children participated this semester. Finally, we are looking to start the La Canasta food buying club early next year.

St. Simon Stock

St. Simon Stock is proud to have launched its first Faith in Action Committee. Last summer, the team organized their first event to address citizenship concerns of its primarily Dominican and Mexican congregation. Fifty-five members of their congregation took part. This summer, their committee invited Gamaliel Foundation Director Ana Garcia Ashley to facilitate a leadership training especially for Spanish speakers. They put those tools to work to organize a delegation of 30 congregants to attend the NWBCCC Public Meeting “Our Lives, Our Solutions, Our
Bronx.” The event featured a short documentary film with interviews with two leaders from their parish—Freda Medrano and Rafael Diaz. They plan to coordinate an outreach effort this Christmas during their church’s annual Posada celebrations to identify the key issues that impact the lives of their congregants.

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

During the Spring Term (January 20th to April 10th), 16 undergraduate students engaged in approximately 30 hours of work a week with the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition in partial fulfillment of their course requirements. Course: Works of Mercy, Work for Justice, Course Number THEO 3861

LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN

Five Students collaborated with Armory and Jobs organizer Amanda Altman on the March 10, 2011 Community Brunch sponsored by the Dorothy Day Center for Service and Justice on the Living Wage Issue for students, faculty, and staff, held from 1:00 to 2:30.

Presentations were made by Fordham staff and students including Dr. Brad Hinze, Professor of Theology; two of the five students gave presentations on the significance of the Living Wage Bill. April 4, 2011, Rally for a Living Wage was held at the Bronx Pentecostal Deliverance Center. The five students promoted this event among students in class and campus wide.

HOUSING COMMITTEE

Four students supported Housing Organizer Patricia Torres by going door-to-door to invite people to attend tenant meetings, help plan local community events around housing, and participate in the planning of and execution of public action demonstrations against landlords when necessary.

SISTAS AND BROTHAS UNITED (SBU) LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Four students worked with Director Maria Fernandez to reach out to high school students to engage them in educational justice campaigns, work with the Student Support Program to design college access workshops for students, and assist with coordinating a public meeting on our issues.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Three students worked with Education organizer Allison Manuel to conduct parent outreach at local elementary and middle schools, help coordinate large public meetings and press events and facilitate trainings/workshops to parents.
Safety and Dignity in Schools

Restorative Justice: In 2010, SBU began working with the Morris Educational Campus to develop a restorative justice program to be implemented in the spring semester of the 2010-2011 academic year. Staff and students at Morris had noticed a pattern of conflict both within individual schools and between students of the different schools sharing the building. Increased tension at the metal detectors each morning were making matters worse. Morris is currently a highly policed school campus with metal detectors and with an average of 12 School Safety Agents in the building each day. Nonetheless, the school suffered 200 suspensions last year (some of which included police involvement), the vast majority of which were 1-5 day suspensions, either in school or at home. Because the Department Of Education’s methods of violence prevention have proven to be counter productive, 60 students and 45 teachers from the various campus schools in the building have been trained on restorative justice practices and peer mediation. By September 2011, all four schools on the campus had implemented peer-to-peer mediations and conflict resolution programs. SBU also launched the Morris Student Leadership Council, which engages 20-25 students from the various schools in work to build school unity and safety on campus.
Student Safety Act:
After 3 ½ years of youth organizing efforts, the Student Safety Act was signed into law on January 6th, 2011. The Student Safety Act mandates the NYC Department of Education and the NYC Policy Department release bi-annual data regarding the number of suspensions, expulsions and arrests based on age, race, class, and gender in NYC public schools. The first wave of data was reported by the DOE and the NYPD this past fall and proved what students have been saying for years: Black students made up 52% of the total suspensions even though they make up only 33% of the student population. Students with special needs were hit with 31% of total suspensions. Nearly half of the students arrested inside New York City schools from September to July were under the age of 16. Through the Dignity in Schools Campaign (New York), SBU youth leaders testified in front of the Department of Education and the NY City Council to ensure that the DOE act immediately to end the disproportionate use of suspensions on certain groups, reduce suspensions by 50% by September 2013 and eliminate suspensions of more than 10 days by requiring positive interventions before hand. SBU leaders participated in the DSC-NY National Week of Action Against Student Pushout, and have been meeting with the DOE’s Office of School & Youth Development to work on changes to the school disciplinary code.

School Closures

Save Our Schools!: To promote the belief that underperforming schools need investment and not just closure, we helped organize “Fix Our Schools, Don’t Just Close Them” in January 2011. The civil disobedience action was held one day before a Panel for Education Policy vote on the DOE’s list of schools to be closed. Members of Sistas & Brothas United, along with members of the Urban Youth Collaborative (UYC) and the Coalition for Educational Justice (CEJ) organized a rally and press conference leading up to the civil disobedience in front of Tweed Courthouse in Manhattan. Over 300 students, parents, city council members and advocates for education reform attended the action. After the press conference, 23 people including city council members Jumaane Williams and Charles Barron, SBU Director Maria C. Fernandez and members Rafael Pena, Juan Antigua, Miguel Rodriguez and Tyrek Greene, linked arms and blocked traffic in front of Tweed Courthouse and were arrested. On February 3rd, 1,500 students, parents and teachers (including 100 SBU members) staged a walkout and shut down the Panel for Educational meeting for 45 minutes when they voted to proceed with all school closures.
At the end of 2010, Samuel Gompers Career & Technical High School was announced to be slated for closure in 2012. Outraged, students began organizing to implement a community-led school improvement plan. In 2011, Gompers students organized and met with elected officials like Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. and Councilwoman Maria del Carmen Arroyo, as well as Chancellor Dennis Walcott and Deputy Chancellor for Portfolio, Mark Sternberg to demand that the DOE invest resources into Gompers instead of closing the school. Students held rallies in front of Gompers HS, marched in solidarity with Banana Kelly High School and participated in city-wide actions against school closings. Most recently Joseph Duarte, 15, spoke in front of 650 students and community leaders at the NWBCCC Public Meeting, demanding an end to Mayor Bloomberg’s school closings policies. In February 2012, the Panel for Educational Policy (PEP) will vote on the fate of Samuel Gompers High School.

