

A month of pride

Western Edition HP JOURNAL

June 2010

Bridging San Francisco communities through nonprofit services



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Levi Strauss brings volunteers, community together for annual event

By Kerri-Suzanne Kyle

In an effort to better reach out to the community, Levi Strauss & Company hosted its annual Community Day May 5 – where 600 employees participated in 25 projects around the city of San Francisco.

Volunteer efforts included upgrading Glide’s transitional housing center on Treasure Island, gardening at Good Samaritan Family Resource Center in the Mission, cleanup at Crissy Field and landscaping at Rob Field in the Presidio.

In addition to San Francisco, Levi Strauss organized volunteers in 165 local communities in 44 countries where the company has a presence, such as Taipei, London, Dhaka and Cape Town. The company chooses nonprofits that focus on environmental sustainability, equality and the fight against HIV/AIDS.

“The company has an obligation to show up in the community,” said Robert Hanson, president of Levi Strauss America. “It’s part of our legacy.”

The Edgewood Center for Children and Families has historical significance for Levi Strauss & Co, said Kelley Benander, director of Corporate Communications.

The company’s founder, Levi Strauss made his first donation of five dollars in 1850 to Edgewood, when the center was an orphanage. In 2010, Levi’s employees volunteered at “pop-up” Levi’s stores at Edgewood, donating new Levi’s clothes for each child.

At Levi’s Plaza, volunteers operated industrial machines to sew dog beds from denim scraps and clothing remnants, for the clients of PAWS, a San Francisco volunteer organization supporting pets



Levi Strauss & Company’s annual Community Day was held May 5. Blake Simpson, Senior Manager (left), and Robert Hanson, president of Levi-Strauss America, display a hand-sewn dog bed they completed for PAWS (Pets Are Wonderful Support). Below, employee volunteers cleaned up and weeded the grounds at Coit Tower’s Pioneer Park. Photos by Kerri-Suzanne Kyle.



of people with HIV/AIDS and other debilitating diseases.

“These dynamic volunteers from Levi’s are playing a big role in helping PAWS make sure that people in our community never have to give up the unconditional love and support their pets pro-

vide,” said John L. Lipp, president and CEO of PAWS.

Daniel Lee, executive director of the Levi Strauss Foundation, said, “I work in philanthropy day in and day out, but this is the day that reminds me what this company is all about.”

Chinatown CDC works to make housing for clients affordable

By Elen Nettlebeck

Safe and affordable housing has been an issue in San Francisco since the end of World War II. Thanks to one local nonprofit, residents – many of whom live in Chinatown – have the help they need in building a solid foundation for their families.

Formed Jan. 1, 1988,

Chinatown’s Community Development Center was created to coordinate and streamline the efforts of two other Chinatown community organizations. Until then, the Chinatown Resource Center promoted open space and recreation facilities, advocated for affordable and safe housing and planned for transportation. Chinese

Community Housing Corporation was a subsidiary of the resource center and was created to provide safe and affordable housing.

In addition to housing development, the organization now provides housing counseling, a food pantry program, a youth leadership program, community planning,

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Nonprofit

Quest 'bridges' bright future between students in need, universities

By Liza Gershman

"The future of our democracy rests upon ways of finding opportunity and mobility that are not happening in our unequal world. Quest (Bridge) is at the crossroads of doing just that."

Those are the words of Anthony Marx, president of Amherst College about the organization – founded in 1987 by Michael McCullough and Marc Lawrence, both of whom were Stanford University undergraduates at the time. It has been an incredibly successful scholarship matching program for low-income, talented youth to attend some of America's best universities and colleges.

QuestBridge is the provider of the National College Match Program and the College Prep Scholarship. Through one website, Quest Bridge connects academically talented low-income youth with more than 20 of the nation's best schools, scholarship providers and employers. Participating colleges include Amherst College, Brown University, Caltech, University of Chicago, Columbia University, Embry University, MIT, Northwestern University, University of Norte Dame, Stanford University and Yale University, to name a few.

There are 48 Quest graduates currently enrolled at Stanford and more than half of Quest graduates have eventually worked for Quest, ensuring continuity.

In order for a student to qualify for QuestBridge, he or she must be motivated and have the ability to academically thrive at one of the partner schools and live in a household whose annual income is less than \$60,000. Some of the factors QuestBridge uses to access a student's academic ability include his or her Grade Point Average – more than 75 percent of finalists are in the top 5 percent of their class – rigor of high school curriculum, stan-



Photos by Liza Gershman



dardized test scores, essays and recommendations.

"There is no shortage of low-income talent and more than enough to fill every dollar of financial aid in America with talent," McCullough said. There are approximately 30,000 talented low-income students who score over 1,300 on the math and science SAT, yet only 3,000 or so of these students attend top college with full financial aid.

"Many don't know that a college like Stanford, Amherst or Yale is actually cheaper for them than community college since the financial aid is so good for low-income students at these top colleges," McCullough continued. "Approximately 1,000 Quest

Bridge students gain admission to these schools and receive a combined total of more than \$1 million in financial aid.

QuestBridge wants students to succeed even before they gain admittance to a school during the admissions process.

"The moment you are identified as a QuestBridge applicant, you are prioritized in a way that very few applicants are," said Tom Parker, dean of Admission and Financial Aid at Amherst. "When you're a QuestBridge student, you're in a priority bin. They've got a leg up in a way that perhaps an athlete or legacy would have a leg up."

Once students enter into a school QuestBridge continues

"There is no shortage of low-income talent and more than enough to fill every dollar of financial aid in America with talent."

—Michael McCullough, Founder

to support them, understanding the tools that are needed for success go well beyond admittance and financial aid.

Students who tend to meet the requirements of the program demonstrate "exceptional academic abilities and drive to succeed despite financial obstacles." Most have taken the most challenging academic track offered at their schools like Advanced Placement courses, or they participate in Honors classes. This academic rigor not only gains them admittance to the top schools, but also prepares them for the sort of course work that they will undertake once they are enrolled at a university or college.

