

Happy
New Year!

Western Edition HP JOURNAL

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Bridging San Francisco communities through nonprofit services

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Compassionate support of well-being with Shanti

By Chad Smith

Have you ever wondered why many cities have such strong communities? Can you see how social circles are developed through excellent programs provided by nonprofit organizations? In our San Francisco Bay Area we are fortunate to have caring nonprofits that watch over our local neighborhoods and surrounding areas.

One nonprofit in particular that extends a gentle helping hand in assisting people diagnosed with HIV/AIDS and various mental illnesses is the Shanti Project. Dr. Charles Garfield — who worked at UCSF in the Cancer Sector of the university — started the Shanti Project in 1974. In 2014, the Shanti Project celebrated 40 historical years of providing local therapeutic health services to the Bay Area. Since its inception, 18,000 volunteers have been a part of the Shanti Project, all of whom reside in the Bay Area. Throughout the



The Shanti mission advocates compassion for others, including the elderly. Photo by Jonathan Mcelod of www.shanti.org/.

nation, there are many other Shanti Projects and similar Aide Service Organizations — ASOs — based on its volunteer model introduced by Dr. Charles Garfield. “Shanti” is Sanskrit for “inner peace,” which is the focal point of the project. In order to reinforce his thesis, Dr. Garfield created a volunteer model based on a system of individuals sharing “heart spaces” with one another. The three tenets of the sharing “heart spaces” model are to listen from the heart, speak from the heart, and act from the heart.

By this means, the doctor formed a system based on developing a comfortable bond between patients and staff members through an effective communication method and peer support program.

The Shanti Project over time became a long-term solution for people seeking additional treatment after their diagnoses. This began to happen during the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in the San Francisco Bay Area that was occurring in 1980s. The Shanti

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Symphony Parnassus — a community orchestra



Performance at the Herbst Theater in November 2016. Photo courtesy of Board President Sarah Smith, www.symphonyparnassus.org/.

By Daniel Joseph Lilly

Already into its 27th season, which began November 6th, Symphony Parnassus plans to highlight the talent of local musicians with a schedule featuring works by Ravel, Debussy, Stravinsky and Beethoven. Soloists this season include Silvie Jensen, Vivian Ling, Parker Van Ostrand, and Elliot Wu. Their season will close with an original composition by the orchestra’s Composer In Residence, Stefan Cwik.

The ensemble that would become Symphony Parnassus began in 1965 as the Doctors’ Symphony, led by Lyn Giovanniello. This loose coalition of musicians played throughout the 1970s before giving way to the UCSF Orchestra, led by Jonathan Davis, which first performed in 1989. Under Davis, the orchestra began to develop its focus on community and local artists.

In 1998, Stephen Paulson was elected musical director of the UCSF Orchestra, but the orchestra was cut

from the UCSF budget the next year. Paulson and others then reorganized into the nonprofit Symphony Parnassus. The orchestra is proud to support the local talent of emerging soloists and composers. Last season featured young cellist Elena Ariza, of Cupertino, and a new piece titled “The Sword in the Stone” by San Francisco-based composer Stefan Cwik, who has since been named Symphony Parnassus’ first Composer In Residence.

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Perspectives

Hope Levy — wellness educator with a special focus on seniors



[Above]: Hope Levy elucidates the background that has led to her dedication as a "wellness facilitator." [Below]: Levy's bookshelf with the "Hope" motto. Photos by Laurie MacDougall.

By Laurie MacDougall

Hope Levy champions positive aging through lifelong learning and health education. Her particular passion is healthy brain functioning, and, as an educator, she spreads the gospel as wide as she can.

It's a big task. But she loves the work: "I get as much out of my work as I give. It's such a gift to get to do work that gives you joy and has meaning."

Hope's life is motivated by a voracious curiosity. As she explained it, "I stay current on cutting-edge research and developments in the fields of wellness, aging, training, education and career transition. In so doing, I continually find new, effective, creative and engaging ways to empower my clients and students to maintain and improve their cognitive vitality, productivity and well-being."

As a teacher — or as she prefers — a facilitator, Hope offers classes, workshops and training sessions to bring to as many people as possible the news about the latest scientific techniques and understandings about maintaining healthy brain functioning throughout life. Her signature class series is called "Brain Fitness," and most of her classes are offered free through institutions that serve those who are 55 and older. However, Hope is quick to point out that everyone is welcome at these classes, and there are no age restrictions. Her classes

are typically presented through nonprofit institutions — such as The San Francisco Public Library, Kaiser Permanente, San Francisco State University, and City College of San Francisco.

Hope's classes are uniquely valuable in several ways. First, they are free, so they are accessible to anyone who needs them. Secondly, Hope's approach as a "facilitator" further makes them elder-friendly. She considers herself a facilitator because — as she says — "I'm not the sage on the stage; I'm the guide on the side." Hope accomplishes this by designing classes that deliver hard-core scientific findings in a soft wrapping of curiosity, play and fun. This kind of supportive learning atmosphere is what best supports behavioral change, which is Hope's ultimate goal.

"I always gravitated to older people, because as the youngest child in the family, I was always around my mom."

Hope has honed this approach over 20 years as an educator. As an example of how a class would go, the first part of a Brain Fitness class might be spent discussing a

topic, such as "What factors influence your brain functioning at any time?"

According to Hope, "Research tells us the main contributors to brain functioning at any age are physical exercise, mental stimulation, social engagement, and nutrition." Answers emerge from the group wrestling together with a question, and then the next question is the kicker: "Which of these do I have control over?" That is when things get interesting, as people realize that fully half of brain health is determined by environment rather than genetics. This prompts group reflection about strategies for their own unique situations.

Hope further stated, "As a facilitator, I bring out information they already have. They teach each other. This makes it an experiential learning experience." The rest of class is playtime, using brain teasers and interactive puzzles conducive to a group setting, to animate social interactions and engagement among participants.

Hope clearly has a feel for energizing older adults. She explained, "I always gravitated to older people, because as the youngest child in the family, I was always around my mom." As an adult, when she grew dissatisfied with her job training employees in a large corporation, she wanted a change and — as she said — "I tried lots of things." One of those things, based on her interest in elders, was a course in gerontology at San Francisco State University.

She took one class — which turned into her being a full-

time student — which led to two degrees, in Gerontology and Special Education. "I was hooked," she said. "It suited by capabilities, and I wanted to make a positive impact. I didn't want people to run when I entered the room, like they used to when I was in H.R." Those days are long gone. "Now, she said, "I get lots of gratification from my work. People are happy. They want to be there [in class]."

In the first quarter of 2017, Hope will be a big presence at the Main Branch of the San Francisco Public Library. Details about a "Brain Fitness" class series to be held at the Main Branch of the San Francisco Public Library starting this month can be found in Neighborhood News. In addition, she has created several other ways to deliver her message of wellness to as many people as possible:

- "Creative Ways to Tell Your Life Story" — another free series of classes beginning January 17 — is designed to support participants in reviewing their lives through a semi-structured topical and group approach.
- "Healthier Living: Managing On-Going Health Conditions," a series of free classes beginning in April, focusing on managing pain and stress, and goal-setting to make positive changes, be more fit, and eat healthier.

To learn more about the services offered by Hope K. Levy, you can contact her via her website, Hope@TheresAlwaysHopeConsulting.com.



SF News Briefs

By Sam Felsing

SF Sketchfest

Had a rough 2016? Difficult holidays? In need of a laugh? SF Sketchfest is back to bring the funny stuff.



Web poster for 2017 Sketchfest via Google.

The 2017 festival lineup is an eclectic mix of live stage readings, tributes, musical acts, sketches, storytelling and more. Among the city-related highlights: a tribute to actress, comedian and San Francisco native, Aisha Tyler; a special comedy-themed nightlife event at the California Academy of Sciences; and an audible presentation of "Timothy McSweeney's Internet Tendency," which has its origins in McSweeney's publishing house in the Mission.

SF Sketchfest runs from Jan. 12-29. Its full program of events can be found at <http://www.sfsketchfest.com/>.

