

Celebrate Earth Day!

# Western Edition HP JOURNAL

April 2014

Bridging San Francisco communities through nonprofit services

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## DOD uses physical activity to help control diabetes



Everyone has a place on the dance floor during a dance session. Photo courtesy of Dance Out Diabetes.

By Lindsay Adams

As an advanced practice registered nurse and a nationally known certified diabetes educator, Theresa Garnero used to struggle to get out of the door in time for work in the morning because she was so busy dancing to music on her iPod shuffle. Garnero had received the device at an American Association of Diabetes Educators conference,

the same conference that given her the 2004–2005 Diabetes Educator of the Year Award.

In 2006, those mornings of dance suddenly became an inspiration to Garnero, who has over 25 years of nursing experience with diabetics.

“I realized there was something missing in the field of diabetes education,” she recalled. “There were

really no venues that were diabetes-friendly.”

A former figure-skating champion and current lover of dance, Garnero explained that she realized dance could be used as a fun way to promote health and diabetes awareness in the community — and also provide a physical activity that

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## City housing from the perspective of SF renters



Executive Director Sara Shortt, HRCSF. Photo by Breana Rae Flores.



Daniel Everett, [www.folklawradio.com](http://www.folklawradio.com). Photo via Daniel Everett law office.



Peter Cohen, CCHO co-director. Photo by Leland Fox.

By Julie McCoy

Daniel Everett believes the current housing situation in San Francisco is “an affront to decency.”

An attorney who represents clients throughout the Bay Area in a variety of criminal defense matters, Everett sees first-hand how a disproportionate amount of minorities — especially African Americans — are being evicted from their homes.

African Americans represent 6 percent of San Francisco’s population, yet are 29 percent of the Eviction Defense Collaborative’s clients, Everett pointed out.

By comparison, Latinos represent 15 percent of San Francisco’s population and 17 percent of the EDC’s clients; Asians represent 34 percent of San Francisco’s population and 10 percent of the EDC’s clients; and Caucasians represent 42 percent of San Francisco’s population and 30 percent of the EDC’s clients.

“The African American population has certainly been bearing the brunt of the housing crisis,” Everett noted. “No other racial or ethnic group is so overly represented.” He added, “This has echoes of stealing

Indian land in the misguided quest for expansion and ‘progress.’ In today’s terms, it is San Francisco’s African American population that is being stepped over in the pursuit of ‘progress.’”

What is happening to African Americans and other minorities who are losing their homes and being pushed out of San Francisco? They moving in with friends and relatives, or moving to the East Bay, where housing is more affordable, according to Everett.

Everett pointed out that the *continued on page 11*

## Perspectives

# Supervisor Campos pushes for immediate changes to Ellis Act law



District 9 Supervisor David Campos advocates working with technology companies to help find solution to city housing problems, along with Ellis Act changes. Photo by Leland Fox.

By Thomas Figg-Hoblyn

A tattooed man with long grayish hair and a big smile sat quietly next to me outside the office of Supervisor David Campos, as I waited to interview Campos. The man looked like he had something important on his mind. He asked, “Do you mind if I get 30 seconds with the supervisor before you go in?” “No problem,” I replied.

“I thought I would take a chance and just come down here,” the gentleman said.

Apparently he had just dropped in on Campos, hoping to get some help with a problem that seemed to weigh heavily on his mind—judging from the pre-occupation showing in his eyes.

Campos stepped out of his office exactly at 1 p.m. — our appointed time — and invited the man into his office after checking with me. A few minutes went by.

That gentleman then popped out of Campos’ office with a huge smile on his face, apparently very relieved. He shook my hand before heading out the door. He looked like he had gotten what he needed.

Campos then invited me into his expansive office and thanked me for allowing him to shave off some time for the stranger. I never asked about what they discussed, as that did not seem to be my business. But I was really impressed with the genuine kindness and concern exhibited by Campos toward the stranger.

We spent a few moments making small talk and getting to know each other, while I confirmed what I already knew about him. Campos came to America from Guatemala with his family when he was a young boy. He graduated from high school

in Southern California at the top of his class and then went on to graduate from Stanford University and then from Harvard Law School.

Campos entered the public service sector in 1999 as a deputy city attorney. He was elected Supervisor of District 9 — the Mission, Bernal Heights, and Portola — in 2008. He lives with his partner Phil Hwang. They were married in early 2014.

After the introductory formalities, Campos was asked a series of questions about the state of things in San Francisco, which were recorded for more accurate recounting.

Q: “What drew you into politics?”

A: “I think my background as an immigrant is the reason I am in public service. I feel that I have been extremely lucky to receive the opportunities that I have received from this country. And when you have so much that has been given to you then you have an obligation to give back. This is my way of giving back — by being in public service.”

Q: “What needs to be done about San Francisco housing?”

A: “I am glad that we are recognizing that there is a crisis — before you can deal with a crisis you have to acknowledge that it is a crisis. We need to make sure we focus on the building of affordable housing. I think that when you lack affordable housing, then the solution should be to build more affordable housing. Most San Franciscans are not able to afford luxury condos that cost several million dollars. On the short term, we

need to do whatever we can to help people who are facing eviction stay in San Francisco, and we have number of strategies to help do that.”

Q: “What is the city doing about protecting renters?”

A: “We have a two-prong strategy — on one hand, we have to amend the state law [Ellis Act], and the second strategy is that we need to work on the local level and take immediate action on the local level so people are not pushed out of the city, as it will take time to amend state law.

We have a number of proposals introduced — including legislation that we passed which is now law — that tries to prevent tenant harassment by some landlords. We provided a cause of action which the tenant can bring to the rent board to provide added protection to tenants. The second piece that we are working on is a proposal to increase relocation costs in the event of Ellis Act evictions so that evicted renters receive the difference between what they are paying and what the fair market value of a similar unit would be in San Francisco — and they would receive that money for two years.”

Q: “Do you have any plans in progress or concepts of how to implement affordable housing?”

A: “Yes, one of the things that the city has to do a better job of is identifying government properties that can be used to build affordable housing on. There are examples. There is a vacant lot on Mission and 16th Streets that belongs to the San Francisco Unified School District that could be used to build affordable housing, and I think there are many properties like that owned by the city, the school district, or City College that we should be looking at to develop affordable housing on. We should also find funding that was funded by proposition C that provides some money for the city to build affordable housing, and we should leverage that money with money from the State and Federal Government.”

Q: “How long have you lived in the city?”

A: “Since 1997.”

Q: “Is the ‘Tech Boom’ a big cause of the housing crisis?”

A: “It is a factor, but I don’t believe in pointing a finger or vilifying the tech companies — but I do think it is important to recognize that they are having an impact on the cost of housing. What I am trying to do is develop a dialogue with these companies and their workers, because they are part of the community and we want to integrate them into this community, and we want them to be a part of the solution. They also donate a lot of money. We are asking them to help us push for affordable housing, and push for changes in state laws like the Ellis Act, and local laws designed to protect tenants. We want tech companies to be part of the solution. And at the same time we want them to pay their fair share to the communities that they come into.”

Q: “There are grumblings that the city is changing toward the right? Do you have any insight on that?”

A: There is a question mark about how much San Francisco has changed. I still think that San Francisco remains a progressive city, and that there are still many of us who believe that his is a city that should continue to allow low-income and middle-income people to stay here. I feel people like me are advocating that regular people are able to live here. You shouldn’t have to be a multimillionaire to live in San Francisco. What we are seeing with the affordability crisis is a shift. People are saying — and not just low-income — but also middle-income people are saying that maybe the pendulum has swung too far the other way, where we focus so much on the creation of wealth and the building of luxury housing — and that the city needs to pay more attention to the middle class, lower income, and working class people — and that’s what I am trying to do.”

Q: “What’s your favorite aspect of San Francisco?”

A: “It’s diversity. I think San Francisco’s biggest asset is the people. That’s why I feel this crisis on affordable housing is so important, because it has the potential to make the city less diverse.”

## SF News Briefs

By Sam Felsing

### Caesar Chavez Day

The annual San Francisco Cesar Chavez Holiday Parade & Festival will happen this year on April 12. The parade will assemble at 11 a.m. at Dolores Park at 19th and Guerrero Streets. At 12 p.m., Chavez celebrators will make their way to the area between Treat Street and Bryant Street, where the festival will take place. The festival will include a number of musical and entertainment-related performances, as well as Arts & Crafts Booths.



Noted in a UC Davis report: Migrant workers are used to produce up to 96 percent of agricultural crops in California; [https://migration.ucdavis.edu/cf/more.php?id=174\\_0\\_2\\_0](https://migration.ucdavis.edu/cf/more.php?id=174_0_2_0). Photo via Google Images.

