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Western Edition HP JOURNAL

JANUARY 2015

Bridging San Francisco communities through nonprofit services

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Aerial acrobatics with daring and ease at AcroSports



Students in the Adult Aerial Silks classes gain strength and confidence and learn finesse while performing on silk streamers. Photo by Scott Saraceno for AcroSports.

By Dorothy O'Donnell

There are plenty of places to take gymnastics classes around San Francisco. However, at AcroSports, you can also learn how to fly on a trapeze, break-dance or try parkour — a discipline that fosters precise, efficient forward movement needed in sports such as snowboarding. You can even take your yoga practice to new heights with an aerial yoga class.

AcroSports is a nonprofit located in the Inner Sunset/Haight Ashbury district. Dorrie Huntington — a

community activist who lives in the area — and former Moscow Circus acrobats Sergey Zenov and Youry Kelpatsky — founded AcroSports in 1993.

The founding site was once a gymnasium for the now defunct Polytechnic High School that had become an abandoned pigeon roost. With help from other community members, the trio transformed the historic 10,000-square-foot Art Deco building into a fully equipped center for gymnastics, acrobatics, circus and urban arts.

“We started with a couple of

mattresses on the sidewalk that my kids tumbled on,” said Huntington, who is now executive director of AcroSports. “Today we serve about 1,200 students a week at our facility and another 500 through our off-site programs.”

AcroSports classes cater to everyone from preschool tumblers to teenage acrobatics and thrill-seeking adults who want to learn how to walk a tightrope. In addition, with activities such as an indoor zipline and bungee ride, birthday parties at the facility are

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Growing community social strength with gardening



BEETS gardeners at Koshland Park, June 2014; applications are open for paid internships at <http://www.communitygrows.org/application-for-beets-january-2015/>. Photo via communitygrows.org.

By Paul Kenyon Krantz

Ask persons where they think their food comes from, and what do you think they will say? “The store,” is a likely response, or perhaps the specific name of whichever grocery chain their parents shop.

In this age of fast food served in paper bags and grocery store shelves filled with foods that were grown, processed, and shipped from a thousand miles away, it is no surprise that many people living

in urban communities are out of touch with their food and where it comes from.

Learning more about how food is produced has a multitude of benefits. By learning about what is grown locally, one can begin to eat more sustainably by choosing to eat what is produced nearby — and therefore being less dependent on oil, which is needed to transport goods across the globe.

Furthermore, taking part in the act of growing crops puts one in tune with the natural cycles of the

weather and the seasons. There are numerous physical and psychological benefits associated with organic gardening and farming practices. Lowering stress levels, for instance, comes with allowing oneself some quiet time away from the noise of today's technological distractions.

There are also health benefits that can be measured objectively, such as the benefits of contact with healthy bacterium that naturally exist in good soil.

There are no apple orchards or dairy farms in the Western Addition neighborhoods, so it is difficult for residents to actively get involved with agricultural practices. Fortunately, there are a number of community gardens — and an even larger number of people dedicated to supporting them spread throughout the neighborhood. Thanks to these spaces, and the people who support them, local youths can still have the chance to get their hands dirty and harvest a salad from right out of the ground.

One such garden plot is called

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Ross Mirkarimi — visionary city sheriff with a dauntless spirit



Ross Mirkarimi was elected in November 2011 as the 35th sheriff of the City and County of San Francisco. He has campaigned to expand the criminal justice reforms developed by his predecessor, Sheriff Michael Hennessey, who demonstrated 32 years of progressive leadership. While serving two terms on the Board of Supervisors, Mirkarimi championed public safety reforms and worked closely with Sheriff Hennessey to modernize rehabilitation programming for violent offenders. Photo courtesy of Ross Mirkarimi.

By Rebecca Duran

In 2014, the San Francisco Sheriff's Department's Five Keys Charter High School — the first charter high school in a county jail system in the United States — won the Charter High School of Year Award in California and expanded to the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department — the largest county jail system in the nation.

Sheriff Ross Mirkarimi stated that the objective is to reorient the criminal justice system into knowing that an education for incarcerated and the formerly incarcerated is one of the best antidotes society has to reduce high repeat-offender rates — while also bettering the student's life.

Mirkarimi further said that as technology has improved, so has the policy diagnostics — into verifying that an inmate benefiting from the Five Keys system will have a 40 percent better chance of not recidivating.

“We're literally one of the first county jail systems in the country to bring in computer tablets in the jail system — and we're doing so because we need to help bridge the digital divide,” Mirkarimi said. “It doesn't help our rehabilitation effort that we're not also training inmates, people in our custody, on building their skills with computers. That's what we're aiming to do.”