Inauguration

January 9 marks a changing of the guard in San Francisco. On that day, Supervisors Eric Mar, David Campos, and John Avalos will each step down after eight years on the Board of Supervisors. Taking their places are school board trustee Sandra Lee Fewer in Mar's District 1; legislative aide Hillary Ronen in Campos' District 9; and political operative Ahsha Safai in Avalos' District 11. A replacement for District 8 Supervisor Scott Wiener, who was elected to the State Senate in November, may also be named and sworn in around the same time.

The board's political bent will also switch from politically progressive to politically moderate. Six of the 11 current board members are deemed to be politically progressive, but because the moderate Safai is taking the progres-

sive Avalos's place, the board will switch its identity in 2017.

The difference between moderate and progressive supervisors can sometimes be hard to determine, since each side tends to define the other in unflattering terms. An individual's identity also tends to change while on the board. For instance, formerly a moderate supervisor, Assemblyman David Chiu was considered a progressive when he first joined the board; however, Chiu's time as President of the Board of Supervisors seemed to temper his progressiveness.

To get a sense of where the city is headed under the new supervisors, it might be best to focus on their commonalities. Safai — the moderate — and Fewer and Ronen — the progressives — all seem to agree that the City Government should fund public pre-kindergarten classes, and each wants to expand the number of navigation centers for the homeless population. The newly elected supervisors also seem focused on increasing the number of affordable housing units built within San Francisco.

Here's to the next four years.

Women's March

Those who are concerned about the current state of human

rights, women's rights, civil liberties and social justice in the United States are invited to participate in a series of women's marches taking place across the country on Jan. 21. Although they're called "Women's Marches," they are open to people of any sex or gender identity.

The marches will take place the day after President Trump's inauguration, leading many to believe they're a protest against him; however, the organizers of the events stress that they are non-partisan celebrations. Marchers will "support and inspire each other and the nation to celebrate, honor and protect our diversity, freedom and human rights," according to the website attached to the local marches, www.womensmarchbayarea.org.

Three Bay Area cities will host marches on January 21: Oakland, San Jose and San Francisco. The San Francisco march will begin at the Civic Center at 4 p.m. and is expected end at 9 p.m. To learn more, go to the website, www.womensmarchbayarea.org.

MLK Day

San Francisco's Yerba Buena Gardens has the third largest memorial to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the United States. No wonder the city goes all out to honor him each year around his birthday!

Liberation Film Festival, highlighting human-interest documentaries and short-format cinema.

Traditionally, the Monday of MLK Day kicks off with a Labor and Community Breakfast, where the city's civic, community and political elite gather to honor Dr. King and discuss the collaboration between the labor and the civil rights movements. Following the breakfast, there is a 1.5-mile parade from the Caltrain Station to Yerba Buena Gardens.

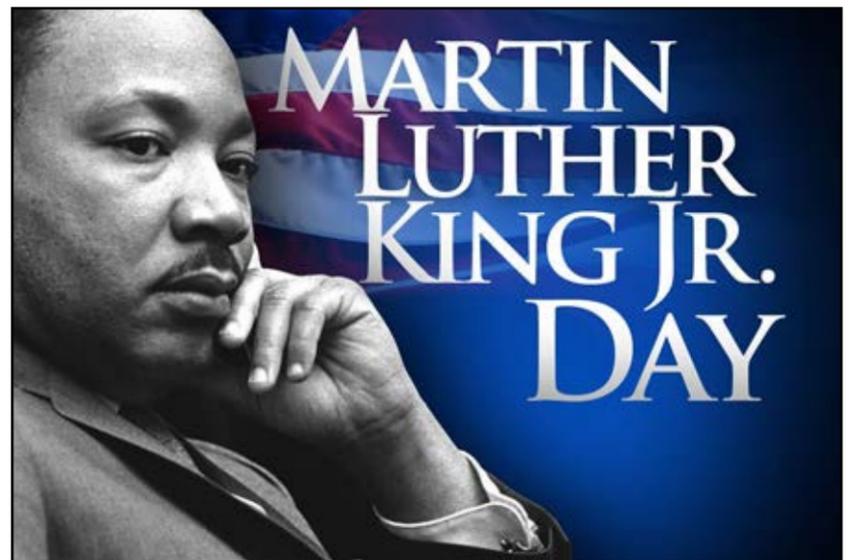
Learn more at <http://sfmlkday.org/>.

Restaurant Week – Consider



SF Restaurant Week illustration via Google.

Have you always wanted to try a particular restaurant in San Francisco, but thought it was too expensive? Does the city's restaurant scene seem overwhelming? The 2017 SF Restaurant Week, from Jan. 18-29, may be the ticket



The 2017 MLK Day commemorates Dr. King's unceasing dedication toward advancing civil rights. Photo via Google.

The 2017 MLK festivities are hosted by the Northern California Dr. Martin Luther King Community Foundation — NorcalMLK — and will take place Jan. 13-16. Throughout the long weekend, residents and visitors will be treated to, among other events, a lecture series contemplating Dr. King's teachings; a Black Comix Arts Festival with activities for children; film screenings; cosplay and more; a music festival featuring poetry and songs; and a

to further exploring the area's food scene.

During the week, nearly 130 restaurants around San Francisco will offer "prix fixe" menus featuring their best-known dishes, or new menu items their chefs are interested in testing. Lunches will be 2-course meals, running around \$15 to \$25, while dinners will include three or more courses and costing from \$40 to \$60.

To learn more, go to <http://www.sfrestaurantweek.com/>.



Our national capitol, Washington D.C. Photo via Google.

Volunteerism

Back on My Feet — a new program for inspiring the city's homeless



[Clockwise, from top]: Team spirit expressed by interlocking hands; greeting the runners; Team Tenderloin. Photos courtesy of Executive Director Linda Glassel of Back on My Feet San Francisco.

By Jeffery Mendenhall

A select group of those who have called the streets of San Francisco their home are waking up with renewed hope and a fresh outlook.

Since November 30, these road warriors have battled the cold early mornings three days a week, alongside a band of enthusiastic volunteer runners from the community, in their quest to outrun their life on the streets.

These individuals are now entering into the “Next Steps” phase of the newly established San Francisco chapter of Back on My Feet — a phase that focuses on providing educational support, job training, employment referrals, and housing resources.

Back on My Feet is a national nonprofit that aims to combat homelessness through a running-based restorative model. This model paves the way to establishing new lives through employment and housing.

The organization enlists several homeless shelters to refer interested participants committed to running three days a week — Monday, Wednesday, and Friday — at 5:30 a.m. Those who meet a 90% attendance threshold the first month move on to “Next Steps.”

The shelters partnering with Back on My Feet in San Francisco include Larkin Street Youth Services, Hospitality House, and Cityteam. Individuals who are selected into the program take part in one of three running groups that assemble near these shelters.

Program Director Cricket Miller works closely with the shelter facilities and their staff.

“They (the shelter facilities and their staff) are the front line and know the potential members better than most,” Miller said. “I have been in the shelters 2–3 times a week since the partnerships have been made. The staff can help in many ways.”

Selection becomes an option to those in the later stages of the

Cityteam’s live-in recovery program, and specifically for those individuals who have gained a certain level of autonomy, according to Cityteam Director Eric Venable. The other partnering shelters follow similar standards.

“Back on My Feet and our program work like hands and gloves,” Venable said. “It streamlines our own process of live-in recovery. It turbocharges our mentorship capacity. It gives our guys more on-ramps to skill building. It also gives them a sense of control. They get ownership in the process.”

The San Francisco Chapter of Back on My Feet is the twelfth in the nation. It is also the newest. The initiative to bring Back on My Feet to San Francisco began in January of 2016 by CEO Katy Sherratt.

Sherratt summed up the importance of the nonprofit’s launch on November 18 in San Francisco.

“Homelessness is a critical societal issue that is alarmingly prevalent in San Francisco,” Sherratt said. “Our goal is to enable positive change in the community and to have a major impact on the lives of those experi-



encing homelessness in San Francisco. We are eager to join the San Francisco community in helping to tackle one of the city’s most pressing challenges.”

Miller delved into some of the critical issues Back on My Feet aims to bridge. “Through my experiences of working with the homeless population, I have

learned that being homeless is much more than not having a home,” Miller said. “It is a lack of sense of stability and community as well. Back on My Feet provides members and volunteers with an opportunity to bridge the gap, while engaging in a healthy activity.”