Cesar Chavez lived from 1927–1993. In 1962, with Dolores Huerta, he founded the National Farm Workers Association, which later became the United Farm Workers union. As the head of the organization, Chavez organized several strikes and advocated for better pay and working conditions for farm workers. He was known for his nonviolent methods, which included fasting.

To learn more about the parade, readers are directed to: <http://www.cesarchavezday.org/>. To learn more about Cesar Chavez, readers are directed to the website, [http://www.ufw.org/\\_page.php?menu=research&inc=history/07.html](http://www.ufw.org/_page.php?menu=research&inc=history/07.html). More information can also be obtained by calling 415.621.2665.

### Earth Day

It is once again time to celebrate the Earth. Well, officially. The 2014 Earth Day Festival SF celebration will take place at the Civic Center/UN Plaza on April 19.



Approximately 10,000 people attend the San Francisco event each year. The 2014 attendees will be able to visit a holistic health zone, an eco-village, and a bike build. Visitors will be able to participate in an organic food demo, a green film festival, and an eco-fashion show. They will be able to listen to speeches by Atossa Soltani, director of Amazon Watch; Sarah Hodgdon, the conservation director of the Sierra Club; and Osprey Orielle Lake, founder and president of the Women's Earth and Climate Caucus, among others. It will be

a packed day, with many more activities and events planned.

Former Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson came up with the idea for Earth Day in 1969. On his way home from touring a large oil spill in Santa Barbara, CA, Nelson was reading an article about the teach-ins happening at college campuses across the country. The teach-ins were primarily focused on educating the public about the Vietnam War. With the oil spill on his mind, Nelson thought that teach-ins would be an excellent way to spread information about the environment. He soon proposed a national day to celebrate the Earth — where students, workers and others across the United States could participate in teach-ins about the environment. Though he created an office to coordinate Earth Day queries, and helped pick the date for the celebration, he let people across the nation determine their own paths for celebrating. An estimated 20 Million people participated in the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970.

To learn more about this SF event, go to <http://earthdaysf.org/>.

### 311 for Shelter

In San Francisco, homeless people have often had to wait in long lines to reserve spaces in shelters. Now they can reserve space by dialing 311 — the city government's informational hotline.

For 24 hours a day, seven days a week, homeless men and women can dial 311 and reserve

space in the city's shelters. When a spot is open, 311 system managers can text or call people to let them know.

Approximately 700 homeless people die of hypothermia in the United States each year, according to the National Coalition for the Homeless. From Nov. 28 to Dec. 18, seven Bay Area homeless men passed away from cold-related afflictions. The new 311 program is an opportunity for San Francisco to stop these deaths from occurring, because it makes it easier for the City to get people off the street.

### For the Unemployed

In early 2014, more than 300 U.S. companies signed a pledge spearheaded by President Obama not to discriminate against the long-term unemployed. Workers who have long been absent from the job market often have difficulty returning to it because of employer bias. Some supervisors believe that the workers' absence make them hard to retrain and hard to re-assimilate into the workforce.

San Francisco's long-term unemployed may get some relief. The City recently launched its new Platform to Employment — P2E — pilot program. The program provides the long-term unemployed a way to get their confidence and skills up-to-date, while also providing them with financial assistance.

People who take part in the P2E program will participate in five weeks of job readiness workshops, will receive job counseling, and will partake in financial and behavioral counseling. After the training, the long-term unemployed will be matched with local companies for eight weeks of job experience. During the eight weeks, the P2E program will pay the salaries for these long-term unemployed workers. At the end of the on-job-experience, the employers will decide whether to hire the workers or not.

The P2E program is not native to San Francisco. It already has been tested in eight other cities so far, including San Diego and Detroit. If the San Francisco pilot works out, it will become a permanent part of the city's Office of Economic and Workforce Development.

The San Francisco P2E is a partnership between the City and County of San Francisco, Jewish Vocational Services — JVS, The WorkPlace, Consumer Credit Counseling Service of San Francisco, Family Services Agency of San Francisco, and the California Employment Development Department. Citi Community Development, the Walmart Foundation and the AARP Foundation help fund the program.

More information about San Francisco's P2E can be found here: <http://www.workforcedevelopmentsf.org/>.

### Ellis Act Map

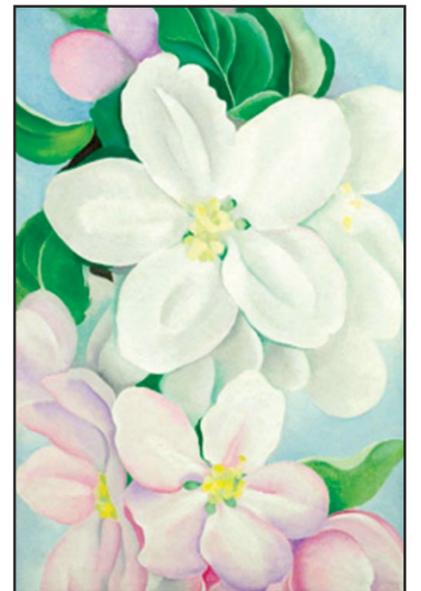
One of the hot topics in San Francisco right now is the Ellis Act. The act — which allows landlords to evict renters if they plan to take their properties off the rental market — is in frequent use these days. Many landlords are using it to take advantage of the high housing prices created by the Tech 2.0 boom. They evict tenants, and then sell the tenants' former apartments at high prices. Now there is a way for residents to better understand how the Ellis Act impacts them.

The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project chronicles the use the Ellis Act from 1997 to 2014. Its website lets users see where all the Ellis Act evictions have happened in the last 17 years. It also shows where there have been "No-Fault Evictions," and where the Ellis Act has been used against seniors and people with disabilities. The site also spotlights the serial evictors in the city.

Readers are directed to <http://antievictionmap.squarespace.com/#/ellis/> to learn more about Ellis Act evictions.

### Georgia O'Keeffe

April will be the last full month to see the de Young museum's "Modern Nature: Georgia O'Keeffe and Lake George" exhibit. For 16 years, O'Keeffe would spend parts of her year on the estate of Alfred Stieglitz, located on Lake George in New York State. The retreat inspired much of her work during that period.



Georgia O'Keeffe painting in April de Young exhibit. Photo via Google Images.

The de Young exhibit is the first major examination of O'Keeffe's lake-related work. It began on Feb. 15 and runs until May 11. To find out more about the exhibit, go to: <http://deyoung.famsf.org/press-room/modern-nature-georgia-o-keeffe-and-lake-george>.

## The Great California Drought

By Frank Vaughn

“I can sign a piece of paper, but I can’t make it rain.”