In 2014, the department achieved the unprecedented milestone of requiring the diversion population — people who do not need to be incarcerated — to complete a rehabilitation program while moving forward with their lives.

The department's growing Electronic Monitoring program's

strategy has had a 93 percent success rate in 2013 for the nearly 400 clients put on ankle monitoring — without reoffending within three years.

According to Mirkarimi, after a recent visit and look at the re-entry program, Jeffery Beard — secretary for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation — paid the department a huge compliment that made the cover of the SF Examiner, referring to its in-custody strategies for better re-entry as the leader in California during the age of State Prisoner Realignment — AB109.

Mirkarimi said that this is the kind of validation that any sheriff who agrees with this type of rehabilitative philosophy to jump for joy.

Mirkarimi also believes that the faith-based community contains heroes and heroines who have led the struggle to convince the federal government, as well as society in general, that seeking retribution and vengeance against persons released from incarceration is wrongful. The diligent work of these memorable persons inside San Francisco jails has gone almost unnoticed by the general public.

In 2012–2013, Mirkarimi called for the first interfaith summit in the department — hosting a town hall meeting with more than 100 faith leaders and institutions. He said the aim was to develop better coordination between the leaders and their volunteers for directing the formerly incarcerated into better reintegration, without attempting recruitment into any specific faith.

Areas in which the religious community is collaborating include those such as finding

housing, substance abuse rehabilitation, and family reunification — with goals of building essential strategies for helping ex-prisoners within a generally unsympathetic population outside of the jails.

One of the most well-known and oldest programs in the department is the Garden Project. The acreage of this project is located at the San Francisco County Jail San Bruno Complex. It is home to the largest public garden affiliated with the San Francisco jail property, and the food — weighing in tons per year — is donated to many public housing and food pantries.

The program is also one of the largest vocational programs offered by the city during the summer. In partnership with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, during the summer and throughout the year the Garden Project hires nearly 400 under-17-year-olds and young adults formerly incarcerated to tend to the lands while learning skills in horticulture.

According to Mirkarimi, the department has established rehabilitation programs in the last several years under an audit to determine impact, while also determining program gaps that warrant greater attention. These areas include those such as vocational skills and employment; gender-responsive and culturally-competent programming; and reunification between children and their incarcerated parents.

Mirkarimi stated that the Innovation Challenge Grant was then started by his administration as a means to support community engagement with the department and the criminal justice system by focusing on better re-entry for someone transitioning from incarceration to society.

“My hope is to make it annual,” Mirkarimi said. “That's our goal. But this is a first for the department that we've launched this year. I'm hoping that it becomes an annual event.”

Mirkarimi said that one of the overall goals of the administration is to improve San Francisco's public safety, while yet knowing the limits and drawbacks of relying on a criminal justice system that is propelled by retribution — while dismiss-

ing the power of redemption and accountability.

“We're the second largest law enforcement agency in the city and county of San Francisco, the police being No.1,” Mirkarimi said. “I believe that we have a very sizeable, dedicated team of deputies who can assist the police department and other municipal entities with their law enforcement and public safety needs. For example, there are over 200 city parks in San Francisco, and yet they only have 20 park rangers for 200 parks. I think our deputy sheriffs could assist in the public safety of those parks, or with Muni. If there is any concern about Muni being unsafe, then I believe we have deputies who would also be able to police with Muni.”

Additionally, Mirkarimi is also strongly focused on making sure that inmates know their voting rights. He stated that there is a misunderstanding in this country that all incarcerated or formerly incarcerated individuals cannot vote, which is not true.

Mirkarimi emphasized that even though San Francisco can trumpet one of the most under-crowded jail populations in the United States, it still hosts a sizable pretrial population, similar to many urban jails. He said that this can double as a large voter precinct because pretrial inmates can vote if they do not have a felony record that precludes their ineligibility — and the jail system boasts the largest voter registration and voter participation rate per capita in California.

Mirkarimi further said that yet another goal is to remind City Hall that he as sheriff rejects the trend that jails have become a substitute for mental health hospitals.

Mirkarimi is convinced that this trend warrants a system correction, and he has become more emboldened to demonstrate policy reasons for this pronouncement; he emphasized the direct results of efforts by the sheriff's department to assist in enhancing public safety and community-oriented policing — which he made a signature issue when he was District 5 supervisor.

“I do not believe in criminalizing people with mental illness and yet we are — the San Francisco Sheriff's Department and our jails — the largest provider of mental health beds in San Francisco,” Mirkarimi stated. “I think it is a systemic problem that we are putting people with mental illness in jails when they need to be in facilities helping their illness, and helping their behavior.”