**Going Green**

The student-gardeners took several trips to learn about urban agriculture work in New York City. In April, students visited New York Botanical Garden in April, where they learned about local growing and participated in a composting workshop. In July, students met with Karen Washington and learned about the history of the community garden movement in the Bronx. Students have also worked with Taqwa Community Garden and Morning Glory Garden, where they have also volunteered their time in the
gardens, at their farmers’ markets, and organizing community events. In August, 6 student-gardeners participated in a two-week service learning trip to Louisiana. Students spent their first week at Our School at Blair Grocery in the Lower 9th Ward of New Orleans and their second week at Our Light Organic Farm and Healing Center in Hammond, LA. There, the student-gardeners performed their regular farming duties (composting, pulling weeds, seeding sprouts, watering, feeding animals) and did comparative analysis between access to healthy food and environment in New Orleans and in New York. Moving forward, SBU student-gardeners are planning to expand their gardening work – at Roosevelt Educational Campus, Samuel Gompers High School and Morning Glory – and to develop a food and health curriculum for an elective course that they would teach in their own schools. Students are currently working on a Food Justice 10-Point Platform that will guide the long-term food and community health organizing work for SBU student-gardeners.

**Organizing Activities for 2012:**

- Continue to develop the Morris Student Leadership Council at the Morris Educational Campus as a pilot Restorative Program to be replicated city-wide.
- Through the Dignity in School Campaign-NY, continue to push for an end to zero-tolerance practices that push low income students of color, students with special needs, and immigrant students out of schools and into low-wage jobs and prison.
- Continue our local school organizing work in 5 school campuses, specifically working with University Heights High School students to create a student government focused on accountability and ensuring that student’s rights aren’t being violated.
- Develop a comprehensive 10 Point Food Justice Platform that links our youth leaders to urban agriculture and green jobs.
- Launch our citywide “Get Us 2 College” Campaign to ensure that all students graduate college and career ready
JOBS and DEVELOPMENT

“Development of the armory is not just about developing a building. It is about developing people in our community.” - Sandra Leon, Kingsbridge Armory Redevelopment Alliance member

The Bronx has been the most negatively affected borough in the city by the economic downturn of 2007. 12.7% of Bronxites are unemployed, compared with a citywide unemployment rate of 8%. Now more than ever, our tax dollars need to be used to create good jobs in our borough and a pathway for community residents to access those jobs. Instead, government subsidies are being used to keep Bronxites in poverty. The city gave Gateway mall $133.9 million dollars in government subsidies. Now, workers are starting at wages of 8.80 dollars an hour. Meanwhile, median CEO compensation in the US went up by 27% in 2010.

Sandra Leon is a KARA member and one of the millions of unemployed or underemployed nationwide. “9 out of the 10 job listings I receive a week, say that you must be currently employed or recently employed to apply. If you need a job to get a job, where does that leave people like me? If the Mayor took our needs seriously and started redeveloping our Armory with the community, perhaps I’d be working there today.”
KARA is fighting for a redevelopment of the Kingsbridge Armory that is driven by the needs of community residents like Sandra. In 2011, KARA created and presented to the Borough President’s task force our blueprint for how to develop the armory into a multi-use facility, financed through a public-private partnership, and managed by an LDC. KARA presented a mix of uses that would generate hundreds of living wage jobs and include community college space, a youth and senior center, an international food market, affordable athletic and recreational space, and a multi-plex. In the next year, KARA will develop partnerships with community serving institutions who are interested in renting space at the armory to refine our vision for the space and create political will to find a new developer. We will also be vigilant on reviewing the mayor’s new RFP to be released to be sure that it reflects our community benefits principles.

In 2011, KARA worked as part of the Living Wage Coalition to advance our fight for the Fair Wages for New Yorkers Act. The Act will ensure our community makes $10 per hour with benefits, or $11.50 per hour without benefits at malls, stadiums and development projects built with our tax dollars. In 2011, our campaign brought together 400 people in April at the Bronx Pentecostal Deliverance Center and 3000 people in November at Riverside Church to call for a vote on the bill. Because of the strength of our organizing, 29 council members signed onto support the bill, and we had two hearings on the bill in the city council, the second of which was attended by Christine Quinn. In the next year, we expect to build enough pressure citywide to pass the Fair Wages for New Yorkers Act in the city council.

Sandra Leon has worked long hours to put together a model of redevelopment for the Kingsbridge armory. She closed her speech at our 2011 public meeting saying, “I am struggling to make ends meet, I am struggling to find work and most importantly I’m struggling improve the lives of Bronxities who are struggling just like me.”
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THANK YOU FOR BEING WARRIORS FOR JUSTICE & FAITH!!

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