Back on My Feet’s official launch coincided with National Hunger and Homelessness Week, November 12–20. Parisoma, a co-working space in the South of Market neighborhood, was the site where approximately 20 runners assembled that Friday at 7 a.m. Once they formed a circle and began to stretch, the seeds were sown — running rituals binding them through their journey over the weeks and months to follow.

The launch brought in members from each of the three running groups. San Francisco Executive Director Linda Glassel said that the participants were transported from their respective shelters to Parisoma.

“The social interaction and atmosphere is quite situational, you just have to experience it,” Glassel said. “Everyone circles up. It is a key piece to the whole program.”

Glassel said that the volunteer team brings in a host of attributes that participants may not be used to. These attributes include support, camaraderie, and accountability — building a foundation for community that in turn fosters stability.

Miller elaborated on the importance of community and how Back on My Feet bridges the divide.

“We not only utilize running but also the power of community and the support they are able to

the volunteers, and the ‘Tunnel of Support.’”

Volunteers are asked to commit to at least once a week. Glassel said that those who are interested should be aware of the different physical abilities of those being served by the program. Because of this, runners, joggers, and walkers are sought.

Each volunteer is paired with one person seeking services, and can be expected to go anywhere between one to five miles. This way, volunteers and participants build connections, share conversations, and build trust, according to Glassel

“We aim to keep volunteers with the same program participant,” Glassel said. “It is like having a running partner.”

“The community and camaraderie is really built within each team and every team is different,” Miller said. “As mentioned earlier unique bonds and friendships form between the members and volunteers. They offer each other encouragement and motivation. That’s something that everyone can use in life.”



The Young Professional Board — YPB — was integral in getting the San Francisco chapter off the ground through outreach efforts. The board consists of young professionals who are

just beginning their careers in various professions. The YPB is tasked with about three volunteerism and fundraising events per year, according to Glassel.

Pete Roller, one of the original members of the YPB, said that Sherratt assembled the board in January. Roller said most of these first members already knew about Back on My Feet. After several successful events, Roller said he has witnessed an increased interest and involvement from the community through volunteerism, a growing number of fellow YPB members, and increased donations.

“Many who came out to our events are now volunteers,” Roller said.

Along with YPB, The San Francisco Advisory Board does much of the same. These board members are well established in their careers, are tasked with Back on My Feet’s strategy, and are expected to have a greater impact with fundraising events and projects.

There has been a multitude of outreach to the community,

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Nonprofit News

Shanti Project — continued from page 1



[Clockwise, from top]: Group of volunteers with the Shanti Project; Shanti clients with pets. Photos by Kendra Luck of www.Shanti.org. Shanti members in discussion on outside deck. Photo by Jonathan McLeod of www.Shanti.org.

Project at the time was considered to be the first ASO to fight the epidemic and provide direct assistance to those affected. The program puts more of an emphasis on HIV/AIDS because that was the reason it was founded; however, now the program has extended its services to women with any form of cancer and individuals with mental illnesses.



A new program, the Department of Aging and Adult Services — DAS — is also being developed. The program will specifically work with LGBT community and senior citizens who face isolation problems, while also simultaneously providing reintegration services. Another well-known program offered by the Shanti Project is the L.I.F.E.

program, or Learning Immune Function Enhancement. This is based on scientific research that connects performance in certain biological, psychological, and social cofactors to immune system functioning, disease progression, and overall health. The program has two main goals — to reduce transmission, and also to optimize health outcomes for

people living with HIV/AIDS. Overall, the program has reduced health problems by 27–44 percent, and other personal problems by 38–50 percent. The L.I.F.E. program is an essential piece to the Shanti Project because it “provides participants

with the knowledge, motivation, skills, and support necessary to establish and maintain health-protective routines.”

Food for thought: Did you know that the Shanti Project conducts 90 percent of its services in the field? This is one of the best direct assistant programs that is a pro bono service in the City of

San Francisco. Figuratively speaking, the Shanti Project is “a part of the fabric of the city” said Deputy Executive Director Mike Hickey.

The mission of the Shanti Project is that it “exists to enhance the health, quality of life and well-being of people with terminal, life-threatening or disabling illnesses or conditions. Through a continuum of services, including in-home and onsite patient and care navigation, emotional and practical support, Shanti strives to achieve the highest medical and quality of life outcomes for San Francisco’s most vulnerable.”

Ultimately, the program forges relationships in alignment with the Shanti Model and creates a suitable environment and atmosphere for its clients. Director of Development Mindy Schweitzer-Rawls at the Shanti Project said, “Our initiative is a voice and source of compassionate support for our clients.”

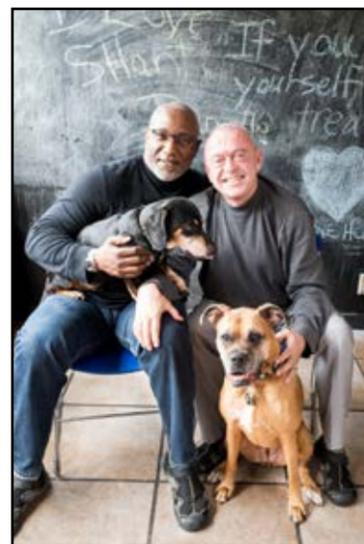
Another goal the Shanti Project strives to meet is helping clients deal with the intangible issues they may not be able to see or feel during the adversity of their illness. Bringing visibility to these clients and those intangible matters is a primary role the Shanti Project fulfills in order to make full-circle relationships between volunteers and clients.

However, volunteers are not there to “fix” a client’s problems. Instead, volunteers provide helpful services, such as accompanying clients or simple chores that alleviate stress on the client, and being an excellent vehicle for posi-

tive communication. Volunteers — who are not licensed therapists — are simply there to help the client solve their own problems through the Shanti model.

Walter Campbell, a volunteer with the Shanti Project, said that one motivating thing about the project is that it is “productive for other people” who are volunteers. Volunteer corps are the reason that nonprofits are so successful — because they do everything they can to produce effective results. Volunteers are paired up with clients by finding the best possible matching personal backgrounds between the two parties. However, before they are paired with a client, volunteers are inducted into

an intense 1-day training seminar, followed by six months of additional educational training and commitment. During this training, they are learning to listen and to provide a nonjudgmental atmosphere. As Hickey said, “most people that volunteer want to give back, and they want to help someone.”



If you cannot volunteer, there are still ways in which you can donate and/or support the Shanti Project. You can pair up with various other city departments who are partnered with the program; you can be a small donor or big donor; or you can volunteer at fundraising events that are featured by the program — such as their annual gala, called “Compassion Is Universal.” So if you are looking to get involved and give back to your local community, the Shanti Project is a place to exhibit your consciousness and kindness.

Back on My Feet — continued from page 4

the establishment of partnerships, fundraisers, and seed funding projects.

Roller credits several efforts to reach individuals who may not be runners themselves in garnering further support. A charity bartending event in August — in which tips went to Back on My Feet — not only raised money, but also increased the volunteer pool. A 2-hour spin class in October at a local fitness center brought in further interest with between 30–40 participants.

Likewise, Back on My Feet periodically involves those they serve with social events outside of the program. Venable said that “the guys gain so much,” including a sense of normalcy and one on one attention.

One example Venable gave of normalcy and mentorship outside the sphere of running, or the broader program, included the opportunity bestowed upon program participants to attend the Pac-12 Football Championship at Levi’s Stadium on December 2. Venable said that this was a chance for those at Back on My Feet and program participants to deepen their bonds and commitment, as well as to spur new interest from others at the shelter not involved with the program.

Participants receive the gear necessary for them to succeed. Shoes are donated by Fleet Feet. Back on My Feet provides shorts, socks, long-sleeve shirts, and warm-ups with a Back on My Feet logo.

“I visited our partnering shelters on Thanksgiving and saw members in their new shoes and how good they feel in them,” Miller said.

Venable said that many at his shelter not yet involved with the program are taking notice, and seem more apt to join, open up their world, and try something new.

“In recovery, their world can become small,” Venable said. “Do something new, because sometimes the new thing is what you need.”

Miller said she encourages those not yet involved to take that step to recovery.

“Morning runs are early, and if the staff is on board with the

program, they too can encourage members to wake up for the runs and get involved,” Miller said.

“The case management — CM — staff and I work together to make sure an individual in the “Next Steps” phase sets goals that correlate with the CMs as well. Back on My Feet acts an extra resource for clients within the partnering shelter and should complement their work as well.”