SF News Briefs

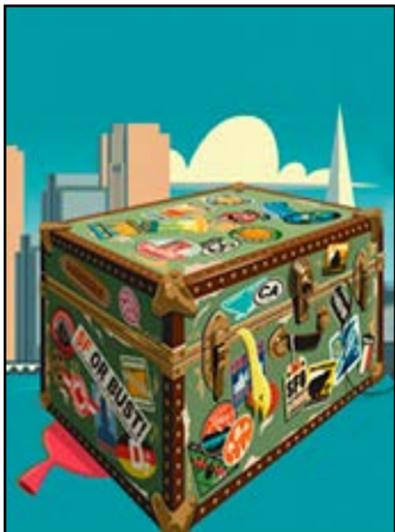
By Sam Felsing

SF Sketchfest

Every January, comedians, sketch comedy performers, sitcom actors and film funny-men gather to participate in the SF Sketchfest, an inclusive comedy festival happening for 18 days from Jan. 22 to Feb. 9.

The festival is known for its broad range of events. Not only are there comedy sketches, performed by a wide range of comedy groups, but there are also stand-up comedy performances, film screenings, and salutes to comedy shows and comedy masters. Performers such as Dan Aykroyd, Candice Bergen, James L. Brooks, David Byrne, Neil Patrick Harris, Garry Shandling, Brian Henson and Moby have performed or have been honored at prior Sketchfest events.

David Owen, Cole Stratton and Janet Varney founded SF Sketchfest in 2001. It was originally only meant to spotlight six Bay Area comedy groups, but soon expanded to showcase talents from all across North America. To find out more about the festival and learn about this year's lineup, go to: <http://sfsketchfest.com/x/>.



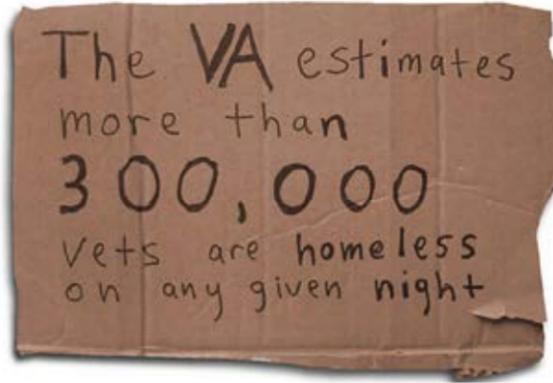
SF's 14th annual Sketchfest. Photo via Google Images.

Help for veterans

In San Francisco, anywhere between 1,260 and 3,960 people are homeless veterans, according to Project Homeless Connect. To help counteract this problem, the City & County of San Francisco recently leased space at 250 Kearny Street so it can house 130 formerly homeless military members.

The City has set a goal of ending chronic veteran homelessness in San Francisco by the end of 2015. The address on Kearny Street, which the city will lease for 10 years for \$2 million a year, will play a large part in helping the city achieve its goal.

The new facility will primarily cater to veterans who have chronic homelessness, drug use and psychiatric histories. These veterans will live in units with their own private bathrooms



HUD statistics for 2013 show 716 homeless veterans in SF with 59 percent without housing. Image via Google Images.

and will have standard internet, phone and cable connections. They will also have 24-hour access to services provided by social workers, counselors and building staff. Though the building and treatment services will largely be cost-beneficial to veterans, these former military personnel will still be expected to pay 30 percent of their adjusted income in rent.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development — HUD — will pick up 74 percent of the City's leasing costs. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs will also provide an additional \$500,000 annually to help pay for support services at the site, such as health and wellness counseling, as well as case management. The San Francisco VA Medical Center will also provide financial support, and the San Francisco Housing Authority will take advantage of government vouchers to help pay for the program's services.

MLK Day

The year 2015 will mark the 50th anniversary of the famed Selma to Montgomery march on March 9, 1965, when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. led thousands of nonviolent demonstrators on a

on Jan. 19. At that time, labor, business and community leaders will hold a breakfast to honor members of their communities who have played a part in the civil rights movement. At 10 a.m., the public will be invited to join in a parade, which will begin at the Caltrain Station and end at Yerba Buena Gardens. At Yerba Buena Gardens, celebrators will have their choice of events to attend, including a health & wellness festival, a film festival, and a music festival. Featured throughout the day will be a series of public conversations with noted civil rights luminaries.



Zipper truck used to install median barriers on Golden Gate Bridge. Photo via Google Images.

The Northern California Martin King Jr. Community Foundation is an organization sponsoring MLK Day celebrations in San Francisco. Festivities that were led originally by Reverend Cecil B. Williams of Glide Memorial Church for 23 years were passed on to the founders of the foundation in 2009.