QuestBridge is able to continue its scholarship matching programs through the help and support of 16 full-time staff members and more than 50 community partners, the largest of which is the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Many donors are large foundations like Hewlett, and many are private individuals who simply believe in the organization's vision.

QuestBridge really is a program without bounds and recognizes that scholars come from "a variety of diverse cultural and racial backgrounds, including various U.S. states and regions," said founder McCullough. "We welcome top applicants in all shapes and sizes, the colleges would love for us to increase the pipeline of top students who we know are out there. There is no shortage of low-income talent and more than enough to fill every dollar of financial aid in America with talent," McCullough said.



Bay to Breakers 2010

With the usual fanfare and excitement, thousands of people from around the globe participated – one way or another – in the 99th Annual ING Bay to Breakers through downtown San Francisco. However, soon after the annual race, organizers got some disappointing news: the insurance giant announced that the company had reached its goal with its sponsorship of the race and would not renew its agreement.

LinkedIn Elite Centipede team members, center in white, run at the beginning of the 2010 ING Bay to Breakers race in San Francisco. The team won the Elite Centipede division. Courtesy of LinkedIn.

"These are the financial times," Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi told KTVU following the announcement. "I assume ING is dropping out of a number of races across the United States."

The 2010 Bay to Breakers featured many world class athletes including winner, Sammy Kitwara, from Kenya, who finished in 34:15 to win the race for the second year in a row. Lineth Chepkurui won the woman's division with a 38:07 finish.

Perspectives

Heart transplant recipient shares power of faith, determination

From The Western Edition
News Desk

At 30 years old, Ila May Fisher is filled with gratitude and the unique knowledge that humanity is composed of some pretty amazing people.

Fisher is a heart transplant recipient who in 1997, was diagnosed with dilated cardiomyopathy.

"The heart is weak and doesn't pump normally, most patients develop heart failure," Fisher said.

She was 18 years old when she received the news and was not expected to live unless she had a heart transplant. Against medical advice, she went home to get on with her life. Years later, while living in Humboldt County, Fisher collapsed and was air lifted to the University of California Medical Center in San Francisco.

Fisher was about to undergo a complete transformation.

"When I arrived at UCSF Medical Center on September 16, 2004, I was in multiple organ failure. My heart, liver, kidneys and lungs were all (failing). I had an estimated three days to live. I was so weak that I could not lift my arm off of the bed, and the nurses had to turn me every 30 minutes so that I would not get bedsores.

"I began to pray," she added. "I told God, 'If you can help me – and I do not know how – I promise that I will not live my life for myself, but for others.'"

Two days later, a surgeon explained that she was too sick to receive a heart transplant, but



Ila May Fisher - Photo by Western Edition staff.

"Accepting an organ carries a tremendous responsibility because someone has to die for it."

—Ila May Fisher

could be placed on a Ventricular Assist Device, or VAD – a 400-pound machine that would perform the work of her heart. She was told this was the only option to save her life and she had to make a decision immediately. At age 24, she agreed to the procedure suggested by the surgeon. As Fisher lay on the operating table, the surgeons cut her chest open and inserted several large tubes into her heart. Connected to the VAD, it pumped blood to the rest of her organs instead of her own ailing heart.

Every day following the

operation was a painful struggle, she said. For example, Fisher still had to be turned every 30 minutes and every time the nurses touched her she felt like she was being "beaten with hammers." But the doctors encouraged her to think positively and as she imagined her blood tests getting better, they did in fact improve.

Seemingly small challenges began to become the stepping-stones to her eventual recovery. Medical staff did not want to give her water because her body had become swollen with fluid, however, she remained thirsty. Hospital staff gave her ice chips instead. One day, she saw a cup of water within reachable distance and made a commitment to herself.

"I was thirsty and every time I asked the nurse for water, they would only give me ice chips. I was so swollen they wanted to cut down on the amount of fluid in my body so that my heart could rest. So I told myself, 'If you get that water, you will live. If you do not, you will die.' I could feel my skin rubbing against those tubes, but I was determined. It took me a long time, but I got the cup. It was the best drink of water that I ever had."

As time went on and her test results improved, Fisher received a treadmill. She told herself, "If you walk you will live, and if not you will die."

Fisher's residence was the intensive care unit at the UCSF medical center. Her life on the

unit was filled with the daily possibility of someone dying. She remembered her reaction when a patient in the room next to hers died and was wheeled out.

"I went into my room and cried because in all reality, we were both fighting for our lives. There is nothing that made us different; we both had an equal right to live. How did I know that I would not be next?"

Fisher grew stronger in her resolve.

"The next time one of my fellow patients died, instead of hiding, I got on that treadmill, moved faster and harder than ever and vowed that the only way that I was leaving the ICU for good was walking out on my own two feet."

After months of training, she was able to get onto her treadmill independently and eventually ran five miles every day while hooked up to life support.

While hospitalized, Fisher was offered hearts from two sources; one from family members who had lost a loved one and the other, a lung transplant patient who offered her own in the event her surgery was unsuccessful. Fisher declined both because of her hope for her own recovery.

"I felt like I owed my body the efforts and I could not accept a transplant until I exhausted all of my other options. Accepting an organ carries a tremendous responsibility because someone has to die for it."

Fisher's heart eventually became too weak and had to be replaced. Finally, she agreed to receive a transplant and went on the list. Fisher was fortunate ... a match was identified a few days later.

After a 15-hour operation and several blood transfusions, Fisher said, "I woke up to see the most amazing people I have ever met in my entire life, and of course, there was no babying. The day after my transplant, they made me get up and walk." There were many challenges following the surgery, but Fisher overcame them.

Today, Fisher is a beauty consultant. Her life transformed, she shares her experience as a way of encouraging others.