The organization is planning to host its first gala in May 2017. More information can be found on the website at <http://sanfrancisco.backonmyfeet.org/>.

Nonprofit News

One Warm Coat: keeping the Bay Area warm for 25 years



[Clockwise, from top]: Mother and child with donations; Board Chair Sherri Wood; President and CEO Jennifer Stockard; children with new warm coats. Photos courtesy of Director of Communications Patti Zappa, www.onewarmcoat.org.

By Michael Orion Powell Deschamps

According to statistics, there are 795 homeless people per 100,000 people in San Francisco — one of the country's highest rates for homelessness. San Francisco is a compact city by the water, and the weather can get pretty chilly at night — something that may seem

organization also enjoys a presence in a diverse number of countries outside of the United States, including Lebanon, Singapore and Hong Kong.

OWC originally started in 1992 as an event held in San Francisco's Union Square. Not formally an organization — the genesis of OWC “just happened.” Coats were distributed success-

fully to people in need, and the drive continued, with the organization building informally around that original drive. These events were held by Lois Pavlow, who continued to build recognition and esteem for OWC to the point of recognition by the Bush White House, which said

of Pavlow, “Since the One Warm Coat began in 1992, 3/4 of one million coats have been donated.” In addition to her work with OWC, Pavlow also founded the Child Abuse Prevention Society.

Pavlow was involved in OWC the entire time until her passing in 2015, leaving it in the venerable hands of Sherri Lewis Wood, who stands now as OWC's Chair and “National Founder.” While talking with Wood, she expressed that one of the primary accomplishments of OWC was its longevity — the organization has been around for almost a quarter of a century now and many of its volunteers are proud of having volunteered for OWC as children or young adults.

OWC has roughly 80 agencies throughout the Bay Area, and

Wood stated that the structure allowed for the informality needed for affiliates to hold drives of their own — whether they are running a preschool, church, university or a senior care center. “We don't have a bureaucracy; we're a virtual organization that allows people to create their own drives. To me, the cool thing is 25 years later, we're growing and they're still coming back,” Wood said. “Right now, we've really got to get caring about other people. It's about what you have — most people have another coat and think about those who don't.”

OWC is affiliated with a wide swath of businesses in the area, including very well known ones, such as Delta Airlines and Coca-Cola. Coca-Cola launched several showcases at Walmarts in Northern California aimed at raising awareness of OWC to Wal-Mart shoppers, all of whom could participate in OWC's drives. “Most people have at least one extra coat,” Wood said. “Imagine there's someone out there who doesn't.”

Coat drives are operated very informally, with OWC-provided banners and tax receipts that can be given to drive participants, with most of the other formalities decided upon by the participating

December 15, and over the last years has grown to encompass all 5 of BPB's branches in the area. “There are much larger donation sites, but we feel we can get the attention of people walking by, seeing our display and bringing a coat in the next day that they may have hanging unused at home,” Sue Colliver, branch manager at

BPB, told me. “Donors have come back year after year to make coat donations at our location, they say it is convenient and easy for a worthwhile cause.”

Another organization that has been heavily involved

with OWC has been the Girl Scouts. Scout leader Tiffany Hasker — whose troop has been participating in OWC coat drives in 2015 and 2016 — said that she saw direct impact in her troop members' sensibility as they delivered much needed items to people in need, “They love feeling like they are bringing their whole school together to help their community,” she said. “They take great pride in speaking in front of the school about it, and in delivering the coats to the homeless center. Especially since our school is near a park where there are homeless people — they see firsthand the direct need for what they are doing.”



ONE WARM COAT®



trivial for someone with shelter, but a real challenge for the city's many homeless residents.

One Warm Coat — OWC — has been operating as a philanthropic organization dedicated to providing much needed clothing to individuals in the Bay Area, the country and the world; the



groups. The OWC website allows users to easily locate drives in their vicinity — for example, there are 30 drives within the Berkeley area.

One organization that has been involved in OWC's coat drives for a significant time, about 12 years, has been the Boston Private Bank — BPB — a lending wealth management and private banking company with locations throughout the Bay Area. Annually, the bank collects 150–200 coats by way of their clients to be later distributed by the St. Anthony clothing site — a San Francisco based charity. The coat collection process for BPB lasts from November 21 until

Hasker commented about what a success their drive was — her girls collected over 200 coats in all, so many that the local homeless center organized an event just to distribute the coats. “The girls were over the moon about that,” Hasker said.

There are always people in need and the winter season is a time in which many less fortunate people are more prone to vulnerability from cold weather. Check out one of OWC's many drives at www.onewarmcoat.org, or send an email to drives@onewarmcoat.org. You might be able to help someone make their way out of the cold!

Neighborhood News

By Laurie MacDougall

Alamo Square

Update on regular events usually scheduled at Alamo Square Park

Construction on the site was originally scheduled to last through the end of January, possibly longer. Meanwhile, the weekly Alamo Square playgroup for toddlers, usually scheduled for Tuesday mornings, is on hold until completion of the construction project. Alamo Square Bark, however, is hosting playgroups for furry family members at other parks around the city. You can learn more about when they are scheduled at www.facebook.com/alamosquarebark/.



Free guided walking tours of the Landmark Victorians of Alamo Square, Thursday, January 5; Saturday, January 7; Thursday, January 19; and Saturday, January 21, at 11:00 a.m.

The continued closure of the park need not interfere with your enjoyment of the neighborhood. Through some of the most spectacular guided walking tours offered through the auspices of the San Francisco Public Library, you will learn about the City's most opulent and carefully restored "Painted Ladies," including the famous "Postcard Row." Tours meet in front of 824 Grove St. They are conducted by volunteers, so the walks are free, although donations are always welcome. For further information — and a comprehensive list of city walking tours throughout San Francisco — visit www.sfcityguides.org.

Classes offered with a master of Congolese traditional dance and drums, every Saturday, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at AAACC

Fans of dance and drumming have an exceptional opportunity to learn this dynamic traditional art form by studying with former lead

choreographer of the Congolese National Dance Company, renowned master teacher Sandor Diabankouezi. Classes are held every Saturday afternoon in the Dance Studio at AAACC — the African American Art and Culture Complex. For more information, call 415.302.8692.

Bayview Hunters Point

Free access to a well-equipped recording studio and help in learning how to use it — for youths ages 12–24, Monday through Friday, 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Third Street Youth Center and Clinic

It may come as a surprise to learn that among the many programs of the Third Street Youth Center and Clinic is a fully-equipped recording studio with state-of-the-art microphones. Young people are invited to create beats, write lyrics, record and publish their work. The studio is open during clinic drop-in hours, Monday through Friday from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., and every Wednesday an instructor is on hand to help participants get the most out of the program and equipment. For further information about all the services available, visit the website at www.3rdstyouth.org, or call 415.822.1707. The clinic is located at 1728 Bancroft Ave., on the corner of Bancroft and Third Street.

Twinkle Toes Ballet offers beginning classes for the young set, Bayview Hunters Point YMCA, every Saturday, 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Boys AND girls between the ages of 4 ½ to 10 years old are welcome to join these classes designed to give children confidence, coordination, rhythm and flexibility. Classes are taught by Sally Miramon at the Bayview Hunters Point YMCA at 1601 Lane St., in the 3rd floor Dance Studio. Classes are free for members or \$8 per class for nonmembers. For further information call 415.822.7728, or email APatton@ymcasf.org.

Delicious and affordable breakfasts and lunches now being served by HuliHuli Hawaiian Grill, another enterprise with meaning by Project Bayview, open from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. every weekday.

"Huli" means "turn" in the Hawaiian language, and this restaurant is devoted to turning lives around. The menu is based on the method of Hawaiian grilling, in which meat is turned and turned to seal in natural

juices, and the food is prepared by people who decided to turn from a life of crime or addiction. Proceeds from the restaurant are used by the nonprofit Project Bayview — which also runs the Nu2u thrift store up the street — to support those who are ready to take a new turn in life. HuliHuli is dishing up delicious at 4100 3rd Street, and is closed on Saturday and Sunday.