Though the majority of San Francisco's MLK day events will happen on Jan. 19, a few will take place between Jan. 16 and Jan. 18. For a full list of the MLK Day activities, go to <http://sfmlkday.org/>.

"God never intended for one group of people to live in superfluous inordinate wealth, while others live in abject deadening poverty."

- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Famed quote by Martin Luther King, Jr. Photo via Google Images.

5-day, 54-mile journey to campaign for voting rights. These efforts helped spur nationwide civil rights actions that lead to the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. The 50th Anniversary celebrations will commemorate the marchers and their impact upon American history.

Many of San Francisco's MLK Day festivities will begin at 8 a.m.

Golden Gate Median

In its 78-year history, the Golden Gate Bridge has rarely been closed to automobile traffic. It was closed three times due to high winds: in 1951, 1982 and 1983. It was closed once in 1975 because of construction work. It was off limits to vehicle traffic on its 50th and 75th anniversaries; and it was briefly closed

twice to welcome visiting dignitaries President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and French President Charles de Gaulle of France. So it is going to be a rare sight when the iconic bridge closes from 12 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 10 to 4 a.m. Monday, Jan. 12.

Roughly 39 million vehicles cross the Golden Gate Bridge each year; only 19-inch tall, 4-inch diameter plastic tubes, placed in 25-foot increments along the bridge, have protected cars heading in opposite directions from hitting each other. The bridge's board of directors has wanted a more stable barrier, and in January, they are finally going to get one.

During the bridge's temporary out-of-order phase, construction crews will install a 13,340-foot long moveable median bar-

rier across the bridge. The new barrier will be made of 12-inch wide and 32-inch high steel clad units filled with concrete. It will cost \$30.3 million to build, but will "virtually eliminate the possibility of head on collisions" on the bridge, according to www.goldengate.org, the official website of the iconic structure.

Celebrate the Sea Lions

In 1990, following the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, San Francisco's Pier 39 began being visited by a group of sea lions. For various reasons that can only be speculated upon — likely a hefty food supply and good protection — they just decided to stay — although a large group of them did briefly disappear last year, setting off a media frenzy. Despite their lazily hanging about the pier, nobody has really minded their presence, and the pinnipeds have become a beloved San Francisco tourist attraction.

From Jan. 16–19, the managers of Pier 39 will honor their friendly mammal moneymakers' 25th anniversary on the dock. During this time, the pier will offer Sea Lion Encounter walking tours, special discounts on pier products, and refreshments.

Volunteerism

Meals on Wheels — volunteers providing nutrition to those in need



[Clockwise from top]: A pair of volunteers delivers holiday packages to those needing assistance; family receiving Thanksgiving packages; and Harry, 90 (seated), who has Parkinson's disease, with his 86-year-old partner. Photos courtesy of Meals on Wheels.

By Jeffery Mendenhall

The 2014 Christmas holiday season culminated in another successful fall campaign for Meals on Wheels of San Francisco.

Powered by a legion of more than 560 volunteers, 1,600 seniors were assured a traditional Thanksgiving meal according to Volunteer Director Danie Belfield. The number of seniors served this year increased by 300 from the year before, which is significant according to Belfield.

"It was a pleasant event and we got wonderful feedback," Belfield said. "The demand for our services is continually increasing. Some of the seniors we serve through the year spent Thanksgiving with their families."



The fall campaign ranged from September to early December and included FallFest in October, Thanksgiving in November, and the holiday gift drive, Socks 4 Seniors in December. The period posed new challenges from the rest of the

year and was an especially busy time for the nonprofit, according to Belfield. The nonprofit must continually recruit an influx of volunteers and seek out and expand partnerships with local businesses and other groups.

FallFest is a benefit for Meals on Wheels that helps to raise money under the guise of a culinary celebration at Justin Herman Plaza. It is similar to the Star Chefs and Vintners Gala held each spring in the way that money is raised for the nonprofit. The silent auction and raffle at FallFest set a record for money being raised of more than \$20,000.

According to Belfield, Socks 4 Seniors aims to engage the community and companies to service opportunities/team building activities by stuffing gift bags with toiletries, warm socks, chocolates, writing pads, and other items to more than 2,000 seniors. The gift bags contain between 10–12 items.

Belfield said that some companies, including Airbnb, Mellon Capital, Bank of America, and Brown and Toland participated in 1-day projects, with as many as 100 volunteers, who stuffed as many as 500 holiday gift bags.

These successes are a reflection of the work Meals on Wheels does on an ongoing basis in San Francisco.