"I went through all of these trials to show people that even in the darkest of times, your life can change ... there is always hope," Fisher said. "If I found happiness attached to machines in the hospital, then people can find joy no matter what they are going through in life."

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Corporate Philanthropy

Volunteering for one CNET employee is music to youth's ears

By Pauline Guiuan

As the eighth grader at San Francisco's Horace Mann Middle School stood in the hallway, he timidly peeked into the doorway of a classroom from which the rich notes of a saxophone flowed. He watched quietly as a man guided a few students through a music lesson, something he had never seen before at his school.

The man in the room – Ed Hernandez – turned and smiled at the eighth grader.

“Why don't you join us, Daniel?” he said. Daniel paused apprehensively, scanning the brass instruments as he entered. He had never handled a saxophone before. Little did he know that his journey through music had begun, culminating in a performance at his middle school graduation several months later.

Daniel is one of many Horace Mann Middle School students who receive both academic and co-curricular support and guidance from Hernandez and his fellow employees from CNET – the online news source that is now part of CBS Interactive, the national online information and entertainment network.

CNET and CBS Interactive's San Francisco Community Involvement Committee chooses several local nonprofits and programs to support financially and through volunteer hours annually, said Tamara Woods, senior manager of Corporate Communication. The Horace Mann tutoring program is just one of a variety of programs that

CBS employees participate in.

“We choose local charities with a real need,” Woods said. “There really is a commitment to make a difference in the community ... we have a holistic focus on students and education, but it is by no means the only thing we do.”

She added that the committee started at CNET several years ago and continued when the company was bought by CBS. Each year, the group chooses one to three charities to support, keeping the number of beneficiaries small so that they could truly receive help “in a meaningful way.”

Woods said the committee does not formally follow guidelines for choosing charities to support, but rather bases their choices on their employee population and what charities their employees are involved in.

“It's largely driven by employees,” Woods said. “Even when the economy was terrible, we saw tremendous support from them.”

Along with Horace Mann, CBS employees regularly support and volunteer at Habitat For Humanity, the Oakland Zoo and the annual AIDS walk, to name a few. In 2008, the company donated \$50,000 to food banks all over the country; in 2009, the donated amount was \$25,000. The holiday season is especially full of volunteer opportunities, with pancake breakfasts and gift drives as part of the giving.

“We try to mix it up every year,” Woods said.



Photo courtesy of SF Education Fund.

The committee chooses a wide variety of charitable organizations to provide the employees with many different touch points for the community. Most employees, Woods said, like working with kids or Veterans. In the light of the recent years' economic difficulties, the employees were encouraged to continue giving their time even when they could no longer donate money.

The number of employees who regularly support a specific organization is hard to quantify, and is usually a “relatively small group,” Woods said, but they “see a lot of involvement in people coming out to activities and events and giving donations.”

One of the company's most committed volunteers is Ed Hernandez, who Woods said has tutored Horace Mann students for several years. Hernandez spends three to five hours a week, and his time at the school led him to establish the very first music program there.

After a couple of years tutoring at the Mission District school, Hernandez, who grew up playing music, said he was astounded to find that there was no music program there.

“I just always assumed they had one, as it was the norm in schools when I was growing up,” he said.

With the help of the San Francisco Education Fund – the organizational liaison between CBS and Horace Mann – and a few other local volunteers, Hernandez worked with the school to bring together musical instruments and hold classes twice a week for students who had an interest in music, but little opportunity or resources to learn how to play an instrument. The program launched in October 2008.

“What I took out of it the most was learning how much a kid can benefit from even a small amount of time you spend with them,” Hernandez said. “It really makes a big difference.”

Woods said she is impressed by how much commitment her fellow employees put into volunteering.

“They think of the big picture, of other people,” she said. “These people work fulltime, and yet they have such a commitment to make a difference in their communities. And the volunteers return year after year ... it's been a success.”

Hernandez said that the volunteer experience has increased his appreciation for his work and his coworkers.

“The corporation has really set a path for me and for a lot of people,” he said. “They make it easy for you to get started with volunteering and to continue doing so.”

Legislative News

Latest update on San Francisco's stimulus funds

Mayor Gavin Newsom announced late last month in a press release that there are “no reportable issues” in how the state is managing federal stimulus money, according to a April 2010 investigation by California General Inspector Laura Chick. Under the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, San Francisco will receive more than \$1.12 billion in federal stimulus funds. The money will be redirected into the economy and help create new jobs, including in the San Francisco Unified School District, the Doyle Drive project in the Presidio and the reconstruction other public facilities.



lant, transparent and accountable for every federal stimulus dollar we receive as we invest in the future of our city,” Newsom said.

Improve city through map tracking program

Newsom is calling all “tech savvy citizens to enhance the beauty of San Francisco.”

In April, the mayor announced that San Francisco would be the first city in the nation to use the Urban



Forest Map (www.urbanforestmap.org). Working with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and Friends of the Urban Forest, residents and visitors will be able to help put together a “tree census” by recording the size, age, type and location of trees throughout the city.

The online tool allows users to map trees in their homes, schools, offices or any public space, helping urban foresters, city planners and climatologists determine the environmental impact of the trees in an attempt to track tree pests and diseases, future environmental planning and tree maintenance.

Other cities are expected to pick up on the trend, as “Million Tree” campaigns are taking-off around the country.



Youth Commission applications being accepted

The 2010 elections are heating up - the Youth Commission elections that is. Once a year young San Franciscans between the ages of 12 and 23 are appointed to help city supervisors and the mayor keep up with what is fresh and happening in the forthcoming generation of citizens, and voice their opinions on policy and legislation that affects them.

Applications and nominations are due June 4. For more information, visit <http://www.sfbos.org/index.aspx?page=5585>.

Nonprofit

New Catholic Charities housing initiative focuses on family, youth

By Kerri-Suzanne Kyle

Renting an apartment at the newly built housing initiative at 10th and Mission means a permanent home to many in need, along with access to case management and a host of additional on-site programs provided by Catholic Charities CYO.