Fillmore

Free — "The Secret Life of Pets" is screening at the Western Addition branch of the S.F. Public Library, Saturday, January 7, 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Bring your favorite animal-loving kid to see the animated feature film, "The Secret Life of Pets." It is a comedy-action story about Max — voiced by Louis C.K. — a spoiled terrier who lives in luxury in New York City, until his owner adopts Duke, a giant and unruly canine who gets him in all sorts of trouble. The film is rated PG, and the screening will be held at the Library, 1550 Scott St.

Live jazz at the Fillmore Farmers Market, every Saturday, 9 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

The Fillmore Farmers Market is the only farmers market in San Francisco, and one of the few in the nation, to offer free live jazz for shoppers. Savor the music while you savor the gorgeous produce. Everything for sale is California-grown by the very farmers that planted, nurtured and harvested the crops. A wide assortment of artisanal breads, pastries, baked goods and cheeses are for sale, and you can snack on samples from local Fillmore restaurants. The Fillmore Farmers Market is open rain or shine, all year-round, and is located at O'Farrell and Fillmore Streets in the Fillmore Center Plaza.

Free guided walking tour — "Japantown, Urban Renewal and the Fillmore District" on Saturday, January 28 at 2:00 p.m.

If you are still trying to shed those pounds you gained over the holidays, join in this walking tour that traverses two neighborhoods — the Fillmore Jazz District and nearby Japantown — and traces their interlocking histories. This is one of many free walking tours offered in partnership with the San Francisco Public Library. Tours meet at the intersection of Buchanan and Sutter Streets, near 1747 Buchanan St., next to the large Japanese gate — the rectangular arch at the entrance to the pedestrian mall. The meet-up location can be reached by MUNI buses 2, 22, and 38. Conducted by volunteers, the walks are free, although donations are always welcome. For further information, visit www.sfcityguides.org.

Hayes Valley

A series of five Brain Fitness classes will meet every Tuesday, starting January 17 and ending March 14, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:50 a.m. at the San Francisco Public Library Main Branch. Free.

The brain is like any muscle in the body, it needs exercise. And this series of free classes will teach you how to challenge your brain in fun and creative ways. Classes are structured to be social, entertaining, and informative, and you can join the series at any time by simply attending class and filling out a registration form. For further information contact Hope Levy at 415.931.8679, or hopelevy0@gmail.com. Meetings will be held in the Latino-Hispanic Meeting Room at the Main Branch, 100 Larkin St.

Free MLK Day Open House at the SF Jazz Center, Monday, January 16, with special free shows at 11:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.



The SF Jazz Center is celebrating its fifth anniversary season with a pull-out-all-the-stops day of live music and activities for the whole family, tours of the Jazz Center, and an opportunity to learn more about America's art form — jazz. Catch performances by the SF Jazz High School All-Stars Big-Band and special musical guests. You can reserve free tickets for the three performances by visiting the website at www.sfjazz.org. The SFJazz Center is located at 201 Franklin St.

Youth Speaks celebrates its 20th Annual "Bringing in the Noise for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Poetry Slam Showcase," January 16 at the Nourse Theater, 7:00 p.m.

After an immersion in the joys of jazz, top off MLK Day in Hayes Valley with a special celebration of the life and legacy of Dr. King through the voices of young poets and writers. This year's showcase is inspired by Dr. King's seminal speech, "Where do we go from here: Chaos or Community?" Tickets are \$10 general admission, \$5 for youth under 24. For tickets or more information, visit the website www.youthspeaks.org. The Nourse Theater is located at 575 Hayes St.

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Community Voices

Making life easier for the elderly

By Nicole G. Manina

It was an especially cold December afternoon, as I walked through San Francisco's Financial District looking for 731 Sansome St. Peering at me over my scarf, the woman behind the front desk came quickly to the door, urging me inside and out of the cold. The office was very much alive, filled with the daily bustle one would

Ma was most excited to discuss the nutrition plans and meals SHE offers daily. Their newest program, called Choosing Healthy Appetizing Meal Plan Solution for Seniors — CHAMPSS — allows seniors the experience of dining in a restaurant at a price they can afford. In Partnership with S&E Café on 19th Avenue, and funded by the Department of Aging and Adult Services, attendees need



[Above]: August 2016 gathering listening to SHE speaker. [Below]: Josephine Ma, fund development director for SHE. Photos courtesy of www.selfhelpelderly.org.

expect to find in a large firm or corporate setting, not at a non-profit organization that specializes in senior care. Shortly after my arrival, I was greeted by Fund Development Director Josephine Ma, who was smiling from ear to ear as she took my hand in her own. We moved to a small conference room located in the back of the building, where I gladly accepted a hot cup of tea. Reaching my notebook, Ma spoke first, "I love what I do," she said. "It is very rewarding."

In 1966, Self Help for the Elderly — SHE — opened on Old Chinatown Lane in San Francisco, with only three tables and a mission to serve the poverty-stricken of their diverse community. Now on the cusp of their 50th year anniversary, SHE now serves over thirty-five thousand low-income seniors a year in the Bay Area. With over nine programs, structured to assist common yet specific needs, thousands of seniors can now successfully navigate this late chapter in their lives with the confidence that comes from being self-sufficient. Programs such as Social Services, Caregiving and Housekeeping, Home Health Care and Hospice, Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy, as well Adult Day Services, not only support seniors, but offer comfort and security to the many family members unable to dedicate their own time to assisting their aging loved ones.

only offer a donation of \$3.50 for a satisfying, dietitian-approved, meal of their choice. Collectively, SHE offers over a thousand meals a day, including deliveries to the homebound. With ten senior centers located throughout the Bay Area, this year alone SHE provided more than 200,000 onsite meals, with an additional 100,000 meals delivered to seniors and persons with disabilities.



These same senior centers offer a wide range of both onsite and offsite activities, structured around the happiness and health of those they serve.

One of the most beneficial programs SHE offers is employment training and placement. Many low-income seniors are working well past the age of retirement, in order to support themselves and others under their care. And those seniors who are undocumented or do not speak English are often forced to take significantly lesser paying jobs with no security or benefits. SHE not only offers classes to teach basic English, but also trains and secures employment for low-income seniors, while simultaneously working towards obtaining health insurance, social security, and retirement. There is also the San Francisco Pathways to Citizenship Initiative, which helps with the meticulous process of becoming a citizen; applicants receive free legal care and language assistance.

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Midgett's Corner

My 2017 goal

Readers! Age is nothing but a number! If you read many of my columns at www.thewesternedition.com, you will see dating and life experiences fits all individuals who are in the dating game.



For some new readers, I reached age 80 on August 4. On September 25, a family member introduced me to a wonderful person who will now be a permanent fixture in my life. We agree and come to the conclusion we are 90 percent compatible; the other 10 percent is growth.

I want to share with you my life experiences and how I can write so many subjects. Taking you on my journey, hopefully, you will be wiser in 2017 than in 2016? This a new year now. So how do you see your life going forward in 2017? Will it be the same boring life as last year? What will be different? Do you have a goal?

How old are you? In your early twenties, there is hope for you to make some changes. Forties? A possibility. Fifties, you are still at the starting gate to a senior.

I will share my continued goal which has been in progress since 1986. I wrote my first book since living in San Francisco.

"These experiences led me to do workshops and write for other ages and genders."

My writing started innocently. I had written an erotic piece in high school. I let my best friend read it. I was in the 10th grade. He made a degrading comment. I threw the piece away. Then I wrote a poem in 1976.

Ten years later, I wrote a novel called "New York Flavor with a San Francisco Beat," an erotic book for men and woman over 55. I met men and women of varied genders and ethnicity. These experiences led me to do workshops and write for other ages and genders.

I wrote a relationship packet, "How to Keep a Spark in Your Life," and "Brown on Brown: Black Lesbian Erotica." The book in progress is called, "I'm 80 and Still Having Fun." You could say I'm still at the starting gate. Why? Here is the good part. I continue my process of writing every day. Getting feedback from men, women and students has brought me joy.

Also, it has changed some men and women's life for the better. One of my students, now 54, told me she sends the column to her mom in South Carolina. I present workshops for singles, family, and students.

Start planning fun time in your life and don't let the cell phone control your life, as I see this with youngsters and parents. Have verbal communication with your children as well as with adults. I see parents talking on phones and youngsters 3 and 4 doing the same.

Perhaps in your case, a lot of changing might not be necessary in 2017.