Meals on Wheels of San Francisco is a nonprofit organization and member of the Meals on Wheels Association of America — MOWAA. Each chapter of MOWAA mirrors the uniqueness of the community it serves,

according to Communications Manager Vivien Kim Thorp.

Participants are offered two meals per day. Thorp said that in the future the nonprofit is hoping to provide three meals.

Thorp said that the yearly budget for the nonprofit is a little more than \$8 million. Sixty percent of this comes from fundraising and donations from the community, while the other forty percent is received from various grants and local, state, and national governments.

The continued growth and success of the nonprofit in San Francisco in particular goes well beyond the financial support it receives. Throughout the year, the nonprofit relies heavily on the robust generosity of the community and local businesses according to Belfield.

Many volunteers are eager to give back, such as a long-time volunteer Jim Dunn. According to Dunn, the nonprofit is "in the best shape it's ever been in."

Dunn should know — he has been volunteering for more than 26 years. In fact, he said that he has "visited a LOL — little old lady — pretty much weekly since 1990," doing mostly "companion work."

Beyond delivering meals, companion work is a big part of the service in which the nonprofit engages. According to Thorp, this may include simple errands such as changing a light bulb, or something more complex, such as taking a senior shopping or to the hairdresser.

Thorp stated that throughout the year, active participants

of Meals on Wheels programs range from 2,400–3,000. She explained that some participate for a short period of time due to injury or illness. She further said that proper nutrition speeds recovery for those who may be suffering from an injury or an illness, and that this helps seniors to maintain their independence. "The goal is to nourish the whole person," Thorp said.

The nonprofit's holistic approach harkens back to the unique way that services are implemented and drummed up in San Francisco. When looking at daily operations of the nonprofit, it is apparent that the mind, the body and the spirit of the seniors are taken into consideration.

In addition to delivering meals, the concept of companion work, as mentioned above, has expanded in recent years for Meals on Wheels of San Francisco, to the point of incorporating new programs. Some of these programs include: Home Delivered Groceries, Spring Cleaning All-Year Round, and Emergency Food Kits.

Each of these programs has garnered new opportunities for the public to be engaged, partnerships to be established, and to which local businesses can contribute.



Home Delivered Groceries launched four years ago according to Belfield. In partnership with the San Francisco Food Bank, the program aims to deliver two bags of groceries on Wednesdays to low-income individuals who are able to cook, but have difficulty getting to and from a grocery store.

Belfield said that students and the retired typically volunteer due to their flexible schedules.

The Spring Cleaning All-Year Round program launched in March 2012, according to Belfield. The program is funded by a \$15,000 grant from the Winifred Johnson Clive Foundation. In its first year, 70 senior homes were cleaned through the program. In 2014, the program reached 65 homes. In 2015, Belfield said she is aiming to reach 80 homes.

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Learning and Education

Using credit unions to take advantage of community banking services



[Above]: The San Francisco Fire Credit Union occupies a futuristic site on California Street in Laurel Heights. [Below]: Volunteers from the San Francisco Federal Credit Union assemble at the San Francisco Food Bank. Photos via Google Images.

By Julie McCoy

Credit unions have been around for a long time and have become more popular since Bank Transfer Day in 2011. More and more people are closing their accounts at big banks and opening accounts at credit unions. Credit unions are also helping people who don't have any prior banking history to open accounts as well.

One big difference between banks and credit unions is that banks are for-profit, and their goal is to earn profits for shareholders — whereas credit unions are member-owned, not-for-profit institutions and operate as cooperatives. They can give their profits back to their members.

Credit unions also require a much lower minimum balance than banks. They have fewer overall fees, and typically those fees are lower than you would find at traditional banks. Additionally, credit unions are

“We can assist our members with all of their financial needs,” Herrmann explained. “We’ve got them covered if they need borrowing needs — auto loans, mortgages, credit cards, personal loans and business loans; are looking to save — deposit accounts, IRAs, investments and financial planning services; or just need a free checking account that doesn’t have any hidden fees attached to it.”

San Francisco Fire Credit Union has three branches. The first is located at 3201 California St., just across the street from the Jewish Community Center. The second is at 565 Buckingham Way, adjacent to the Stonestown Galleria Mall. The third is at 12 Mint Plaza, near 5th and Mission Streets, and right across the way from Blue Bottle Coffee.

“While there are no plans at this time to open an additional branch, I wouldn’t rule that out as a possibility in the future,”

impact of social media and the power of social media and the power it gives to the word of mouth reputation, I believe it goes a long way towards explaining the growth of credit unions,” Herrmann said.

“It’s not big budget advertising campaigns and catchy slogans that are driving credit union growth,” Herrmann added. “We wouldn’t spend money on that type of expense, and to be honest I’m not sure people believe what they are presented in the ads.