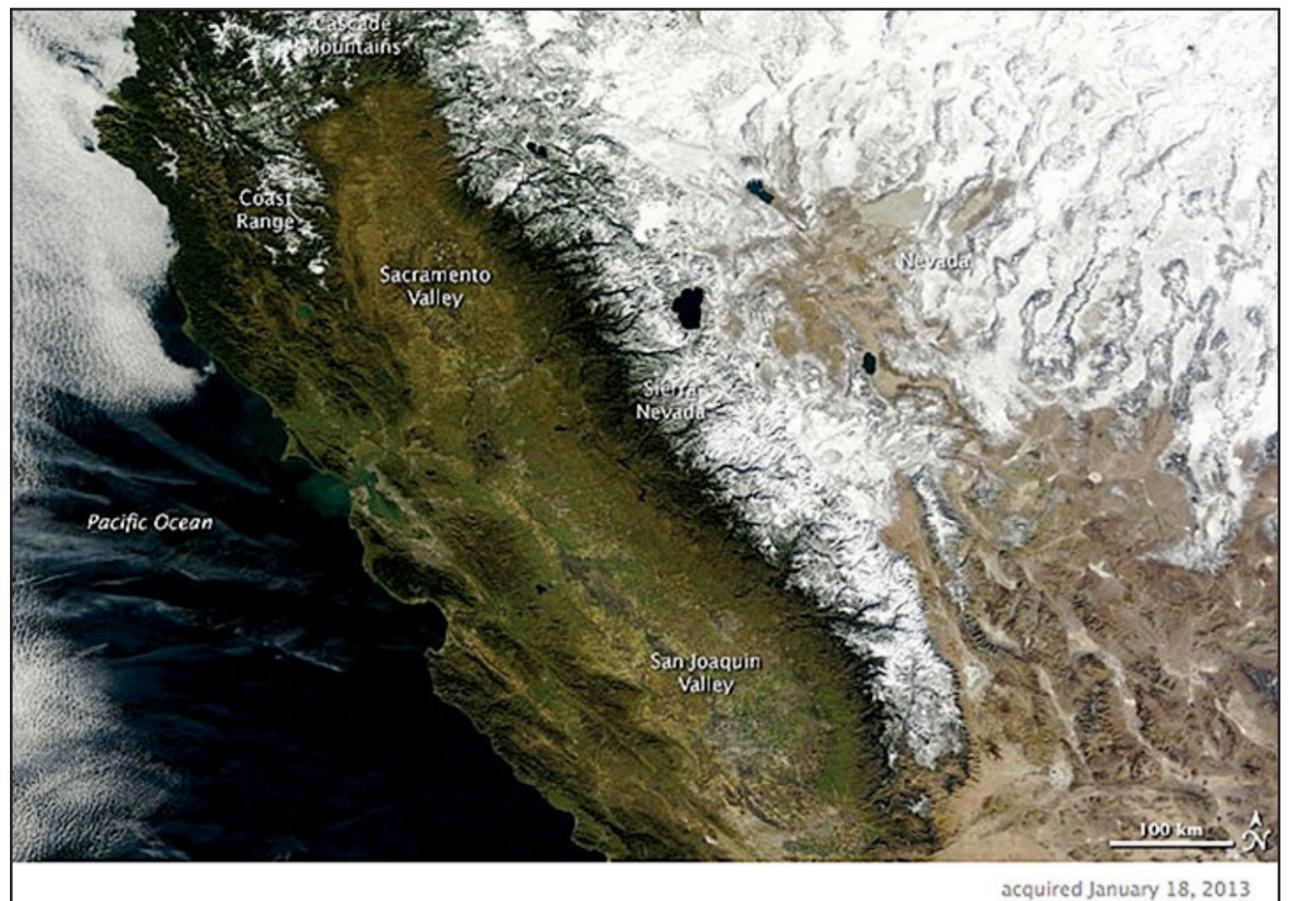
—Gov. Edmund G. Brown, Jr.

California is now in its third year of one of the worst droughts in recorded history — 2013 was the driest year on record for many parts of the state, and 2014 promises to be even more parched. The unprecedented water shortage caused Gov. Brown to declare a state of emergency on Jan. 14 and to form a Drought Task Force with a charter to review water allocations and address the problem of water scarcity throughout the state. Californians in turn are being asked to voluntarily cut back on water use wherever possible, while state government agencies examine ways to move water to parts of the state where it is needed most.

Farms, ranches and dairies are being severely impacted. Half of the nation’s fruit and vegetable crop comes from California — and not surprisingly, agriculture accounts for 80 percent of all water consumed in the state. Delta farmers expecting to receive their normal allocation of water in 2014 were hit particularly hard. The Central Valley Project announced in February that agricultural users both north and south of the Delta will receive zero water allocation this year, a first for the CVP. Two NASA satellite studies of California snowpack and groundwater tables reveal the severity of the drought and why such drastic measures are required to mitigate the crisis.

NASA photos show the Sierra snowpack as viewed from space in Jan. 2013 and in Jan. 2014. The photos are self-explanatory. At the 6000-foot level and above, where the snowpack should be more than three feet deep, one now sees bare ground and pine cones. With many reservoirs around the state below 50 percent of average capacity, this means there will be little chance of replenishment with spring runoff. To exacerbate matters, if April is warm and dry, the snow will simply “sublimate,” meaning it will evaporate into the sky and blow east with the wind, leaving barely a trickle flowing into depleted reservoirs.

Other photos illustrate a dramatic impact upon California reservoirs and groundwater tables. The photo on the left shows Folsom Lake in July 2011. The photo on the right shows the lake from the same vantage point in Jan. 2014, with the lake at 17 percent of capacity. Recent rains and snowmelt have brought Folsom Lake up to 41 percent capacity, but this is still well below average. A 10-year study by a team of scientists at the UC Center for Hydrologic Modeling at UC



Photos via NASA’s Earth Observing System Data and Information System (EOSDIS), *California-Drought\_NASA\_EOSDIS\_MODIS\_RRT.jpg*.

Irvine utilized data from NASA’s Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment — GRACE — satellite to study groundwater depletion. The data show that between 2003 and 2010 more than 30 cubic kilometers [7.2 cubic miles] of fresh water disappeared from the Sacramento and San Joaquin river basins, equivalent to the full volume of Lake Mead, and more than 20 cubic kilometers [4.8 cubic miles] of this was groundwater loss. Even though 2011 was a wet year and replenished groundwater tables back to their 2006 level, 2012 and 2013 were again dry — and in these two years alone, another 20 cubic kilometers of freshwater disappeared from these two basins, the largest drop since GRACE began monitoring California watershed

data. The result is lower highs and lower lows in CA aquifers — the wet years simply do not replenish the depletion caused during the dry years.

While its reservoirs are well below capacity, the San Francisco Bay Area is nevertheless much better off than other parts of the state. The Bay Area has 17 reservoirs with a total capacity of 688,000 acre-feet [AF] of water, and a historical average of 505,000 AF. According to a California Department of Water Resources — DWR — report generated Mar 12, Bay Area reservoirs are at 394,000 AF, or about 80 percent of capacity. This is well above other California regions such as the Central Coast, which is at 31 percent of its histori-

cal average, or only 21 percent of capacity. The DWR reports similar dismal reservoir levels throughout the state, although some relief did come from the March rains.

Water rights and water allocation has always been contentious in California, and in the early 20th century even devolved into violent “water wars” — as dramatized in the quasi-historical movie *Chinatown*. This is due in no small part to the unequal distribution of population throughout the state combined with a widely varying climate. Specifically, whereas much of the precipitation falls in the wetter northern part of the state, much of the water is consumed in the

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## Nonprofit News

# City support helps fund CHALK programs for employing SF youths



[Above]: Mayor Lee with young CHALK volunteer Irlanzhuan Martin; [Below]: Ruth Barajas-Cardona, director of San Francisco Youth Development and Employment Programs, [www.BACR.org](http://www.BACR.org). Photos courtesy of CHALK.

By Julie McCoy

The San Francisco-based organization, Communities in Harmony Advocating for Learning and Kids — CHALK — was founded in March 1996 by David Glickman and Jason Singer.

CHALK transforms and enriches the lives of disconnected and at-risk youth by providing them with a sense of identity and purpose and helping them to gain skills and be productive.

CHALK, located at 965 Mission St. Suite 520, provides these youths — who are between the ages of 14 and 24 — with an opportunity to be community organizers, grantmakers, outreach workers, after-school outreach program leaders, media producers and counselors.

“Having a job where you are of service to others changes how they see themselves and how the community sees them as well,” said Director Ruth Barajas-Cardona of San Francisco Youth Development and Employment Programs for CHALK.

CHALK also provides these youths with academic support; for example, it assists them in preparing for college.

“What we are doing is providing young people with a wraparound approach in that you get as much of the things you need as possible from here all in one place,” said Barajas-Cardona. “That’s definitely our approach, is this wraparound model, with an individual approach as well.”

Anthony Patchell, 19, first came to CHALK last fall. He said the organization helped him look forward to the future and use the past as something to learn from.

“Since my first trip to juvenile hall up until October 2013, I had been in and out of YGC [Youth Guidance Center], group homes and placements,” Patchell stated. “I was shot at the age of 16 and came an inch away from death. I was so intertwined with the streets that my parents were constantly telling me how afraid they were that one of these days they were going to lose me. CHALK has played a big part in giving me the hope and positive support that I need as an individual to be successful in the world and environment that I live in.”

Patchell added, “All my life I have looked at my past as something that will hold me back, and I had let it affect me deeper than I probably should have. But at CHALK one of the core values is focused around youth using their past experiences — negative or bad — to help make tomorrow a better place.

“After spending more and more time in the positive environment created by my CHALK family, I have come to accept my part in making tomorrow a better place. CHALK has helped me in my short time working here to believe in myself and live up to my full potential. I have also learned how to look at my past as a blessing instead of a curse. Now I feel like I went through all that for a reason that I wasn’t even fully aware of at the time and that was to help better tomorrow and lead the next generation.”

Patchell emphasized that it is good being with other people who have been through or are going through what he has been through. He has been working as a community organizer with CHALK and has assisted with

two campaigns — the first being justice rights for young people, and the second being rights for undocumented youths.

According to Barajas-Cardona, CHALK served approximately 90 youths during the 2013–2014 fiscal year. She said that the selection process is highly competitive, and there are several hundred applicants a year.