Although Mercy Housing operates the facility, Catholic Charities Catholic Youth Organization – CCCYO – supports residents with resources to “navigate the system,” said the organization’s executive director, Jeffrey Bialik. Services available include a youth center, senior facility, a food pantry, ESL classes, party and event planning and intergenerational programming with the seniors.

Bialik said the partnership with Mercy Housing allows low-income residents and the recently homeless obtain “permanent supportive housing.”

Among the 136 units, about 30 percent of the residents are referred by the San Francisco Human Services Agency, with the rest available by lottery. The priority is to serve the “invisible homeless,” families, as many are separated, living within different relatives’ homes or are residing in their vehicles.

“You rarely see a homeless family on the street,” Bialik said.

The initiative is “a new model for support,” which integrates several services designed to mitigate additional stresses to economic hardship, such as an onsite extensive after-school youth programming. He added that parents have a difficult time focusing on regaining economic stability, in the absence of affordable child care.

“We wrap services around the family; we wrap our arms around the family,” said Bialik, defining family broadly and inclusively. To strengthen it, create and sustain community, and “go beyond a meal for today and address” poverty as a “multigenerational issue,” he added.

Recently opened in September, the 10th and Mission



A look inside the Mercy Housing facility - Photos by Kerri-Suzanne Kyle.



Youth Center will be fully operational by this fall, said residential services coordinator Raymon Cancino. Since its inception, the programs offered give priority to residents; later it will be open to the entire community. The new center features an art room for ages 5 to 12; a full kitchen with classes on healthy eating and food preparation; and a computer lab with equipment donated by a technology nonprofit One Economy.

As part of the San Francisco city requirement for newly constructed buildings to include art façades, Mercy Housing commissioned Ball-Nogues Studio to envelop the youth center with an art piece sandwiched within the windows. The project blends industrial design with handcrafting and is infused with the theme of community cohesiveness and support, said Jonathan Kitchens, Ball-Nogues project manager.

Two other art projects included for the facility are the stair tower in the teen center, which “can be seen from Bernal Heights,” said Kitchens, and an internal series of warmly-hued linking hands in the Senior Center. Completion is scheduled for this July.

CCCYO intends for the youth center to fill a gap left by the closure of its Mission Day Care on Fair Oaks Street, said Cancino. The center lost the location in 2009 after 26 years. He said the 10th and Mission’s

center in the SOMA district will help recreate the sense of community established by the closed Mission District Day Care, two miles north.

Families and Community Coordinator Donna Talavera is one of several employees who transferred to the new youth center after the Mission District center closure. She’s currently planning the summer field trips for the 5 to 12 age group, with activities focused on cultural centers and nature exploration. The program will have several openings to youth not in residence.

Disappointed by the Mission Day Care closure, Talavera is dedicated to the new center.

“The economy is tearing down everyday life for families that were already struggling,” she said. “I’m so proud of these kids and want them to have everything they need to succeed. I imagine we’re molding future congressmen and women.”

History of CCCYO

Founded in 1907 to care for the orphans of the San Francisco earthquake, Catholic Charities CYO has been a leader in providing human services to the Bay Area for over 100 years.

Today, we operate more than 30 programs throughout San Francisco, Marin, and San Mateo Counties. These programs change the lives of children, families in crisis, single parents, the homeless, the elderly and disabled, those living with HIV/AIDS, and refugees and immigrants.

Our CYO programs bring youth—of all socioeconomic backgrounds—together to take part in organized athletic programs, summer camp, and environmental education.

Source: cccyo.org

Neighborhood News

Compiled by Lindsay Adams

(Editor's note: Beginning this month, each of our focus neighborhoods will include a question posed to random residents that pertain to their area, the city or what's going on in the world around us.)

This month's question: What makes your neighborhood stand out from other San Francisco communities?

Alamo Square



Photo by Western Edition staff

"It has a great sense of diversity. There's a lot of pride in the neighborhood. You can go from Bean Bag Cafe across the street to Nopa, or Eddie's Café to Tsunami. Within a block, you can go from a greasy spoon to a nice restaurant."

—Nico Lizarraga, Chateau Tivoli Bed & Breakfast Manager



Shops along Divisadero will open their doors from 6 to 9 p.m. June 3 for the Divisadero Art Walk. The event gives patrons an opportunity to check out new local art and take advantage drink specials.



The monthly Alamo Square Neighborhood Association Board Meeting will take place June 28. Meetings take place at Chateau Tivoli, 1057 Steiner St. and doors open at 7 p.m. with the meeting beginning at 7:30 p.m. All are welcome to discuss matters taking place in the neighborhood. If you would like to be on an upcoming meeting agenda, contact the ASNA Board President, Jeffrey Ross at jeffrey.ross@alamosq.org.



The Alamo Square Farmers Market takes place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Sunday at Divisadero and Grove.

Bayview Hunter's Point

"There's so much possibility. Even as much as there is going on, there's so much possibility. It's exciting. There's a lot of engagement among the people here."

—Jacob Moody, Bayview Hunters Point Foundation Executive Director



The Bayview Hunters Point Project Area Committee will be holding the following meet-

ings at Hunters Point Shipyard SFRA/Lenar Site Office Trailers (Conference Room):

◆The Economic, Employment and Housing Committee will meet from 6 to 8 p.m. June 2.

◆The Land Use Committee will meet in the Alex Picher Community Room from 6 to 8 p.m. June 7.

◆On June 8, the Health and Environment Committee will meet from 5 to 7 p.m.

◆The Education Committee will meet from 6 to 8 p.m. June 10.

◆The Executive Committee will meet from 6 to 8 p.m. June 17.

For details and updates, visit www.bvhp-pac.org/meetings.htm#nextmonth.



Every Thursday, is the Bayview Hunters Point Town Hall Meeting from 7 to 9:30 p.m. at the Muhammad University of Islam, 195 Kiska, next to the Boys & Girls Club. All are welcome to come and participate in discussions on news and community improvement.