Relationships. Do you have one and how is it going? Your money maker? Your job or business? Does some firing or quitting need to happen?

How were your finances this year? Do you need to tighten up your budget? Did you overspend for Christmas? Why? Did you think if you didn't get everyone a gift you wouldn't be appreciated? Especially family members, even best friends, or your significant other? So, if some of the above issues need some work, do not be afraid to make changes. Sometimes the fear of change can move us faster in a direction we need to move.

Reflecting on 2016, I doubt that I would have done anything differently this year.

Send me an email at Midgettssf@aol.com. I enjoy email. Happy New Year to my wonderful readers! Continue life with joy in your heart. Share happiness with others.

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Neighborhood News

Neighborhood News — continued from page 7

Japantown

Free guided walking tour entitled *Japantown, Urban Renewal and the Fillmore District* on Saturday, January 28 at 2:00 p.m.

As also noted in the Fillmore section, you get double the fun when you join in this walking tour that traverses two neighborhoods — the Fillmore Jazz District and nearby Japantown — and traces their interlocking histories. This is one of many free walking tours offered in partnership with the San Francisco Public Library. Tours meet at the intersection of Buchanan and Sutter Streets, near 1747 Buchanan St., next to the large Japanese gate — the rectangular arch at the entrance to the pedestrian mall. The meet-up location can be reached by MUNI buses 2, 22, and 38. Conducted by volunteers, the walks are free, although donations are always welcome. For further information, visit www.sfcityguides.org.

Free personalized guided walking tours of Japantown for groups designed around the needs and interests of the group are available through the National Japanese American Historical Society, 1684 Post St.



And while we're on the subject, a very different kind of walking tour awaits you and your group, family, co-workers or quilting society, arranged according to your interests by the NJAHS as part of their educational programming. Your own personalized Japantown Cultural and Historical Walking Tour will be designed by the Society to meet your requirements. Three lengths of walks are offered: 45 minutes (abridged), 60 minutes (standard), and 75 minutes (detailed). You can select from a comprehensive list of possible subjects on the website. For further information, visit the website at www.njahs.org, or call 415.921.5007.

All-You-Can-Eat udon lunch, Sunday, January 22, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. hosted by the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California

Oodles of succulent noodles will be on offer at this unique fundraiser, and you can eat your fill knowing all proceeds benefit the 2016/17 Shinzen Nikkei Youth Goodwill Program. This cross-cultural exchange program fosters ties between the U.S. and Japan, through sports, youth exchanges, touring and home-stays. Young ambassadors build stronger relationships with the people of Japan, while learning about their cultural heritage, traditions and identity. The cost for more Udon noodles than you've probably ever eaten in a single sitting is \$15 for one, \$50 for four. The lunch will be held in the gymnasium of JCCNC, located at 1840 Sutter Street. For further information, visit the website, www.jccnc.org/event/udon/ or call 415.567.5505.

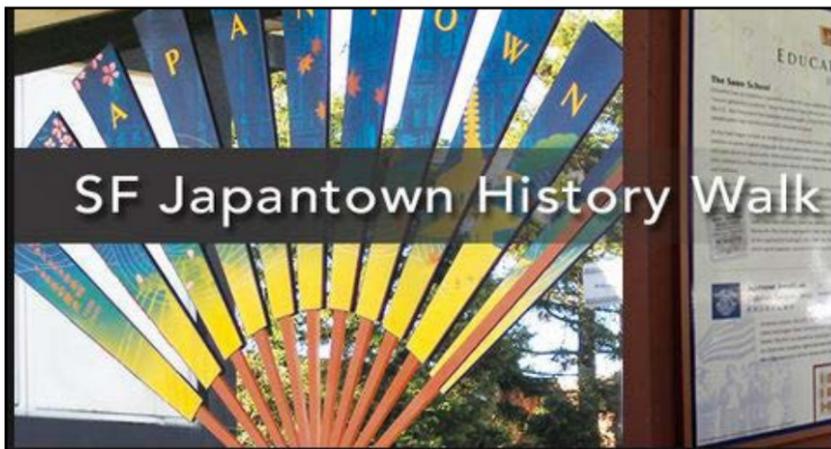
Thursday of every other month, in other words, every odd-numbered month. Speakers include SFPD Park Station, the Supervisor's Office, other city departments and other guest speakers related to our neighborhood. The Oasis Café is located at 901 Divisadero St.

Simply Sandwiches can use volunteers every Friday, 10:00 a.m. to noon, at St. Cyprian's Center

Friday is Simply Sandwich day at St. Cyprian's Center, where volunteers assemble sandwiches for more than 200 of San Francisco's hungry. If you have some time to help out, get more information by emailing glassgerrie@gmail.com.

Divisadero Farmers Market, every Sunday in January, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Divisadero Farmers Market offers seasonal organic fare and artisanal goods such as empanadas, jams, humus and flowers. CalFresh/EBT is welcome at this — and all — Pacific Coast Farmer's Markets. Visit the information booth for tokens that will double your CalFresh food dollars up to \$10. The Market is located on Grove Street between Divisadero and Broderick Streets. Visit www.farmersmarketscalendar.com/blog/divisadero-certified-farmers-market/ for more information.



NOPA

North of Panhandle Neighborhood Association — NOPNA — general meeting, Thursday, January 19, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Oasis Cafe

Keep up with the neighborhood by attending the NOPNA General Meeting, which takes place the third



Self Help for the Elderly — continued from page 8



Self Help for Elderly event in 2016. Photo courtesy of kammyk@selfhelpelderly.org.

SHE has several different housing programs. Lady Shaw, celebrating its 25th anniversary, is located on Mason Street in San Francisco. The 17-unit complex exists thanks to a generous donor out of Hong Kong, who named the beautiful development after

his wife. Lady Shaw offers cooking, calligraphy, singing, and tai chi classes, as well as 24-hour aid and a nutrition-based meal plan. Autumn Glow is a residential care facility specifically for elderly Alzheimer patients; with 15 beds, 24-hour aid, and healthy meals.

Autumn Glow provides medical and daily assistance to patients affected by Alzheimer's. However, staff members also encourage self-sufficiency by scheduling exercise and tea times that help promote a comforting and secure environment.

While the welfare of seniors is the primary focus of SHE, the betterment of our community is their ultimate goal — which is why SHE has teamed up with Comcast to create tech grants for children from low-income families in the Chinatown District of San Francisco. The after-school program offers a computer-based curriculum where children can learn a wide array of technical skills. After a year's participation and successful completion of the program, Comcast promises to give each child their own laptop.

SHE is an invaluable organization that goes beyond the call of charity. It is important to note, the many times during my interview

Ma used the word "entertain" rather than "serve," a testament to the respect these volunteers and employees have for the thousands of low-income seniors they see daily. Newspapers are too often filled with horror stories of senior abuse and neglect. It is humbling to see a group of dedicated individuals devoting so much of their time to the well being of those less fortunate. And it is because of the charity and commitment SHE promotes, that they have been able to turn to generous donations in a time when government funding is in such a fragile state. The Bay Area is lucky to be the home of such an outstanding community organization, and while SHE is a nonprofit organization with 501(C)(3) tax-exemption status, it still relies heavily upon the altruistic practice of philanthropy. More information about SHE, as well as ways to donate and volunteer, can be found on the website link at www.selfhelpelderly.org.

Be like a tree and share gratitude for managing stress in daily living



Point Reyes trees. Photo via Erik Peper, PhD.

By Erik Peper, PhD

I was late in the afternoon and I was tired. A knock was heard on my office door. One of my students came in and started to read to me from a card. "I want to thank you for all your help in my self-healing project ... I didn't know the improvements were possible for me in a span of 5 weeks ... I thank you so much for encouraging and supporting me ... I have taken back control of myself and continue to make new discoveries about my identity and find my own happiness and fulfillment ... Thank you so much."

I was deeply touched and my eyes started to fill with tears. At that moment, I felt so appreciated. We hugged. My tiredness disappeared and I felt at peace.

In a world where we are constantly bombarded by negative, fearful stories and images, we forget that our response to these stories impacts our health. When people watch fear-eliciting videos, their heart rate increases and their whole body responds with a defense reaction as if they are personally being threatened. Afterwards, we may continue to interpret and react to new stimuli as if they are the same as what happened in the video. For example, while watching a horror movie, we may hold our breath, perspire and feel our heart racing; however, when we leave the theatre and walk down the street by ourselves, we continue to be afraid and react to stimuli as if what happened in video will now happen to us.