“There are two recruiting cycles per year, Barajas-Cardona explained. “We recruit for our year-round cycle in May. We get hundreds of applicants, and we interview all of them. The youth who are selected start training in July. The other cycle we call a half-year cycle, since it’s a six-month time frame. It starts in November.”

CHALK has a budget of just under \$800,000 for this fiscal year. About 90 percent of CHALK’s funding comes from the Department of Children, Youth and Their Families — DCYF — while the remaining 10 percent comes from private foundations.

“DCYF funds two CHALK programs currently, both of which provide youth workforce development services,” commented Aumijo Gomez, program officer. “The programs we fund are called Youthline and ReSET. The reason that we fund this organization is because they provide very good workforce opportunities to youth in San Francisco. The agency has been around for awhile and has become a leader in implementing programs that are essentially youth run. By that I mean that participants implement many of the components of their programs and have real decision-making power.”

Gomez added, “The programs have different levels that participants can progress through as they gain skills and hone their interests. I think this combina-

tion of multiple skill building opportunities mixed with the ability to gain and practice leadership skills is what makes CHALK unique. When you also factor in their high level of cultural competence, experience working with a range of youth from differing backgrounds and wide reach across the city, you can see why DCYF has funded their programs for as long as we have.”

What are some of the rewards of running CHALK, and what are some of the challenges?

“The biggest reward is being able to take part in the growth and development of the youth we serve,” Barajas-Cardona said. “They are trusting me by letting me in and allowing me to be part of their journey. I witness the youth struggle and even the steps backward, but I also get to experience the steps forward and that makes it worth it.”

Barajas-Cardona expects 2014 to be a good year for CHALK. “I think that 2014 will be a good year,” he said. “We are relocating to a larger space. We are looking to expand our employment and youth organizing work.”

Will CHALK be doing anything new or different in 2014? “We just started youth organizing as another employment track for youth,” Barajas-Cardona said. “Through community organizing, they can make change within the systems they struggled in; systems they would like to improve.”

Barajas-Cardona expects CHALK to have a bright future.

*continued on page 9*

### How Participants View CHALK

- 96% said they know how to search for a job; 91% said they know how to interview for a job.
- 96% said CHALK provides opportunities to explore various careers.
- 100% said they learned how to handle conflict at work.
- 100% developed a resume by the completion of the program.
- 96% of CHALK participants said it was true that “since starting the program, they are better at setting goals and working to achieve them.”



## Using common sense to help manage attention deficit disorder

By Erik Peper, Ph.D.

*In class, he fidgets, every auditory and visual stimulus distracts him-- he gets up, talks to other students and disrupts the class. Nothing seems to hold his attention; he looks at the page, and moments later turns around and disturbs the boy behind him. At home, he grabs his food and leaves the table. He is continuously distracted. The only thing that seems to capture his attention is his computer games.*

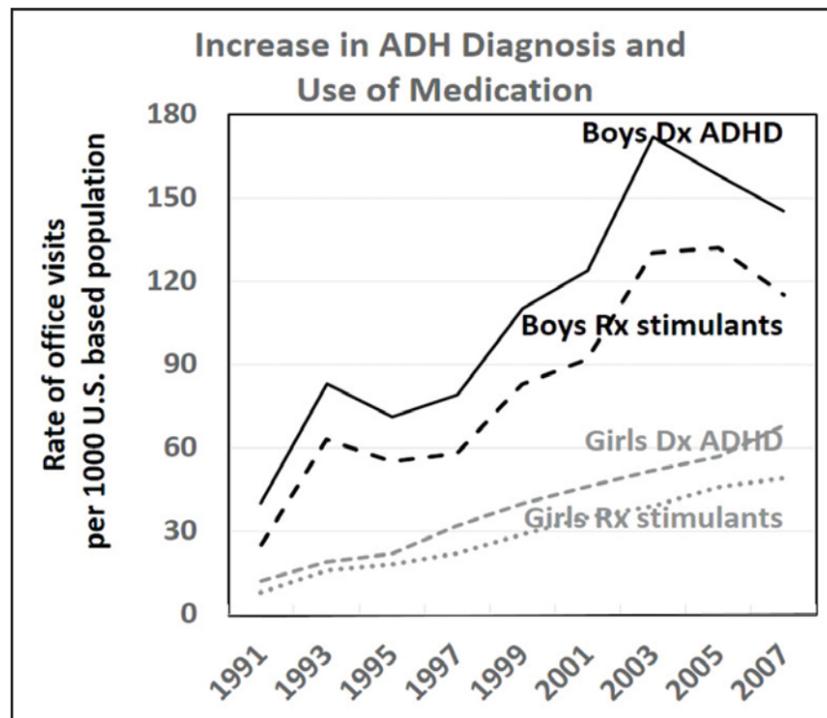
Health is optimized when we live in harmony with our biological and evolutionary background.

These behaviors allowed survival for thousands of generations. Disorders often occur when we neglect our evolutionary background during infant, toddler and childhood stages of development. Diabetes, obesity, allergies, asthma, attention deficit disorder — ADD — and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder — ADHD — and other illnesses are more common in our modern life style. ADD/ADHD disorder is only a disorder if the behavior is too dysfunctional in the cultural setting, or if the learning style is not supported by the prevailing culture.

Drs. Lynda and Michael Thompson — directors of the ADD Centre & Biofeedback Institute of Toronto — observed that in running a boys' camp, and ADHD boys are often sent off to camp, that ADHD children were the best on really difficult canoe trips. They were far faster learners of difficult mathematical concepts concerning the relationship of sails and wind if they were taught in those conditions — such as wild approaching hurricane winds. However, they were terrible if it were insisted that they just sit on a dock and listen.

ADD/ADHD disorders have become epidemics during the last 30 years. Now one in seven boys has received this diagnosis by the time of reaching age 18, according to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention as shown in the following graph.

The increase in ADD/ADHD or diabetes, obesity and allergies cannot be explained by genetics alone. It may depend upon the interaction of genetics and the environment. Diabetes and obesity have increased because sugar intake has increased from about 10 pounds in the 19th century to 150 pounds per year today. Similarly, allergies previously were rare; however, during the past 20 years they have tripled. This spring I was shocked when I asked my students at San Francisco State University how many had allergies and more than 25% of the students said they did. When these illnesses occur, we attempt to remedy them with medications.



[Above]: Simplified graph of attention deficit disorder among boys and girls in the United States from *Clinical Pediatrics*, 51(6), 584-589. [Below]: Toddler focusing attention on video images in lieu of personal contact. Figure and photo via Erik Peper, Ph.D.

Medications such as Adderall, Concerta and Ritalin are prescribed for ADD/ADHD and provide an \$8 billion revenue stream for pharmaceutical companies. Yet, there is little or no evidence of long term benefits.

Self-mastery approaches such as neurofeedback have demonstrated long-term benefits in improving reading, writing, and mathematical scores as well as decreasing impulsive behavior. Neurofeedback training teaches children how to control their brain function. It is similar to learning a new language, mastering a musical instrument, or becoming proficient in a sport. It takes time and practice to retrain and rewire the brain. **Medications often mask the symptoms.**

It also means respecting different learning styles; since numerous people with diagnosed or undiagnosed ADD/ADHD are highly successful. They have learned how to use their brain in a style to make them perform even better.

Public health education needs to focus on prevention and supporting optimum brain development from birth through early childhood and encourage the following factors which are in our control.

- Breastfeed children for up to two years and concurrently introduce new foods slowly after the 6 or 8 months.
- Respect the importance of face-to-face contact to provide safety, develop empathy and nurture social connection.
- Encourage motor development such as crawling, playing in nature, and physical movement to support brain development instead of sitting and being entertained by smart phones, computers, tablets or TV screens. Physical movement during play —

without being distracted by the overwhelming rapid changing stimuli shown on LED and TV screens — is necessary for brain development.

### Provide constancy and reduce novelty

*A cacophony of sounds, I could not make any sense of it. I finally comprehended one word when it accompanied the action a polite bow and words were repeated time and time again. All of a sudden I could recognize and even say "Konnichiwa" – good afternoon in Japanese. My hosts wanted to help me learn some more words; however, they said one Japanese word after another. I could not remember any of them. Only when a few words with appropriate action were repeated time and time again could I remember them.*

When reading a bedtime story, the child wants to hear the same story again and again. If part of the story is skipped, the child interrupts and reminds us to read correctly. When the child is stressed, it wants to hear a previous story for comfort and safety. Repetition while feeling safe allows memory to create appropriate neural connections.