Photo by Western Edition staff

Panhandle

"I have found a great community in the expanding neighborhood coined NOPA, North of Panhandle. By keeping big business out and promoting small businesses, this area has flourished in these troubled times. It is creating its own micro-economy with eco-friendly cafes and even our own Farmers Market. I think that if we all continue to invest in our neighborhoods and support local businesses then we will grow stronger within our communities."

—Candace Collins, KA Interiors Designer



NOPA Networking will take place from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. June 8. Location: TBD.



This month's Panhandle Clean Up will take place from 9 to 11 a.m. June 12 at Masonic and Fell. Join in to help keep the Panhandle beautiful.



NOPA Little Ones Monthly Playgroup will take place from 10 a.m. to noon June 13 for parents and children up to age 5. Location: TBD.



Fillmore Jazz District

"There's a lot of diversity – different kinds of restaurants, different entertainment, different shops – all within a few blocks. There's (sic) so many different people, businesses, places to eat and so much music within just these two to three blocks. People go to Yoshi's and they can eat sushi and listen to jazz. You can get whatever you want. It's very appealing."

—Netsanet Alemayehu, Sheba Piano Lounge and Restaurant Partner



The U.S. Air Guitar Championship-San Francisco will be held at The Fillmore Auditorium, 1805 Geary Blvd., on June 5, starting at 9 p.m.



The 11th Annual San Francisco Black Film Festival will take place June 15-20. The six-day event features independent films and includes panels and workshops, all which celebrate African and African-American culture. For more information, visit www.sfbff.org.



Lalah Hathaway will be at Yoshi's Jazz Club in honor of Father's Day from June 18-20. Yoshi's is located on 1330 Fillmore St.



The 60th Annual San Francisco Juneteenth Festival takes place on June 19 and 20 at San Francisco Civic Center Plaza on Polk Street, between Grove and McAllister. Celebrate African-American freedom through music, performing arts, living history and other cultural activities. Festivities begin at 10 a.m. For more information, visit www.sfjuneteenth.org.

Hayes Valley

"There's definitely an eclectic measure of real happening things. There's (sic) a lot of great restaurants, a lot of great shops. It's a real cultural hub being attached right



Photo by Liza Gershman

by the ballet and the symphony. It's a very active community, very happening."

—Captain Ann Mannix, SF Police Department, Northern District



On June 7, the Hayes Valley Neighborhood Association Public Safety Committee will meet at the Korean American Center, 745 Buchanan. The meeting runs from 7 to 8 p.m. For more information, contact Bob at safety@hayesvalleysf.org.



The Mo' Magic Community Meeting takes place on the third floor of the African American Arts & Culture Complex, 762 Fulton. Meetings will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. June 10 and 24. For more information, contact Sheryl at Sheryl@momagic.org.



June 12 is the date of the Northern District Police/Community Relations Forum, from 6 to 7 p.m., at the Northern Police Station, 1125 Fillmore. Work with police and city and district attorneys to find permanent solutions to ongoing safety issues. For more information, contact Captain Mannix at Ann.Mannix@sfgov.org.



The H.V.N.A. General Meeting will be from 7 to 8:30 p.m. June 24 at the Bridge Housing Community Room, 333 Fell.

Nihonmachi (Japantown)

"Japantown is so peaceful. When you walk around the neighborhood it's so quiet. There's (sic) so many trees and statues. Everything's so beautiful. It's inviting to go to the mall and the bookstores and all the shops. My favorite is a tiny little shop under a bookstore with a bunch of little fans and flowers out front."

—Jeff Lao, Community Youth Center San Francisco Employment Specialist



The JCYC 40th Anniversary Gala will take place from 7 p.m. to midnight June 19 in the Japantown Peace Plaza. Help honor 40 years of empowering young people for the future. Entertainment will include The Bold Rebels & Lady Red featuring Colette Ikemi, Funk Beyond Control and Michelle Martinez. For more information, visit www.jcyc.org.



The first National Asian American Pacific Islanders Historic Preservation Forum takes place June 24-26 at Hotel Kabuki, 1625 Post St. For more information, visit www.apinhp-forum.org.

Help save our neighborhood firehouse, Station #5 on Turk Street.



SAVE OUR

WESTERN ADDITION FIREHOUSE

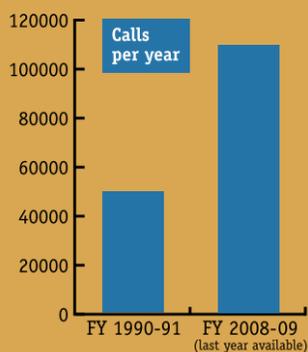
CHECK THE FACTS:

While other parts of government have grown substantially in the last 20 years, the Fire Department has been getting more efficient. Firefighters and medics responded to more than twice as many calls in 2009 than in 1990.

That's why the last thing we should cut are vital services handled at our neighborhood firehouses.

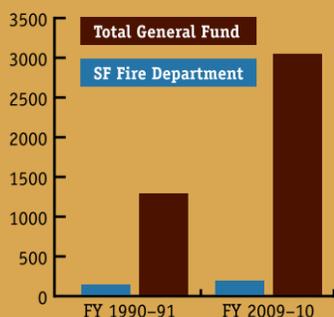
EMERGENCY CALL VOLUME

(total fire, medical & rescue incidents per year)



GENERAL FUND SUPPORT FOR SF FIRE DEPARTMENT

(amounts in millions of dollars)



Dear San Francisco Neighbors,

San Francisco's firefighters are working side-by-side with their fellow San Franciscans to meet the challenge of today's economic crisis.

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Community Voices

Middgett's Corner

Learning ... in and out of the classroom

When was the last time you were in a classroom? Today? Last week? Many years ago? I can safely say the former because while reading this column, you are in a learning mode.