“What they trust are referrals from friends, families and co-workers who have had good experiences with credit unions and are recommending us. Luckily for credit unions such as ours, members are happy with how we serve them — and they’re talking about it.”

The San Francisco Fire Credit Union is very involved within the local community.

Continuing its ongoing relationships with firefighters, the credit union supports the San Francisco Firefighters Toy Program. It also supports the Children’s Miracle Network.

“While most people are aware of the tremendous good the toy program does during the holiday season, many aren’t aware of the work they do year-round to assist local families who are under duress,” Herrmann explained.

“We also join with credit unions across the country to support the Children’s Miracle Network, and the work they do to provide assistance to children who are not able to afford medical treatment due to lack of — or having exhausted — medical insurance. While this is a national organization, contributions stay local, meaning our efforts benefit USCF Benioff Oakland — Children’s Hospital,

Oakland.”

Yet another credit union is the San Francisco Federal Credit Union, which was founded in 1954 and celebrated its 60th anniversary in October 2014. The credit union currently has 31,000 members and that is expected to go up by 2,000 to 33,000 members in 2015, according to Marketing Manager Courtney Derby.

“The market has changed,” Derby explained. “More and more people are seeing credit unions as an option.”

San Francisco Federal Credit Union currently has five branches, four of which are in San Francisco and one that is in Burlingame. Another branch is scheduled to open in San Francisco’s Excelsior District in February.

Derby attributes her credit union’s success to “not taking a cookie cutter approach.”

The San Francisco Federal Credit Union donates to a number of local organizations, including Second Harvest Food Bank, San Francisco-Marin Food Bank, San Francisco Fire Drive, Women’s Community Clinic and Habitat for Humanity.

“It’s really nice especially around the holidays to give back,” Derby said.

San Francisco Federal Credit Union’s 130 employees also volunteer their time to serve in the local community. “People see us at different events supporting the community,” Derby said.

The Northeast Community Federal Credit Union — NECFCU

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insured by the National Credit Union Association — NCUA — instead of by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation — FDIC.

The San Francisco Fire Credit Union, which has more than 52,000 members, was founded back in 1951 to serve San Francisco firefighters and their families. Today, the field of membership has expanded to anyone who lives or works or attends school in San Francisco, according to the President and CEO Darren Herrmann.

Herrmann noted.

Herrmann gave his thoughts on why credit unions have become more popular. “I’d say that the growing popularity of credit unions can be traced to Bank Transfer Day Movement, back in November of 2011,” he explained. “It was a tipping point as far as consumers seeking out alternatives to the big banks, and led many to discover — or re-discover — credit unions.

“When you consider the

Locations of interviewed credit unions

SF Fire Credit Union

Address: 3201 California St., San Francisco, CA 94118

Phone: (888) 499-3473;

Local (415) 674-4800

Address: 565 Buckingham Way, San Francisco, CA 94132

Phone: (888) 499-3473;

Local (415) 674-4800

Address: 12 Mint Plaza, San Francisco, CA 94103

Phone: (888) 499-3473;

Local (415) 674-4800

SF Federal Credit Union

Address: 311 California St., San Francisco, CA 94111

Phone: (415) 775-5377

Address: 4375 Geary Blvd, San Francisco, CA 94118

Phone: (415) 775-5377

Address: 770 Golden Gate Ave., San Francisco, CA 94102

Phone: (415) 775-5377

Northeast Community Federal Credit Union — NECFCU

Address: 683 Clay St., San Francisco, CA 94111

Phone: (415) 434-0738

Address: 288 Jones St., San Francisco, CA 94102

Phone: (415) 441-7283

Address: 992 Howard St., San Francisco, CA 94103

Phone: (415) 615-0457

Nonprofit News

Bayview youths learn fine restaurant skills at the Old Skool Café



[Left to right]: Keeya Edwards, cafe barista; servers Romaine Williams and Raven Williams, Charles Allen, and Carlos Hernandez. Photos by Peter Rapine.

By Peter Rapine

Located at 1429 Mendell St., the Old Skool Café is neither a school nor a café; in fact, it is a restaurant, but it is not just any restaurant. Popularly known as “OSC,” the mission of the café is to provide jobs and training to youths via a faith-based violence prevention program — with an emphasis on at-risk, urban youths. OSC is focused upon supporting a community of under-represented urban youths, specifically those of San Francisco’s Bayview district.

Old Skool Café is a non-profit organization that offers its patrons an experience their hearts and stomachs are sure to remember. The southern style and ‘Old Skool’ atmosphere combined with live entertainment create a unique dining

experience; however, Old Skool Café is much more than just an experience, it’s a way of life.

