

editor's letter

WHEN I MOVED to upstate New York 13 years ago, I was struck by the beauty of the landscape. I was 17 at the time, and the first thing I noticed was how accessible nature is here. Moving from Baltimore — where I was a bit removed from nature — I was surprised and excited to see rivers, lakes and hills. I rarely saw rivers in Baltimore. The inner harbor and much of the Chesapeake Bay was lined with industry, making it ugly and inaccessible. Here though, trees, parks, and plenty of lakes, rivers and streams surround us. Coupled with landmarks like the Erie Canal, this region is rich with history.

As our region sheds its rustbelt status, we begin the search for innovative ideas to propel us well into the 21st century. This magazine is one of those ideas. As an extension of my passion for environmental journalism, this magazine reflects the work of 28 dedicated twentysomethings who wanted to tell the story of this region, its natural and human communities, and what we can do to protect them.

Welcome to the premiere issue of *Envi*, the first magazine focused on the environment and communities of New York's central region. Within these pages you'll find a collection of articles that reflects the mission of this magazine: to explore our history, communities, and environment. We begin with the serious — a feature ("Drinking Well" p. 60) that explores the state of our area's water supplies through the window of well usage and what the usage suggests about our water culture and its future. For lighter fare (literally), consider "Eat, Drink, Be Local" (p. 70), a story about the growing trend to consume foods produced locally. From organic wine to community-supported agriculture and locally baked



bread and desserts, our region sees buying local as a direct investment in our community.

We also profile Brad Powless, a teacher at the Onondaga Nation School (p. 66), and present a photo essay about a Liverpool man who has spent much of his life collecting junk and making it into a unique habitat for birds and other wildlife (p. 76).

Finally, we explore Greensprings Natural Cemetery just south of Ithaca (p. 26), one of six natural cemeteries in the nation. We give you a heads-up on some new environmental legislation (p. 34), some cool ways to dress green (p. 22), and a tour of the greenest house in New York, which is one of four houses in the country to receive LEED's gold rating.

We hope you find this interesting and engaging, fun and educational. It's about you, about us, our communities, and our environment. We have so much to write about, and so much for you to read. But above all, there is so much here to do, so much to be a part of. Join us. Let's save the region. One issue at a time.

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ROB ALEXANDER

ALL THINGS BEING EQUAL, THEY ARE NOT.

AS FIRST WORLD CONSUMERS, WE HAVE TREMENDOUS POWER. WHAT WE COLLECTIVELY CHOOSE TO BUY, OR NOT TO BUY, CAN CHANGE THE COURSE OF LIFE AND HISTORY ON THIS PLANET.

(RED) IS THAT SIMPLE AN IDEA. AND THAT POWERFUL. NOW, YOU HAVE A CHOICE. THERE ARE (RED) PHONES, (RED) SHOES, (RED) FASHION BRANDS. AND NO, THIS DOES NOT MEAN THEY ARE ALL RED IN COLOR, ALTHOUGH SOME ARE.

THE (RED)™ MANIFESTO

IF YOU BUY A (RED) PRODUCT OR SIGN UP FOR A (RED) SERVICE, AT NO COST TO YOU, A (RED) COMPANY WILL GIVE SOME OF ITS PROFITS TO BUY AND DISTRIBUTE ANTIRETROVIRAL MEDICINE TO OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS DYING OF AIDS IN AFRICA.

WE BELIEVE THAT WHEN CONSUMERS ARE OFFERED THIS CHOICE, AND THE PRODUCTS MEET THEIR NEEDS, THEY WILL CHOOSE (RED). AND WHEN THEY CHOOSE (RED) OVER NON-(RED), THEN MORE BRANDS WILL CHOOSE TO BECOME (RED) BECAUSE IT WILL MAKE GOOD BUSINESS SENSE TO DO SO. AND MORE LIVES WILL BE SAVED.

(RED) IS NOT A CHARITY. IT IS SIMPLY A BUSINESS MODEL. YOU BUY (RED) STUFF, WE GET THE MONEY, BUY THE PILLS AND DISTRIBUTE THEM. THEY TAKE THE PILLS, STAY ALIVE, AND CONTINUE TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR FAMILIES AND CONTRIBUTE SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

IF THEY DON'T GET THE PILLS, THEY DIE. WE DON'T WANT THEM TO DIE. WE WANT TO GIVE THEM THE PILLS. AND WE CAN. AND YOU CAN. AND IT'S EASY.

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS UPGRADE YOUR CHOICE.