Your learning environment can be constant even if you are not aware that the process is happening. Below, I have provided examples on how learning takes place in your life every day and throughout your life. I also will demonstrate where learning is happening, which, I'm sure, will amaze you.

At home. In the beginning of my teaching career, I had no educational background to bring to the classroom. My parenting knowledge and common sense was my classroom education. My teaching experiences raised my awareness about how important the colors and shapes were in a classroom environment. I would observe my co-workers using books and paints to teach colors.

I had no preschool educational background, no awareness of colors and shapes, while volunteering in my daughter's preschool some 45 years ago. I was a stay-at-home mom. When my son entered kindergarten, he had no preschool experience. His teachers never told me that he had issues with colors and shapes. He graduated into the first grade in public school in New York without a hitch, then on to Catholic school. Reflecting on my kindergarten experiences, I don't recall the learning of colors and shapes with such persistence.

When my daughter was in kindergarten I was asked to stay on at school with a paid position. I entered college while working in the classroom. Then I figured out a way for the little people to learn colors and shapes in another way. I would tell the parents

that when they asked their child to get something – anything – for them, they should describe the color and shape. It worked!

At the library. Many parents and adults, even today, do not realize the importance of the public library. Books can open up a whole new world for an individual no matter what the age. I can't remember how old I was when I learned to read because books were always in our apartment and at my disposal.

Are you aware that with any business you want to start there is a section in the library that gives you the start up information and the financial breakdown? You can have the equivalent of a Ph.D. of knowledge in your area of expertise if you just do a little research in the library. Think about it ... don't teachers and professors send you to the library for information in the first place?

From your family. Do you listen to your family? They have a wealth of knowledge.

I once took my daughter shopping with me. She was 11 years old at the time when we were looking at bottles of ketchup. She said to me "Mommy you need to read the back of the bottle compare the ounces."

It's true ... learning can be done anywhere.

These examples are from my own personal list, however, I am sure you have your own. Make your checklist, and think about what you learn each day.

Mary Middgett is the author of "New York Flavor with a San Francisco Beat." The San Francisco resident is available to do presentations and seminars on social and family negotiations. She also conducts workshops on parenting, self-esteem and social and intimate relationships. For more information, visit www.marymiddgett.com or email middgettcornet@aol.com.



Don't just sit there, get up and 'dance'

By Kathy Emery, Ph.D.

Two months ago, I arranged six hours of workshop time in which Mike Miller – a Bay Area Civil Rights veteran – gave a very brief introduction about the differences between service and community organizing. Five Berkeley students – known as UCB5 and led by Ray Leung – attended these sessions.

The Berkeley students incorporated what they learned from Miller and have been working with Mission High School students this year, helping them identify what issue they would be interested in organizing around. This process led to the organizing of an exciting anti-violence workshop/dance event on May 28.

As with the Campaign for Ethnic Studies this school year, the organizing around the "Make Peace, Don't Rest in Peace" – MPDRP – Dance has brought together a heterogeneous coalition of individuals and organizations who were committed to getting things done.

Two weeks ago, I sat at an organizational meeting led by the UCB5's new organization, the Neighborhood Visions Project. At the table with the five college students and myself were representatives from the Visitacion Valley Community Center, UCSF's Clinical Translational Institute, Chinatown Youth Center and the Peace Alliance. The vision that inspired these groups to meet was one in which authentic activities designed by high school students from different neighborhoods can bring together youth from different neighborhoods to meet each other, talk, dance and learn about alternatives to having violence be part of one's way in or response to the world.

I am excited about the potential of this group and that of the Campaign for Ethnic Studies because both represent the kind of organizing that is crucial to movement building.

Last month, I argued in my column that the nonprofit industrial complex has co-opted those people who would otherwise be community organizers and lead-

ers. This is not to say that the services provided by nonprofits are not essential. For example, when women get battered, they need help. But nonprofits set up to provide services for battered women are not focused on eliminating the cause of the battering.

To make fundamental change while we mitigate the symptoms of an unjust society, there must be groups of people working across the divisions that during the last 40 years have succeeded in keeping a movement for fundamental change from emerging.

Both the New Visions Neighborhood Project and the Campaign for Ethnic Studies promise to be these kinds of groups if they continue on the course each has charted already.

The Berkeley students asked Miller at one point during their workshop what he thought about Obama. Miller responded by explaining that one cannot have a transformative president unless there is also a transformative citizenry. Right now, we are consumers, not citizens who are constantly active in holding our representatives accountable.

He pointed out that there is a world of difference between voting for something and working to pass legislation. In other words, it's okay to watch baseball, but you have to play it, too.

Most people today who complain about the status quo are armchair critics. We all need to get off the couch and work with people we may not like personally, but do share the same goals — affordable housing and health care for all; fully-funded public education and transportation; safety and living wages for everyone; and so forth.

There are many battles to fight, all requiring different levels of expertise, time and resources. Find one that suits your talents and temperament. I have named two in this column that could use some help.

Kathy Emery is a writer, educator and organizer who lives in San Francisco. She holds a Ph.D. in educational policy from the University of California, Davis.



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Nonprofit News

SF-based organization provides 'smiles' to youth born without one

By Jessica Buchleitner

Bangladesh, the Philippines, Ghana, China – although the countries may change, the missions remain the same.

A team of about 20 volunteer plastic surgeons, anesthesiologists, pediatricians, nurses and dentists with 10 non-medical volunteers will arrive. They remain on site for roughly two weeks, performing surgery on underserved children in effort to repair cleft lip and palate anomalies. Post operations, the team will work side-by-side with local medical practitioners to exchange ideas on proper medical techniques and procedures, as well as advising them on how to provide follow-up care on their young patients.

"These children can develop permanent speech problems and are often isolated in school just because they sound different..."

The volunteers are part of Alliance for Smiles – an non-profit organization founded in 2004 by five active members of the Rotary Club San Francisco to repair children's broken smiles in underserved areas of the world,



New treatment center in Wenzhou, China. Photos courtesy of Alliance for Smiles.

by providing free, comprehensive treatment for cleft lip and palate deformities.