Having too few stimuli hinders brain development. Rumanian orphans who were warehoused with limited stimuli had brains with less grey and white matter than children who were brought up in an enriched environment. These Romanian children had difficulty keeping focused attention and making social connections.

Having too many novel stimuli also decreases brain development. A sensory overload environment — such as too many toys to play with and too many choices to make. The more hours children watch TV, the higher is the incidence of ADD/ADHD. Babies and toddlers are now entertained by watching smart phone screens and monitors instead of kinesthetically exploring the world and integrating/connecting visual and auditory stimuli with touch and movement.

This lack of interconnection is seen in some people with learning disabilities. Some have incomplete motor development — when skipping, they tend to lift the arm and leg on the same side of the body instead of lifting their opposite arm and leg. This incomplete coordination may have been caused by the repeated triggering of the defense (fight/flight) reaction to excessive auditory and visual stimuli.

Children need more time crawling, walking and playing in nature to develop an integrated motor pattern. Researchers Taylor and Kuo showed in 2011 that ADD/ADHD children re-exposed to nature and play in nature children have decreased ADD/ADHD symptoms.

Rapidly changing visual stimuli from the screens and monitors evoke biological reflexes to attend — which is something new, and it could be dangerous. The stimuli do not train self-control or internally generated attention. The flood of novel visual and auditory stimuli trains the brain to react — to react again, and again. The ongoing external

*continued on page 12*



## Neighborhood News

By Thomas Figg-Hoblyn

### Alamo Square

#### Tour bus restriction update

Tour bus restrictions are now in effect on residential streets bounded by Webster, Fell, Divisadero, and Golden Gate Avenue. If one sees a tour bus on the streets within this area please contact SFPD at 415.553.0123 and report the tour bus company, date, and time of incident.



2014 Volunteer Day, Saturday, April 5, 9 a.m.–12 p.m.

Alamo Square Park greening on the first Saturday of April — volunteers needed, refreshments provided, and everyone is welcome. Meet by the tennis courts. Event is hosted by the Alamo Square Neighborhood Association, [www.alamosq.org](http://www.alamosq.org). Please contact [park@alamosq.org](mailto:park@alamosq.org) for more information.

Weekly Alamo Square play group, every Tuesday 10 a.m.–12p.m.

For families with infants and toddlers. Located at the Alamo Square Park playground (just west of Steiner and Grove Streets). Contact [playgroups@alamosq.org](mailto:playgroups@alamosq.org).

### Bayview Hunters Point

Line dancing class for all ages, Mondays, 6–7 p.m.

The Bayview Opera House Ruth Williams Memorial Theatre is being renovated. Line dancing classes are now being offered in a temporary location at 4702 Third Street. Classes are in collaboration with Bayview Koshland fellows, \$12 per month or \$5 per class. Drop-ins are welcome. Location is at 4705 Third St., San Francisco, CA 94124. Visit [info.bvoh@bvoh.org](mailto:info.bvoh@bvoh.org), or call 415.824.0386.

Vinyasa flow yoga with Armando Luna, Mondays and Thursdays, 4:30–5:40 p.m.

Yoga with smooth movements synchronized to the breath at the 4702 Third St. location while the Bayview Opera House is being renovated. All levels welcome. A \$10 donation is requested, but no one will be turned away for lack of funds. Visit [info.bvoh@bvoh.org](mailto:info.bvoh@bvoh.org), or call 415-824-0386.

“3rd on Third” Arts & Music Festival, Thursday, April 17, 5–8 p.m.

A Free community-wide arts celebration for the whole family, including pop-up galleries, food trucks, a beer and wine garden, a special children’s zone with free art-making activities, and the “Stern Grove On The Road” stage featuring Bayview talent. Location is on Third Street between Palou and McKinnon. Visit [www.3rdonthird.com](http://www.3rdonthird.com), or call 415-742-1753.

Community budget meeting, Thursday, April 17, 6p.m.–7:30 p.m.

Attend a community meeting to help decide how \$100,000 funding for neighborhood projects will be used. Meeting location is at the Southeast Community Facility at 1800 Oakdale. Call 415.821.1534 for more information.

### Fillmore

Fillmore farmers market, Saturdays 9 a.m.–1p.m.

The Fillmore farmers market is back for another great season of fresh and seasonal fruits and vegetables, and great family fun. Located at the Fillmore Center Plaza, 1475 Fillmore St. Visit [www.pcfma.com/fillmore](http://www.pcfma.com/fillmore) for more information.

Big Head Todd & the Monsters will be performing on Saturday, April 5 at 8 p.m.

This soulful and intense rock band will be performing at the Fillmore Club as they promote their new album “Black Beehive.” Located at 1805 Geary Blvd. Visit [www.thefillmore.com](http://www.thefillmore.com) for more information.

Artist Khaled Khadour exhibit at AAACC through April 20

View the iconic artwork of this Middle Eastern artist at the African American Art and Culture Complex before the exhibition moves on to New York City in May. Visit the AAACC at 762 Fulton St., or call 415.922.2049 for more information.

Collegiate Roots – HBCU’s, Tuesday-Saturday, 12-5 pm through May 22:

Free community event. With the use of visual and installation arts, Collegiate Roots explores the experience of black higher education while depicting the past, present, and future state of historically black colleges and universities in the United States. Located at the Sargent Johnson Gallery, on the first floor at the African American Art and Culture Complex, 762 Fulton St. Visit [www.aaacc.org](http://www.aaacc.org) for more information.

### Hayes Valley

Rickshaw Stop’s Nerd Nite, Wed., April 16, 7 p.m.

Nerd Nite is an informal gathering of nerds who get together for nerdy things. It’s like Discovery Channel with added attractions. Nerd Nite is an institution in major cities across America, and now in San Francisco. Rickshaw

Stop is located at 155 Fell St. Visit [www.rickshawstop.com](http://www.rickshawstop.com), or call 415.861.2011.

Spring LGBT Career Fair, Wednesday, April 30, 12 p.m.

One of the nation’s largest LGBT career fairs will be held at the LGBT Community Center located on 1800 Market St. The fair will include events and workshops, and there will be many companies on hand looking for potential employees. Resume and professional attire recommended. Visit [www.sfcenter.org](http://www.sfcenter.org) for more information.



Mama Mia — through April 6, various times

The high energy musical Mama Mia takes the stage at the Orpheum for a limited time. This musical is based on the songs of ABBA, and is about a mother and her daughter, and three possible dads. Showing at the Orpheum Theater, located at 1192 Market St. Visit [www.shnsf.com](http://www.shnsf.com), or call 415.551.2000 for more information.

### Japantown

Senior Computer Workshops and Tutoring, Saturdays 10 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Workshop No. 4 will be held on Saturday, April 5, with the workshop focusing on email. Learn how to create an email address, learn how to send, receive, attach files/photos and organize your email. Fees are \$8 for members and \$12 for non-members. For registration information, visit [www.jccnc.org](http://www.jccnc.org), or call Ryan Kimura at 415.567.5505.

21st Annual Cherry Blossom Festival Basketball Jamboree, Saturdays, April 12 and 19

The jamboree features second-grade and fifth-grade girls and boys teams from around Northern California in fun and exciting games. Free to the public. Location: Buddhist Church of San Francisco. For more information, contact Jennifer Hamamoto at 415.567.5505, or email her at [jhamamoto@jccnc.org](mailto:jhamamoto@jccnc.org).

Senior 1-on-1 tutoring session, Saturday, April 5, 2014, 12:30-1:30 p.m.

Tutoring for seniors at the Japanese Cultural and Community Center will be held by Digital Leadership high school students on April 5. Get “hep” with your laptop, iPad, Kindle

or other handheld device. Fees are \$12 for members and \$16 for non-members. For more information, call 415.567.5505, or email [programsevents@jccnc.org](mailto:programsevents@jccnc.org).

### NoPa

Divisadero farmers market, every Sunday in April, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

The Divisadero farmers market offers fresh and seasonal fruits and vegetables. The market is located on Grove Street between Divisadero & Broderick Streets. Visit [www.pcfma.com/divisadero](http://www.pcfma.com/divisadero)

for more information.

Panhandle Park community work day, Saturday, April 12, 9–11 a.m.

Meet at the bulletin board near the playground and be part of something good.

SFPD Park Station community meeting, Tuesday, April 8, 6–7:30 p.m.

Monthly meeting open to the public to discuss new or ongoing issues, located at 1899 Waller Street.