Since 2012, OSC has employed over 180 youth apprentices, providing them a positive and supportive community. Old Skool Café offers its apprentices opportunities that you cannot find everywhere. Through mentoring and training, Old Skool Café helps inexperienced youths gain professional experience. A platform for aspiring artists, chefs and restaurant staff, Old Skool Café is much more than just a restaurant.

The youth-run supper club signifies how important positive community and support truly are for success. Apprentices are given the choice of where they would like to begin, and even-

tually work in every position offered by Old Skool Café, from bartending to cooking to even performing.

Carlos Hernandez has been with OSC as a server for five months now. Carlos found Old Skool Café through his probation officer. This is the case for some — though not all — of the OSC apprentices.

Having grown up in foster care, Carlos’s story is not uncommon. Carlos mentioned how welcomed and cared for he felt by the OSC staff. He said he never had a place or a community of people who were so invested in his life and who wanted him to succeed as much as OSC.

Carlos is about to graduate from Five Keys Charter School and he said he owes his success to the motivation he received from OSC. He related, “They really stayed on me about school; they are the reason I’m graduating, and for City College too.”

Carlos is planning to attend City College of San Francisco in the fall, thanks to OSC’s motivation and help applying for and receiving financial aid.

Before Old Skool Café, Keeya Edwards was working a seasonal job at Target. At 22, Keeya has now been with OSC for eight months. She was behind the bar when I came in, and she stood there with a great big smile as I took her picture. She said that she gets to do, “a little bit of everything” at OSC. Keeya hopes to work in the kitchen next after bartending. Keeya also works as a barista at Dignita coffee, thanks to OSC. Dignita coffee buys and sells only Fair Trade coffee beans. Keeya was given a job at Dignita through connections she gained at OSC. Dignita coffee is located in a studio space next to Not for Sale, a nonprofit organization that works to halt human trafficking around the world and here in the Bay Area.

These are just two of many success stories that have come out of Old Skool Café. The community and supportive environment provided for the apprentices at Old Skool Café are important for youths who have not been given the same chances as

their counterparts.

Old Skool Café is a family at heart and I even felt a part of it. Chief Kevin was giving a pep talk to the hostess before the restaurant opened, and I overheard him say, “We have to work hard if we want to make something of ourselves.”

OSC is a faith-based organization and they believe in the strength of a supportive and positive community.

Old Skool Café is currently organizing a fundraiser on IndieGoGo to raise money so they can continue to support the community, which greatly depends upon them. Twitter, Pinterest and Ron Conway have each pledged \$10,000 towards Old Skool Café’s \$100,000 goal. So far, Old Skool Café has received \$42,000 in donations and is still far from their \$100,000 goal.

Old Skool Café is growing and plans to use the donations to help the process. Plans include renovations, the hiring of additional staff, the launch of a product line and the eventual expansion to other cities and locations.

Nonprofit organizations are struggling to stay open in San Francisco’s growing economy. With rents skyrocketing, many small nonprofits can no longer afford to stay within city limits. That means many of the safety nets that support disenfranchised or under-represented communities are in danger of closing, or moving elsewhere.

Old Skool Café has asked the public to help keep their mission alive. Although Old Skool Café is not losing their building or going out of business, they do need our help to continue to grow.

Old Skool Café depends upon the greater community just as much as the greater community depends upon them. Your dollar means your vote, so vote wisely and give to those who need it most. You don’t have to give much, anything helps, make a reservation for dinner — after all, it is a restaurant.

For more information about Old Skool Café, visit the website at <http://www.oldschoolcafe.org/>.

Find Your Next Employee Through the Success Center SF

Whether you’re looking for employees or a job you’ve got a great resource right here in the neighborhood

Success Center San Francisco is pleased to announce that they are now managing the Western Addition Neighborhood Access Point.

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All services provided to employers and job seekers at no cost.

Call or visit the Success Center to find your next employee!



All Success Center SF programs are overseen by Executive Director, Liz Jackson-Simpson, a native of the Fillmore District.



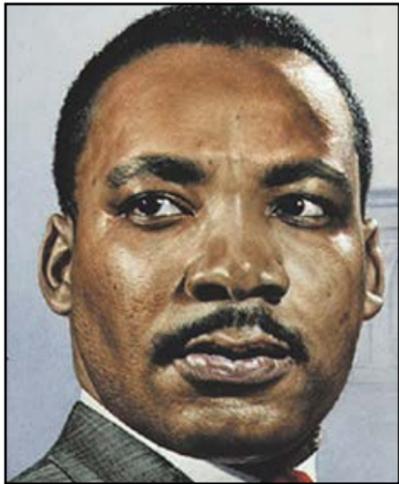
Western Addition Neighborhood Access Point
1449 Webster Street
San Francisco, CA 94115
main 415.549.7000
fax 415.529.2223
SuccessCenterSF.org

Neighborhood News

By Laurie MacDougall

Alamo Square

MLK Interfaith Ceremonies, Jan. 18



The Third Baptist Church and Emanu-El congregations will present annual services in honor of Martin Luther King on Jan. 18. Services will be held at 10 a.m. and at 6 p.m. at 1399 McAllister St.