"We were involved in another organization prior to this and when we started AFS we knew the surgical intervention was a very important thing," said Executive

Director Anita Stangl. "But we knew there needed to be something done that goes beyond just the surgical intervention."

Cleft lip and palate deformities begin within the early stages of pregnancy. Separate areas of the face develop individually and then join together. If some parts do not join properly the result is a cleft, the type and severity of which can vary. The two most common clefts are of the lip and palate.

"These children can develop permanent speech problems and are often isolated in school just because they sound different," Stangl explained. "This causes social and psychological problems in addition to upper respiratory problems, bronchitis, asthma and even hearing loss in some cases."

In the U.S., most children born with cleft lip and palate are taken into an intervention program, lasting from the time that they are born until puberty and are finished with growth. This simply does not happen in most developing countries. The delivery of such services can be very marginal and the outcome not necessarily good.

Alliance for Smiles currently boasts two treatment centers in China providing cleft lip and palate surgery. Since the Jiujiang, China, treatment center opened in 2007, it has treated more than 150 patients. The Wenzhou center was established in 2009 at Wenzhou medical college in the Zhejiang province of China.

"In most developing countries where we go for our operations, we see tons of children

that are 4 to 9 years old or older with cleft palate and or cleft lip. Children in the United States are treated around three months (of age)," Stangl said. "What we wanted to do was go and set up treatment centers, beginning in China, which would end up delivering service as it's done in the United States."

The initial cleft surgery only addresses one part of the problem – these patients require ongoing treatments, which span many medical disciplines. At these centers, patients are able to receive necessary follow up or ongoing care. Alliance for Smiles provides treatment for disadvantaged families in Bangladesh, the Philippines, Ghana and in China.

"We are a two pronged organization ... focusing on the initial surgery as well as the follow up treatments after the surgery," Stangl said.

In the countries served, the average cost of such necessary surgery can add up to more than half of what one family earns each year, often making treatment unaffordable. This is why the goal of these missions abroad is to provide quality and necessary care to as many patients as possible.

The mission teams are large and intricate in order to provide all services and the size of the team depends on the number of operating rooms in the facility of practice.

"For example if you have four operating rooms available, you will have a team of four plastic surgeons, five anesthesiologists, a head nurse or operating room nurse, three recovery room nurses, two pediatricians, a dentist a dental hygienist and dental assistant" said Stangl. "There is also a bank of non-medical volunteers."

Alliance for Smiles has averaged four to five medical missions per year since it began in 2005. A team just returned from a mission in May; one is scheduled for Sept. 4-18 to Harbin, China.

"Our organization has grown so much since its conception through the SF Rotary Club members," Stangl said. "We have so many wonderful volunteers that are so committed to this work. They do wonderful and amazing things. I am so proud of our mission teams, the work they do and their ongoing support."

For more information, to view the work performed on young patients, to volunteer or donate to Alliance for Smiles, visit www.allianceforsmiles.org.



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Nonprofit News

Chinatown cont. from page 1

property management and tenant services, in addition to conducting tours of Chinatown.

"CDC has a really broad scope of work that we do," said Whitney Jones, CDC's director of Housing Development. "We do community planning, community organizing, youth work and organize around Ellis Act evictions."

CDC's organizing mostly involves coordinating with other community groups, but occasionally it does organize groups of people to respond to an issue.

"Mostly, impetus for organizing around an issue comes from individuals who contact us with a problem," Jones said. "Occasionally, we will take action on an issue that we see as obviously important ... like the violence on the 'T' line."

CDC also is involved in the CPMC project on Cathedral Hill. CPMC recently bought nine buildings, many of which are residential. Most residents in those buildings don't want to relocate, and CDC has offered to work with them to prevent that, or to work out agreements with CPMC.

The Chinatown Community Development Center is currently responsible for the existence and the management of approximately 2,500 affordable housing units in 21 buildings in the city and helping thousands of residents. The following are some of the key areas Chinatown CDC works in.

Housing

The focus of Chinatown CDC's Housing Development is on acquiring, preserving and rehabilitating affordable housing. Historically, it has emphasized buying and rehabilitating existing buildings, but lately it has been involved in new construction. Since the '80s, about half of the buildings it owns has been new construction. Although some buildings are outside Chinatown, all are in the northeast quadrant of San Francisco.

Some of the projects are in



Jennifer Chan, center, tenant coordinator for the Chinatown center, interacts with the volunteers and tenants. Below, 150 Otis facility and two CDC clients. Photos By Mathew Wakefield.

Western Addition and Japantown. When CDC acquires housing outside Chinatown, it tries to partner with other, more local, organizations.

"When we go outside our own community, there are often neighborhood issues, and we might not be the most knowledgeable people to be working on those issues," Jones said.

CDC also offers technical assistance to other groups and works with inexperienced owners who want to rehab their buildings, helping developers to obtain funding for both acquisition and rehabilitation.

"When somebody wants to do housing, but doesn't have any experience, we'll work with them," Jones said.

Tenants

Chinatown CDC residents come from a diverse ethnic pool. It is made up of 42 percent Chinese Americans; 20 percent



from the former Soviet Union; 16 percent African Americans; 9 percent Filipinos, Korean and Southeast Asians; and 7 percent white. Its units house more than 2,200 low-income seniors, families and formerly homeless adults.

Although all entering tenants have incomes below 60 percent of the Area Median Income, most households have incomes below 50 percent. Historically, CDC started with SRO's, most of which were, and are, occupied by low-income seniors. CDC has three SRO buildings that offer supportive housing. Others house low-income and immigrant seniors. New construction has been for either seniors or families and translation, health referral, educational and vocational services are offered to residents.