### Other Western Addition News

Western Addition resident Janet Tom is publicizing a free health and wellness event at the Main Library on April 16 at 6 p.m. A lecture and cooking demonstration of preparing healthy food will be presented by cooking instructor Meredith McCarthy at 100 Larkin St., in the Latino/Hispanic Community Room. For more information, go to [www.sfpl.org](http://www.sfpl.org), or call 415.557.4227.



## Community Voices

## Supervisors Cohen and Breed celebrate black history at City Hall



[Left to right]: Supervisors Malia Cohen and London Breed presented a memorable evening of spirited entertainment in celebration of Black History Month. Photo by Thomas Figg-Hoblyn.

By Thomas Figg

Supervisors London Breed and Malia Cohen threw a huge party inside City Hall on Feb. 26 in Celebration of Black History Month. “I feel like we needed to bring some of Black History Month to City Hall,” Breed said.

Dubbed the San Francisco Black History Cultural Experience, the celebration included music, art, dance and an open bar. Breed and Cohen kept the party moving under the direction of radio personality Renel Brooks Moon, Mistress of Ceremonies — who guided the exuberant audience through a spectacle of powerful performances expressing black history and black culture.

The celebration not only drew Mayor Lee — who spent a few moments at the podium highlighting his accomplishments — but also District Attorney George Gascon and supervisors David Campos and David Chiu. Willie Brown even showed up fashionably late and quietly stole the show at one point, posing with folks for photos.

Dancers from the Dominican University of California moved and pranced to a blend of African, modern and tribal influences. The dancers’ well-formed bodies glided to the beats in their bold outfits adorned with solid red against a tribal pattern.

Vocalist Lawrence Beaman captivated the immense crowd as he belted out “The Black National Anthem” and other songs, to the delight of spectators. Beaman shone like a sapphire in his impeccable suit as he showcased his silky smooth voice.

L. Peter Callender recited poetry from the African American poet Paul Lawrence Dunbar, whose parents had been slaves in Kentucky before the Civil War. A touching recital from an account

of Black Christians having a sermon in the woods reminded the audience of how African Americans had to hide out and secretly hold their congregations in the America of old.

Artist/Art Historian Nashormeh Lindo really conveyed the spirit of Black History Month and “got real” about things when she spoke in front of the crowd. She broke down the history of Black History Month — going back to the celebration of emancipation — and shared her personal account of how she was inspired to become a historian after discovering the a lack of black history in her American education, and why it so important to remember the real story of black history.

Afterward, when asked about how she felt in general regarding Black History Month, she said that she was originally from Philadelphia — the cradle of liberty and brotherly love and sisterly affection — but that our founding fathers were all slaveholders.

“So what does that say about liberty?” she asked. “And that’s what really sparked me in my quest for looking at black history,” she further stated.

John Anderson — who was dressed in a fashionable suit, and who flashed a big smile — seemed to support Lindo’s sentiment when he said, “Yes, this is all nice, free drinks and Ed Lee letting us use City Hall, but what did we do? What did we do? They got the Kennedys, they got Martin Luther King, they got Malcolm, what did we do?”

There was a good blend of truth and celebration in the event, and it was a success.

As things were winding down toward the end of the event, Breed said that she was overwhelmed with joy.

Midgett’s Corner

## Inspire, motivate

Are you inspired or motivated by someone or something?

Since reaching age 77, I want to share with you those who inspired and motivated me. First, I want to give my mom credit. She continued to tell me when I was able to hear her words that I was the prettiest black baby in the hospital. My color tone was very dark as an infant, with curly black hair. My skin lightened as I aged. As we all know, society is stuck on beauty. Mom also shared with me that when it was time for the nurses to take me away even for a short time, she and the staff would have minor tussles. To hear these stories for so many years, I always felt wanted. Because of positive input and the bond I had with my mother, whatever I chose to do, she would say to me, “You can do it!”

Positive strokes are the core to make you feel good about yourself and inspire you to greatness. I continue to share that expression with my two adult children, my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren. As parents, teachers and friends, positive input is the beginning to helping youngsters realize in their formative years that they have self-worth.

**“As parents, teachers and friends, positive input is the beginning to helping youngsters realize in their formative years that they have self-worth.”**

Each time I told my mother what career I wanted to pursue — and there were many — she would say, “Mary, I know you can do it!” I remember when I want to be a hairdresser. My aunt’s hairdressing salon was always very crowded on Saturdays when I went to get my hair pressed. I always admired her. When I was nine years old and attended summer camp, I learned how to cornrow hair by braiding the grass which was very long. When I reached the age of 11, parents would give me money to braid their daughters’ hair. I didn’t accept the money, because I really enjoyed the different styles that I produced. Now I see those same hair styles of cornrows that African Americans are wearing now.



Those hairstyles did not come into vogue until the sixties. Prior to that, African Americans were using the hot comb to press and curl their hair.

Then, “Afro” cornrows became the fad. I started cornrowing my daughter’s hair when she was three years old — that was in the late sixties. I continue styling hair because I am an entrepreneur at heart and now a business owner.

My son continues to tell his young/older mother that he enjoys my readings — which is inspirational to me. I continue to be motivated from my readings.

I enlisted in the Woman’s Army Corp because Ebony magazine show me other parts of the state and country where African Americans lived. Susan Taylor — who wrote an editor’s column in Essence magazine — motivated me to write this column. Black Enterprise inspired me to start a business.

Although I am not limited to Black literature, it is who I am. What better mirror images then to see my folks have their own Fortune 500 magazine — Glamour — and stories about us.

Email can be sent to [Midgettscorner@aol.com](mailto:Midgettscorner@aol.com). Her blog can be viewed on Facebook [<https://www.facebook.com/mary.midgett>]. Midgett is the author of New York Flavor with a San Francisco Beat and Brown on Brown Black Women’s Erotica.

Soon to be released: I’m 77 and Still Having Fun. (Girlfriends, I’m now 78 and still having fun; how to live on your own terms.)

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## Nonprofit News

### DOD continued from page 1

included everyone. With that realization, the idea for Dance Out Diabetes was born.

Dance Out Diabetes — DOD — is a nonprofit organization that is dedicated to prevent and manage diabetes through dance, education, support and increased access to care. Since 2010, DOD has been hosting dances open to the public on the second Saturday of each month at the African American Art & Culture Complex at 762 Fulton Street in San Francisco.

"We have a participant who is 1 ½, and we have participants in their late eighties and early nineties," Garnero noted.

The venue is open to everyone — people with diabetes, those at risk for any form of diabetes, their friends and families, and people who want to be more aware and become educated about the disease. Adult

of diabetes require daily insulin shots. This type, although it can affect any age, tends to develop in children and young adults.

People with type 2 diabetes are either resistant to insulin or are insulin-deficient. Ninety percent of diabetic cases are type 2. Being overweight or obese is often linked to type 2 diabetes because it causes insulin resistance and leads to high glucose levels. Diet and exercise can be used to manage type 2, but oral medication and insulin are usually eventually required.

Gestational diabetes — GDM — develops in pregnancies with high glucose levels. It occurs in 1-to-25 pregnancies. GDM usually subsides after a pregnancy, but both the mother and child are at an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes later on in life.

DOD participants receive not only a 45-minute dance les-



participants and all participants with diabetes are given \$10 in "carrot cash," which can be used at farmers markets.

"So many organizations focus on a type of diabetes, and there is an animosity between groups," Garnero said. "We are trying to improve the health of the community and create a circle of support."

There are three main types of diabetes — type 1, type 2, and gestational. Type 1 diabetes is caused by an autoimmune reaction where the body's defense system attacks the cells that produce insulin, which controls glucose levels. People with this form



son, but also a health screening and training that measures their blood glucose, blood pressure, weight, and waist circumference, all of which are tracked over time.

"Over 100 people got health screenings, and nearly half of those returned for further dances and screenings," Garnero related. "Nearly all returning participants had A1C — 3-month glucose average — blood levels in the ideal range of 7% or less, and those who were above that level lowered it in a statistically significant way."

In its first year, DOD had an 11% return rate. Now in their



[Above]: Diabetes educators conduct health screening; [Below Left]: DOD founders Theresa Garnero and Rosie Castillo, and Garnero and participant Beatrice Jennings; [Bottom Right]: Volunteers Catherine Carr, Arielle Bivas, Hanna Rifkin, Lalon Jones, Jacky Aki. Photos courtesy of DOD.

fourth year, the organization is at a 41% return rate.

Each event is live-streamed and has been viewed by almost every state in the United States, as well as several other countries.

This year's educational focus is Diabetes in Real Life. Each month centers on a different topic within this focus.