When we feel threatened, our body responds to defend itself. It reduces the blood flow to the gastrointestinal tract where digestion is taking place and sends it to large muscles so that we can run and fight. When threatened, most of our resources shifted to the processes that promote survival while withdrawing it from processes that do not lead to immediate survival, such as digestion or regeneration. From an evolutionary perspective, why spent resources to heal yourself, enhance your immune system or digest your food when you will become someone else's lunch!

The more we feel threatened, the more we will interpret the events around us negatively. We become more stressed, defensive, and pessimistic. If this response occurs frequently, it contributes to increased morbidity and mortality. We may not be in control of external or personal events; however, we may be able to learn

how to change our reactions to these events. It is our reactions and interpretations of an event that contributes to our ongoing stress responses. The stressor can be labeled as crisis, or opportunity.

Mobilize your own healing when you take charge. When 92 students as part of a class at San Francisco State University practiced self-healing skills, most reported significant improvements in their health, as shown in Figure 1.

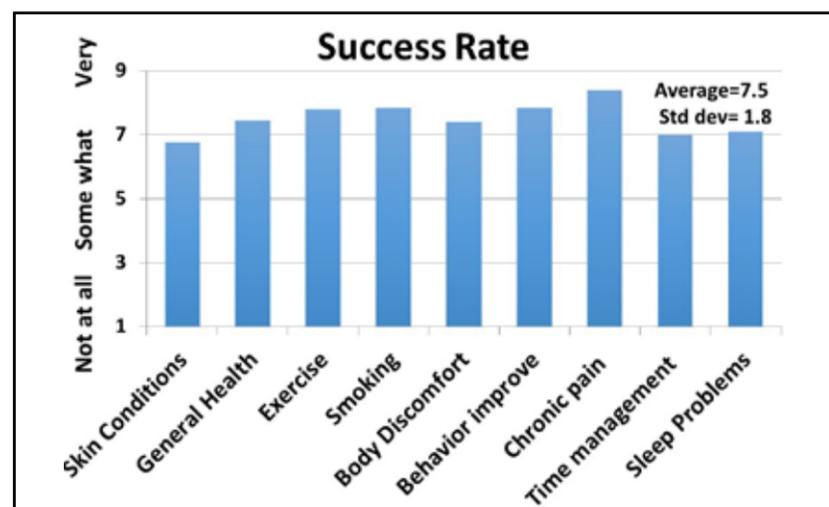


Figure 1. Average self-reported improvement after practicing self-healing skills for at least four weeks. Reproduced with permission from Tseng, C., Abili, R., Peper, E., & Harvey, R. (2016). Reducing Acne-Stress and an integrated self-healing approach. *ApplPsychophysiol Biofeedback*, 4(4), 445.)

A strategy that many students used was to interrupt their cascading automatic negative reactions. The moment they became aware of their negative thought and body slumping, they interrupted the process and practiced a very short relaxation or meditation technique.

Implement what the students have done by taking charge of your stress responses and depressive thoughts by 1) beginning the day with a relaxation technique, Relax Body-Mind; 2) interrupting the automatic response to stressors with a rapid stress reduction technique, Breathe and be a Tree; and 3) increasing vitality by the practice, Share Gratitude.

Relax Body-Mind to start the day*

- Lie down or sit and close your eyes. During the practice if your attention wanders, just bring it back to

that part of the body you are asked to tighten or let go.

- Wrinkle your face for 10 seconds while continuing to breathe. Let go and relax for 10 seconds.
- Bring your hands to your face with the fingers touching the forehead while continuing to breathe. While exhaling, pull your fingers down your face so that you feel your jaw being pulled down and relaxing. Drop your hands to your lap. Feel the sensations in your face and your fingers for 10 seconds.
- Make a fist with your hands and lift them slightly up from your lap while continuing to breathe. Feel the sensations of tension in your hands, arms and shoulders for 10 seconds. Let go and relax by allowing the arms to drop to your lap and relax. Feel the sensations change in your hands, arms and shoulders for 10 seconds.
- Tighten your buttocks and flex your ankles so that the toes are reaching upwards

to your knees. Hold for 10 seconds while continuing to breathe. Let go and relax for 10 seconds.

- Take a big breath while slightly arching your back away from the bed or a chair, and expand your stomach while keeping your arms, neck, buttocks and legs relaxed. Hold the breath for twenty seconds. Exhale and let your back relax while allowing the breathing to continue evenly while sensing your body's contact with the bed or chair for twenty seconds. Repeat three times.
- Gently shake your arms and legs for 10 seconds while continuing to breathe. Let go and relax. Feel the tingling sensations in your arms and legs for 20 seconds.
- Evoke a past positive memory where you felt at peace and nurtured.
- Stretch and get up. Know

you have done the first self-healing step of the day.

*Be gentle to yourself, and stop the tightening or breath holding if it feels uncomfortable.

Breathe and be a Tree to dissipate stress and focus on growth

- Look at a tall tree and realize that you are like a tree that is rooted in the ground and reaching upward to the light. It continues to grow even though it has been buffeted by storms.
- When you become aware of being stressed, exhale slowly and inhale so that your stomach expands, the while slowly exhaling, look upward to the top of a real or imagined tree, admire the upper branches and leaves that are reaching towards the light, and smile.
- Remember that even though you started to respond to a stressor, the stressor will pass just like storms battering the tree. By breathing and looking upward, accept what happened and know you are growing just like the tree.

Share Gratitude to increase vitality and health — adapted from Professor Martin Seligman's 2004 TED presentation, "The New Era of Positive Psychology."

- Think of someone who did something for you that impacted your life in a positive direction and whom you never properly thanked. This could be a neighbor, teacher, friend, parent, or other family members.
- Write a 300-word testimonial describing specifically what the person did and how it positively impacted you and changed the course of your life.
- Arrange an actual face-to-face meeting with the person. Tell them you would like to see him/her. If they are far away, arrange a Skype call where you can actually see and hear him/her. Do not do it by email or texting.
- Meet with the person and read the testimonial to her/him.
- It may seem awkward to read the testimonial, after you have done it, you will feel closer and more deeply connected to the person. Moreover, the person to whom you read the testimonial, will usually feel deeply touched. Both your hearts will open.

Erik Peper is a professor at the Institute of Holistic Health Studies, Department of Health Education, San Francisco State University. The link to his blog is www.peperperspective.com, and his website is www.biofeedbackhealth.org. He can be contacted by email at erik.peper@gmail.com.

Nonprofit News

Success Center's mission — breaking records by breaking barriers

By Zak Huffaker

By breaking the barriers that lie between disenfranchised, disconnected people and meaningful careers, the Success Center's Western Addition Career Center has also managed to break records in job placement at this previously floundering neighborhood access point, and bring a sense of hope and purpose to the community it serves.

In November 2014, Liz "Mama Lizze" Jackson-Simpson, executive director of the Success Center San Francisco — SCSF — took the helm of The Western Addition Access Point Career Center at 1449 Webster St. She quickly went to work assembling a crew of big-hearted, passionate team members — each of whom brings a sincere desire to help disconnected, marginalized individuals launch their own careers and gain a sense of pride, self sufficiency, and empowerment.



Established in 1983 by the Superior Court, SCSF — originally known as Youth Guidance Center Improvement Committee — has expanded far beyond its initial goal of serving the city's youths in juvenile detention. Today, the core focus of SCSF is encapsulated in the phrase "Empowerment Through Education and Employment," and the organization now offers "TAYs" — Transitional Aged Youth ages 16–24 — guidance, mentorship, education, GED classes, and service learning programs.

The continuing evolution of SCSF and its extraordinary commitment to the community is particularly evident when struggling job seekers visit the Western Addition Career Center. There, they are greeted by a team of caring professionals who are eager to help with writing a polished resume, career exploration, interviewing with confidence and charisma, computer access, and — in the caring hands of Job Developer Supervisor, Patricia Tu — even assistance with a sharp outfit or stylish hairdo that will give an

applicant that extra edge needed to land a new job.

"It's these little personal touches that really let the community know that we genuinely care about this. We have agape love for folks," explains Liz Jackson-Simpson.