The organization is currently partnering with Swords to Plowshares to buy and rehab the building at 150 Otis. When completed around the end of 2012, it will contain 75 housing units for homeless Veterans. Chinatown

CDC also is working on a project at Broadway and Sansome for homeless families, which should be completed in 2013. It will house 61 families.

Another project in the works is the Mary Helen Rogers building at 150 Golden Gate, which will have 101 units for seniors, also scheduled to be completed in 2012. Chinatown CDC also is partnering with Tabernacle on Mary Helen Rogers.

"One thing we really feel strongly about is supporting other community-based organizations to develop affordable housing," Jones said.

Chinatown CDC prefers to keep residents in place during rehab when it can be done. It tries to displace as little as possible, for as short a period as possible. Jones said since she arrived 18 years ago, they haven't permanently displaced anyone. Often times, people are relocated to other units within the same building.

Jones said housing development is "very detailed, hard, frustrating work, but very rewarding."



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Service and Recognition

Bayview native uses own experiences to 'remove barriers' for area youth

By Pauline Guiuan

For Gina Fromer, helping young residents of Bayview Hunters Point find work and pursue an education is not just part of her job – it's a calling.

Fromer, the executive director of the Bayview-Hunters Point YMCA who also was once an underprivileged youth growing up in one of San Francisco's toughest neighborhoods, was recently recognized with the Jefferson Award for Public Service, a Bay Area award for outstanding contributions to the community. Fromer has more than 35 years of experience working with children and adolescents in different local organizations.

"It made me feel good to be honored for what we do here at the YMCA," said Fromer, who started working with the organization as a truancy case manager 10 years ago. "Here, we empower people to advocate for themselves and build community."

She added that her passion and motivation for public service come not only from the fact that she is a native of the Bayview – where the median income is \$21,000 and soup kitchens and foster care are public services most in demand – but also because she wants to break the common perception San Francisco residents have towards that part of the city.

"I'm very connected to the Bayview and committed to the betterment of this community," said Fromer whose family called the Bayview home for more than 45 years. "We hear so much negativity, but there's actually a lot of history here."

Stephanie Hughes, co-founder and CEO of Faith Ministry's Lazarus House – a Bayview-based housing project focused on intervention for emancipated youth – said she is thankful for Fromer's support for their organization's growth and activities.

"She's always assisting us, providing training and getting our youth outdoors," Hughes said. "The community I work with is very difficult, but she's created ways to remove barriers."

Fromer's focus on helping the youth of the neighborhood stems from her personal background; she was born and raised in the very building the YMCA has inhabited since 2002. She attended a Catholic school where she was one of only eight African-American students.

Fromer attributes much of her social and academic success to the support she received from the Young Community Developers, or YCD – an organi-



Executive director Gina Fromer - Photo by Mathew Wakefield. Below, youth from the Y programs. Photos courtesy of YMCA.

zation that counseled and supported the local youth. Fromer got her first summer job at the age of 14, which enabled her to help support her family.

"Having an organization that young people can connect with is critical," she said.

Fromer returned to YCD to work as a counselor at age 21 and attended San Francisco State University, where she majored in English. However, she was



forced to drop out her senior year, after having her third son and struggling to balance work and school. A few years later, she married and moved to Marin County.

With the support of her husband Reed, she finally earned her Bachelor's degree in psychology from Dominican University in 2003.

"I really understand the importance of education," Fromer said. "I wanted to be a role model to the young people I meet on a daily basis ... and I also wanted to do that for myself."

Reed Fromer attests to his wife's ability to juggle her responsibilities with her studies, work and family.

"She manages well; she's got this superwoman quality about her," he said. "She's accomplishing something every moment of the day."

Reed Fromer added he believes that much of her success comes from her ability to "communicate with anybody."

Communication was something Fromer learned on the job. After working with the nonprofit Headstart for six years and a brief stint as an insurance biller, she found her way to the YMCA, starting out as a truancy case manager, focusing on tutoring and counseling troubled youth.

"It was a little bit of everything I'd done in my career," she said. "And all the programs were very socially innovative."

During her time at the YMCA, Fromer has found and addressed three major issues with the youth of the neighborhood: literacy, obesity and truancy.

After finding out that the Bayview has the highest truancy rate in the city, she spearheaded the Center for Academic Reentry and Empowerment – an academic recovery program that helps children and youth realize the value of education and ensured that truants would be able to go back to school, improve academically and eventually graduate.

Fromer encouraged case managers to accompany the students back to school to assure their attendance in class and also partnered with different local schools and the city itself. The program has expanded to more than 30 students a year, 10-12 of whom are now graduating.

"My dream is for the [program] to become the one-stop shop for kids who need more credits to finish school," she added.

Fromer also has worked to procure more grants for the YMCA from the city, to partner with other local organizations and to improve the facility by adding child and teen development centers.

One of Fromer's most rewarding experiences came recently when "Nancy," a former truant whose case Fromer had handled, returned to the YMCA after several years to volunteer.

Fromer said that Nancy (whose real name Fromer withheld to protect her identity) was involved in gangs and came from a troubled, immigrant home.

"She went off back to school, but I heard she later dropped out," Fromer recalled.

Then one day, Nancy came into the Bayview YMCA asking to see the director so that she could sign up as a tutor. Fromer immediately recognized her and approached the young lady.

"Nancy told me, 'If it weren't for you, I'd probably be dead,'" Fromer said.

The director added that stories like Nancy's are what inspire her to continue her work in the community.

"I don't have any bad stories, just wonderful experiences," Fromer said. "We don't save every child because there are so many variables in each child's life. But we are still in the business of saving lives and helping people on a daily basis."

Neighborhood News

Party in the street

On May 15, the North of Panhandle Neighborhood Association held its 2010 Neighborhood Block Party and as always, it was a huge success.

The day-long, annual event featured youth events, live music, a BBQ, community fair and more. During the party, local residents also were encouraged to bring a nonperishable food item, which was donated to the Groceries for Seniors Program.

Photos by **Andy Hamilton**.



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