"I give a brief announcement about the topic, but participants get individual questions answered at the diabetes education tables — no seminar. Our focus is to get people moving. Plenty of organizations do a lot of talking already," Garnero explained. "The main thing to emphasize is we are having fun. It is a community of non-dancers getting together for the health of it."

DOD is primarily a volunteer-run organization, and there are no salaried full-time employees. Most of the contributors — such as the dance instructors, the DJs and the diabetic educa-

tors — donate their time or are paid a small stipend. The organization runs mostly funded by donations and sponsorships.

When asked why, as a full-time RN, she puts so much time into DOD, Garnero had no hesitation in replying: "Last month, I met a man whose relative had diabetes. He came as support. At the health screening, he found out he had really high blood pressure and high blood sugar. He had no idea, had felt perfectly fine. Now he can do something about it. We helped this man," she emphasized. "Now he can talk to a doctor and fix these problems. I have so many stories like this. It makes it all worth it."

To find out more about Dance Out Diabetes or to make a donation, please visit their website at [www.danceoutdiabetes.org](http://www.danceoutdiabetes.org), or contact the AAACC by email at [kimberly@aaacc.org](mailto:kimberly@aaacc.org) or by phone at 415.922.2049.



### CHALK continued from page 5



Youths drum up business for CHALK carwash fundraiser. Photo courtesy of CHALK.

"CHALK is in the process of updating its web site and is looking forward to launching it, although no exact date has been set," she said.

Additionally, CHALK plans to move to a new location. "Our rent is going up here so we need to move to a more affordable location," Barajas-Cardona said. "We would like to secure more space as well so we have room to grow."

While some things will change in the future, CHALK's mission, vision, and goals will remain the same. "We would like to continue our innovative, wrap around approach to serving in-

risk and disconnected youth and maintain our reputation for quality youth-led programming," she said.

More information about CHALK can be found on its website, [www.chalk.org](http://www.chalk.org), or by calling 415.977.6949.



YFYI is a CHALK program that funds ideas for youth-led projects. Visit the website at <http://www.yfyi.org/> for more information.

## Community Events

## Cherry Blossom Festival returns for two sparkling weekends in April



[Above]: The parade with the Taru Mikoshi shrine is a highlight of the festival; weighing up to 1,000 pounds, it can require over 100 persons to carry the portable Shinto shrine; [Below]: Queens of the 2013 festival at City Hall. Photos via Flickr.com

By Lindsay Adams

This year's Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival — said to be the second largest of its kind outside of Washington D.C. — will be held in San Francisco on Saturday and Sunday, April 12–13 and April 19–20.

Every year, over 200,000 people gather on Post Street between Laguna and Fillmore Streets to join the celebration that showcases both the Japanese and Japanese American cultures. Historically, the festival commemorates the 1912 gift of 3,000 cherry trees from Mayor Yukio Ozaki of Tokyo to the city of Washington, DC. The gift and annual celebration honor the lasting friendship between the United States and Japan, as well as the continued close relationship between the two countries.

Last year, 225,000 people from San Francisco to Tokyo attended to touch, taste, smell, hear and see the culture of Japan. As the number increases from year to year, organizers are anticipating seeing 250,000 for the city's 47th annual festival this year.

For four days, San Francisco's Japantown will be host to a wide array of events. The Taisho Koto Group from Osaka will be performing traditional Hawaiian dance, and there will be a demonstration from World Oyama Karate. Japanese musical artist Soulit and the San Francisco Taiko Dojo will perform. There will be displays of ikebana — Japanese floral arrangement — and chano-yu, Japan's traditional tea ceremony. Competitions will take place in the festival's golf tour-

namment and the annual Queen Program. Spectators can watch the Grand Parade, and even take part in the Taru Mikoshi — the carrying of a portable Shinto shrine, weighing over 1,000 pounds — and there will be still more.

With so much celebration comes even more planning. The Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival is organized primarily by over 200 volunteers. These are the people that are doing everything from picking up trash to generating social media, all in order to make the festival possible.

in his community and joined the festival's planning committee. Although this is only his second year helping with the festival, his enthusiasm and commitment are evident.

"I grew up in San Francisco; once you get the — I call it a disease," he said, laughing lightly. "To help the community, you want to keep helping it. I didn't appreciate it before."

Viloria has 50 volunteers working with him, a group so large that he needs to appoint a tier of coordinators to manage everyone. Preparation for these volunteers is year-round.



"It's like a small company. All the pieces are important, and without each and every piece, it wouldn't come together," explained Greg Viloria, who serves on the executive committee as chair for social media marketing.

Viloria, who was hired as a community aide for Japantown's Task Force last year, felt motivated to further become involved

Meetings begin in September and are monthly at first, then become bi-monthly. All of the programming must be set in February, well in advance, so that marketing can begin. The website must be posted and up to date. A preview day is held about a month before the festival to establish the events that will be taking place.

Being in the marketing division, Viloria and his crew are

quite busy prior to the actual festival. First, the volunteers must be obtained and organized. Following that, there are interviews and press releases, reviews of Web copy, television promotions, and help with outreach.

Once the festival actually takes place, the work for the volunteers does not end. Barricades need to be set up and then taken down. Technical arrangement, performer management, and audience control are required at the four to five stages. Bilingual translators are needed for the groups visiting from Japan. Servers are necessary for the food and beer booths. This year, Viloria is hoping for a live stream of the Grand Parade, which would be the first. This, too, requires volunteer work.

"Our focus this year, and the next two years, is to establish a good base for the 50th," stated Viloria. "We are building up to that."

With such a big event in foresight, a lot of preparation will need to be done — meaning that a lot of volunteers will be needed.

"We try to make it nice for them. It's very important to you show people appreciation. They want to feel that they are making an impact, that they are doing something important," emphasized Viloria. "There is an expression, 'Be inclusive, not exclusive' — this is very prominent in the Japanese culture. It's important to make sure everyone's voice is heard."

Viloria also makes sure that all of his volunteers know the mission behind the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival, which is to make sure

that all of the attendees are comfortable — "inclusive, not exclusive".

With a mission such as that, and with such hardworking volunteers, and with so much to explore within the Japanese culture, this year's Cherry Blossom Festival is sure to be a success!

For more information about the festival, please visit the website at: [www.sfcherryblossom.org](http://www.sfcherryblossom.org).

## Nonprofit News

### SF Housing continued from page 1

fact that African Americans and other minorities are leaving San Francisco means that the city loses its diversity. “The decrease in the African American population leads to a decrease in African American culture,” Everett said. “It is that cultural diversity and vibrancy that is the basis for our values. It is the basis for what makes San Francisco San Francisco. We are all being robbed of that vibrancy when the housing court aggregates or sidesteps its ethical and legal responsibilities. We are all being robbed.”

Everett further pointed out, “The African American population left in San Francisco has below median income, which makes it difficult to hire an attorney, so what we have is a situation where landlords are allowed to evict folks in an almost railroaded procedure with no accountability.

“With such a staggering loss of our African American population, it is appropriate to ask what has gone wrong while the city’s housing court is not adhering to bolstering the laws that are in place.”

Everett, who graduated from Hastings College of the Law in 2007, began working as a criminal defense attorney in 2009. He hosts a weekly community radio show, Folk Law, on San Francisco’s 88.1 FM at [www.folklawradio.com](http://www.folklawradio.com). Everett said that his business has grown 50 percent within the past year. “I feel the community is rushing to me in droves,” he stated.

What is contributing to the housing crisis? Everything from the tech invasion to development, Everett said.

The Ellis Act, a state law passed in 1980 that gives landlords the right to go out of business and evict tenants, is also a huge factor in the housing crisis.

Everett added that another thing that needs to be done to help solve the housing crisis is that there needs to be more transparency with the courts and oversight of the courts and courts need to uphold and apply the law properly. “The city has taken steps to address the problem to a certain extent, and now the ball is in the court’s court to act on what the city has done,” he said.

Hope SF from the San Francisco Mayor’s Office of Housing on South Van Ness, [hope.sf@sfgov.org](mailto:hope.sf@sfgov.org), was not forthcoming with any statements on the Ellis Act or city housing status.

However, Tommi Avicelli Mecca of San Francisco’s Housing Rights Committee, was. “Ellis is what you use to get around rent control and make more

money,” he explained. “That’s what the Ellis Act is about in San Francisco. It’s all about greed. Greed is what San Francisco has become. Why aren’t we building affordable housing in San Francisco? Again, it’s the two cities. We’re building for the city of the rich people. That’s what San Francisco is. That’s what we’re becoming. We can’t build our way out of the housing crisis. By figuring out how to bring rents down, we can make the city affordable for the poor and the middle class.”