And this love is especially palpable when the Western Addition Career Center takes its mission outside of the center and directly into the community itself through its interactive "Breaking Barriers" events in partnership with Westside Community Services and the Street Violence Intervention Program. Center staff goes straight into locations such as the Fillmore-Turk Mini Park and San Francisco's housing sites. One of these is Adrian Owens — a Career Center Service Connector with an innate knack for "connecting with folks on a deeper level" and forming trusting relationships while emphasizing, "We're not just going to have a table with information, we're going to engage in a conversation with you."

Whether an individual's issue is housing, legal issues, health, or lack of a diploma, Owens will proactively work to find out exactly what a struggling individual's barriers are, determine what resources are available to fit specific needs, and get to work breaking these barriers so that that person can get started down a path towards a productive, fulfilling future.

Michael, a man living in a San Francisco housing site who had personally been deeply invested in his community, but who had recently experienced a profound loss within his own family which resulted in deep depression, is just one example of an individual that Adrian helped by "making sure he understood his own qualities and the value of what he had to offer."

Although Michael initially struggled to follow through and take the steps necessary to break his own personal barriers, Owens was committed to helping him succeed. Through many meetings, conversations and a steadfast desire to build a trusting rapport, Owens finally helped Michael start serving the community he cares so much about again — and he is now employed with Tenderloin Housing Clinic.

Since November of 2014, the Western Addition Career Center has helped place 692 other people similar to Michael, each having a unique story and set of challenges. Liz Jackson-Simpson and her team are focused solely on helping people succeed, regardless of their background or circumstances. She resolutely conveys, "We color outside the lines all the time, and we have to because each individual that comes in here



[Clockwise from top]: Success Center team at the Western Addition Career Center; Adrian Owens with team members; two clients of the Career Center at computer desk. Photos by Zak Huffaker.

needs something different. There's no direct pathway. We need to be able to look at individuals differently and not blame them for what's happened to them."

At an early age, Jackson-Simpson was herself involved in a similar program — the Summer Youth Employment and Training Program. Being an accomplished musician, she was offered a position teaching the neighborhood youth to play stringed instruments, and when she graduated high school, she became an administrator of the program, which enabled her to start forging lasting relationships in every community in San Francisco.

One such relationship is SCSF's partnership with City College and the Office of Economic and Workforce Development. These organizations are working together with the Western Addition Career Center at 1300 Restaurant and Lounge, where job seekers receive hands-on, real-world experience in their Hospitality Boot Camp. Fully supported by London Breed, President of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, this program

tious candidates who are being placed in jobs in both Hospitality and Security.

Additionally, the Career Center is continuing to branch out into new fields, teaming up with Hack Reactor and Microsoft in new Coding Bootcamps for homeless youth, single parents, and youth who have been involved in the justice system. They are also developing a blossoming Construction Program in partnership with MUNI, MTA, Local 261, and the Ironworkers.

The Western Addition Career Center is also becoming a true hub for San Francisco's youth, such as Geoffrey Simpson. A graduate of SCSF's Early Morning Study Academy, he and a group of like-minded entrepreneurs are forming a budding program "My Homie's Couch" and answering the question, "What do youth in San Francisco need to succeed?"

With funding from the Office of Economic and Workforce Development, San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Their Families, United Way, Morris Stulsaft Foundation, Wells

Fargo, and PG&E, SCSF has become a truly valuable asset to San Francisco.

To get involved or take the first step on your own path to a successful career, be sure to the Western Addition



provides job seekers with excellent preparation for working in The Hospitality Industry -- a sector with an extremely high demand for qualified, hardworking candidates.

The Western Addition Career Center also partners with other community centered professionals such as Antonio Solano, Manager at Tacobar, as well as with Mountain Taylor, District Recruiter for a premier provider of security services. These resources are producing a wealth of ambi-

Career Center and get more information on upcoming events. These include "The Huddle" and "Ladies Night" on Thursday, January 19, as well as "Breaking Barriers" on Friday, January 20. Join in, as SCSF continues to bring empowerment through education and employment to the communities of San Francisco.

The Western Addition Career Center is located at 1449 Webster St. The phone number is 415.549.7000, and the website link is www.successcentersf.org.

Nonprofit News

Symphony Parnassus — continued from page 1

For the 85 musicians in Symphony Parnassus, classical music is a labor of love. While some of the musicians are semi-professional, most are amateur, with full careers independent of their participation in the orchestra. Eight of these musicians also volunteer as the organization's Board of Directors, including Susan Smith, the board President and the orchestra's second bassoonist.

Smith was a bassoonist with the UCSF Orchestra, having joined around the same time that Stephen Paulson became the music director. She said the transition to Symphony Parnassus after the group was cut from the budget, was relatively seamless under Paulson's direction. According to Smith, one of the most noticeable changes was that they were now playing in better venues, such as the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and the Herbst Theater at the San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center, instead of the UCSF gymnasium.

As a community orchestra, Smith emphasizes that Symphony Parnassus strives to find the best local amateur musicians. The orchestra is currently holding auditions for all musicians, but noted that they are especially interested in French horn and string players. Individuals interested in auditioning can find a contact form under the "About Us" heading on the website for Symphony Parnassus at www.symphonyparnassus.org/.

The orchestra also offers discounted tickets for students and senior citizens. Many of the musicians in Symphony Parnassus are also music teachers, and any of their students are able to attend the performances free of charge. The orchestra has also given free tickets to veterans and local family shelters. In regard to the community focus of Symphony Parnassus, Smith said, "My dream is that we wouldn't have to charge admission." She sees the orchestra as a way to broaden the outreach of



Orchestra violinists in rehearsal in 2014. Photo courtesy of Board President Sarah Smith, www.symphonyparnassus.org/.

classical music in the local community.

Doing so, however, would require either a major grant or a corporate sponsorship to subsidize the orchestra. Currently, ticket sales account for 40 percent of their operating costs, with the remainder made up mostly by individual donors. Seasonal subscriptions to professional orchestras have been in decline, and Symphony Parnassus also notes fewer subscriptions than in previous years.

In order to draw audiences, the orchestra tries to program ambitious work. This is where, according to Smith, music director Stephen Paulson's experience and professionalism is particularly valuable. Paulson is also Principal Bassoon for the San Francisco Symphony, and he is a teacher at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. According to Smith, Paulson's musical insight a great asset to the orchestra, and he "makes us appreciate even more what professional level musicians are able to achieve."

Despite occasionally uneasiness about the attendance of performances due to diminished seasonal subscription rates, Smith remains optimistic about

the impact Symphony Parnassus has on the local community. The orchestra co-hosts a concerto competition with the Conservatory, and frequently features its students as soloists.

The orchestra also works with local visual artists for their marketing materials, including artists from Creativity Explored in the Mission District. They also collaborate with local composers such as Cwik, who is their first Composer In Residence. Cwik is working with the orchestra on a piece to be featured at the final performance of the 2016–2017 season. According to Cwik, the position involves a very close relationship with the orchestra. Once the piece is in rehearsal, Cwik works with Paulson as well as the players to further develop his compositions. He said that the players "are very willing to give constructive input, and they always prefer that the composer is there," so that they are able to develop a closer bond with his music.

Working with Symphony Parnassus has been very influential in Cwik's career as a composer. A few years ago, Cwik composed pieces that were performed by Symphony Parnassus, and the orchestra was able to provide

him with recordings. According to Cwik, these were a major factor in his acceptance to The Julliard School, where he studied composition with John Corigliano, and graduated in 2013. Now a professor of Music Theory and Musicianship and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Cwik is "thoroughly grateful" for the opportunities Symphony Parnassus has presented him, as a local composer. This season will feature the fourth piece Cwik has composed in collaboration with Symphony Parnassus.

Tickets are available for the 27th season of Symphony Parnassus on its website, <http://www.symphonyparnassus.org>. Patrons may purchase a season subscription, or individual tickets to the performances on January 29, March 19, and June 11. The performance on January 29 will be the orchestra's premiere performance at the Taube Atrium Theater, the new high-tech 299-seat theater on the fourth floor of the Veterans Building at 401 Van Ness Ave., next door to the Opera House. The performance on March 19 will be at the Herbst Theater, and the June 11 performance will be at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

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