Mecca summed up the current housing situation this way: “It’s a catastrophe. It’s probably the worst housing crisis to hit the city. I don’t think we’ve ever seen it like this. Now we’re seeing big buildings being wiped out of tenants. Investors or speculators are buying them. They buy the building and flip it. They buy the building for \$1 million and end up reselling for \$2 million, after evicting all of the tenants by threatening them or the Ellis Act or buying them out. We have a 98-year-old woman being evicted right now. It is beyond immoral. It’s reprehensible. And we wonder why people are on the street.”

Mecca added, “The whole way we do housing in this city and country baffles me. What we’re doing is driving out all the city’s diversity. One day people will wake up and it will be too late. We’re losing the heart and soul of our city. It’s like ‘A Tale of Two Cities,’ but it’s real. We are a tale of two cities right now.

“I don’t know what it takes to wake the city up,” Mecca emphasized. “The city has to wake up in a big way. We have to change the way we do housing. If we don’t, what are we going to be left with? We are going to be left with a big rich people’s playground. It’s a disgrace when your teachers don’t live in the city, when your firefighters don’t live in the city. It’s beyond unreal — it’s like the twilight zone! We’re seeing mass evictions now. The speculators and investors don’t care. They’re just out for the money. They rape and pillage and they walk away. Do they have any consequences? No.”

Peter Cohen is the co-director of the San Francisco-based Council on Community Housing Organizations — CCHO. He stated, “I have little doubt that the evictions crisis has had a disproportionate impact on minorities, seniors, the disabled and people with HIV/AIDS. They are often the long-term residents who are

most vulnerable to the machinations of unscrupulous landlords and property speculators.”

Yet the crisis of displacement and the threat of gentrifying neighborhoods is no longer just an issue affecting the poor, the working class and disadvantaged communities. It is a reality for the middle class too, Cohen pointed out.

Cohen stated, “The speculation frenzy and the dramatically growing wealth gap — San Francisco now has the largest income inequality of any city in the country — have put even everyday middle-class folks at risk of losing their apartments and/or being permanently priced out of San Francisco real estate. I hear about middle class professionals being ‘Ellised’ out of their apartments in Noe Valley and Pacific Heights, as well as working-class Latino families getting evicted from their Mission apartments.

“The market-rate development industry is just not providing for folks. So, the current evictions epidemic and the housing affordability crisis have a unifying aspect to it. More and more people are being bound together by their vulnerability — in relative degrees of crisis, of course — and their intolerance at the ravages of the real estate speculation market. From crisis is grow-

rent controlled units, preventing evictions and increasing production of affordable and market rate housing, according to Sophie Hayward of the Mayor’s Office of Housing.

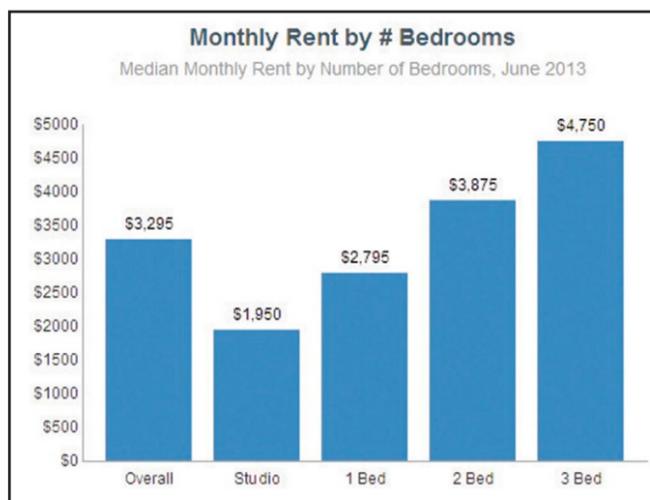
With regard to this, Cohen stated, “At the state level there is now a serious effort to reform the Ellis Act, which is the most poisonous of the eviction ‘tools’ used by speculators. At the local level there is legislation in the works that would put requirements on speculators to pay serious relocation fees to evicted residents, and there is legislation to begin tracking and regulating TIC conversions which is often the key critical point in the speculation process that evictions happen.

“The Tenants Convention [in February], attended by more than 600 people, resulted in a priority for an anti-speculation tax ballot measure this coming November intended to put a stiff taxation disincentive on quick ‘flippers’ of residential real estate.”

Cohen further noted, “There is a great need to increase production of affordable housing so we can keep up with the need. As much as we do well in San Francisco by relative standards compared to other Bay Area jurisdictions, we still fall short of the meeting the needs for very-low-income, low-income and moderate-income San Franciscans. So, those folks have limited options, given they are permanently shut out of the high-priced real estate market, which is only getting more and more expensive as the tech workforce floods the city with growing population. So we need to produce the below-market housing that it takes to ensure people can live here and have places to go when they are evicted by private landlords.”

Cohen further explained, “The city’s General Plan Housing Element dictates that SF should produce 61 percent of all its new housing at prices affordable to very-low, low and moderate-income residents. The general performance, however, is about 30-35 percent of production for those income levels combined. Thus, the gentrification cycle gets more and more impacting as market-rate housing production is so imbalanced with the affordable and below-market rate housing. That imbalance needs to be better controlled through these boom-bust development cycles.”

More information about SF CCHO can be found on its website, [www.sfcho.org/](http://www.sfcho.org/).



Rental costs in San Francisco. Chart via Google Images.

ing a broadening movement to take action and push back.”

Cohen further stated, “The answers are many. As everyone says, there is no silver-bullet to deal with runaway housing costs. But I think the focus needs to be on discouraging and preventing the speculation as much as it is on strengthening the response and triage systems to assist people getting evicted.”

What has been done to help fix the current housing crisis in San Francisco, and what still needs to be done?

San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee has outlined a 7-point plan to address the situation, which includes protecting existing

## Learning and Education

### **Drought continued from page 4**

arid desert regions to the south — and whereas the snowpack is confined to the far eastern Sierra Mountains, much of the snowmelt is used in the Central Valley and along the coasts. A hydraulic infrastructure comprising vast networks of aqueducts and pipelines was built to achieve this engineering marvel and get the water to where it is consumed.

Known to many San Francisco residents as their primary water supply, the Hetch Hetchy Project, located in Yosemite National

Park, delivers 80 percent of the water used by the City and County of San Francisco. The city first secured water rights to Hetch Hetchy in 1908, over strong objections from conservationists such as John Muir and The Sierra Club. Construction began in 1914, was completed in 1923, and the first water began flowing into the city in Oct. 1934. At this time, the DWR has not published data for current Hetch Hetchy reservoir levels or its percent of capacity. However, in Jan. 2014,

the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission — SFPUC — took proactive measures and passed a voluntary 10 percent cutback on all Hetch Hetchy water.

Although this is not mandatory water rationing, it could become so — as it did in the 1980s and 1990s, when statewide drought emergencies were also declared.

The early March rains were welcomed by all, but in truth they brought little real relief to the severe drought conditions

throughout the state. The Sierra snowpack is only 20 percent of where it should be, and reservoir levels are still far below normal. The odds that California will be saved by a miraculous series of April storms at this point in time are close to zero. All things considered, it is shaping up to be a long, hot, dry summer, and we will have to prepare for it.

For more information on the California drought, visit the Pacific Institute's website <http://www.californiadrought.org>.



Photos via CA Department of Water Resources (DWR); FolsomLake2014\_Image\_Credit California Department of Water Resources.

### **ADD continued from page 6**

novelty captures a child's attention, instead of directing attention from within.

A similarity is also observed in college students. Professor Andrew Lepp and colleagues at Kent State University discovered that the more the students use their cell phones and texted, especially while studying, the lower were their grade point averages, and the higher their anxiety levels. Their attention was continuously interrupted instead of staying focused. Adults also experience the paralysis of too many choices and stimuli. If you have only one or two choices, you become happier and content. With too many choices, you

keep thinking, "May be the other one would have been better."

Infants are often bombarded with visual and auditory stimuli without the opportunity to feel safe through face-to-face contact with mother/caretaker familiar faces. Until the 19th century babies were commonly carried facing the mother's chest. Babies also faced their mothers in 19th century baby carriages. Now babies are often carried facing outward on the chest or in baby carriages/strollers facing forward — where they lead the charge into the unknown — instead of facing the parent, touching the parent or hiding behind the parent for safety.

Let us create an environment that is in harmony with our evolutionary background instead of being parked in front of smart phones, tablets, GameBoys, computers and television screens. Such an environment would be one where infants play interactively with objects, explore nature and have face-to-face contacts with their caregivers.



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