Tour bus restriction update

As a reminder for the New Year, tour buses are restricted on residential streets bounded by Webster, Fell, and Divisadero Streets, and Golden Gate Avenue. Report tour buses on these streets by calling SFPD at 415.553.0123 with the company, and date and time of sighting; or email a photo of the tour bus with the company's name visible to Jerry.Robbins@sfmta.com, SFPDParkStation@sfgov.org, and SFPDNorthernStation@sfgov.org.

Bayview Hunters Point

Free toddler/parent yoga and art class, every Tuesday, 9–10 a.m.

While the Bayview Opera House is closed for renovations, programming is still being held at alternative sites. This program offers yoga for parents, art for toddlers, fun and relaxation for everyone, and is currently being held at the Joseph Lee Recreation Center, 1395 Mendell St. For further information, call 415-824-0386, or email the Bayview Opera House at info.bvoh@bvoh.org.

Free hourly "Health Shuttle" service, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 6 p.m.

This hourly fixed-route shuttle service addresses a challenging dilemma for residents of Bayview Hunters Point who need access to transport to immediate and ongoing health care and support services. Through the use of the "Health Shuttle," residents are safely and comfortably driven to a wide range of services and facilities throughout the Bayview Hunters Point Community. To learn more about it, and to get a full list of stops, contact Vincent Webster, Mobility Manager of the Bayview Hunters Point Foundation for Community Improvement at

Vincent.Webster@bayviewci.org, or call 415.740.4416.

Fillmore

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 live jazz while you delight in the gorgeous produce. The Fillmore farmers market is open rain or shine all year round, and is located at O'Farrell and Fillmore Streets and the Fillmore Center Plaza.

Free family fun, "The Lego Movie," showing at the Western Addition branch of the S.F. Public Library, January 3, 2 p.m.–4 p.m.

Bring the kids for this special film event! The movie tells the tale of an ordinary Lego construction worker, recruited to join a quest to stop an evil tyrant from gluing the Lego universe into eternal immovability. Starring the voices of Chris Pratt, Will Farrell, Morgan Freeman, and many more. Film will be shown in the Western Addition Meeting Room at the Library, 1550 Scott Street. For more information, contact Janine.moganam@sfpl.org.

Mentor Appreciation Day, Urban Services YMCA in the Western Addition, January 17, 11:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

The Reach & Rise Program of the YMCA helps at-risk youths overcome personal, social and family challenges through a positive adult-child relationship. If you might be interested in becoming a mentor, you are welcome to attend the Mentor Appreciation Day celebration for more information. Food will be served, and volunteers will be acknowledged for their service, making this an ideal opportunity to learn first-hand about how this program changes lives — for children and for mentors. Contact Eryn Reeder at Ereeder@ymcasf.org, or call 415.561.0631, Ext.102, to sign up and hear about the next training dates.

Free breakfast club for seniors at Prince Hall Computer Learning Center, Fridays, 10:00 a.m.–12 noon



The weekly breakfast club for seniors is resuming in January after a brief hiatus. It provides an opportunity for seniors to socialize, make new friends, knit, play cards or other games, or just sit and talk, and, of course, enjoy breakfast. For more information, visit the website at <http://www.princehallclc.org>, or call

415.922.3347 for more details. The Prince Hall Computer Learning Center is located at 1040 Fillmore St., Suite 501.

Free classes in basic computer skills at the Western Addition Community Technology Center, Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m.

The Western Addition Community Technology Center aims to bridge the digital divide, offering a variety of classes for skill development from the most basic to advanced. The basic computer classes are ongoing, offering continuous learning, so you can start wherever you are and learn at your own pace. These and all other classes are held at the Center at 1003 Turk St. For more information about the basic or advanced classes — the Center will even teach you to get the most out of your Smartphone — visit the website at www.westernadditionctc.org, or call 431-2206.

Hayes Valley

Free Full Moon ceremony, San Francisco Zen Center, January 15, 6:30 p.m.

Each month at the full moon, the community gathers to participate in a ceremony to renew Bodhisattva vows. All are welcome. This is a formal ceremony that includes chanting and full bows. If it is your first full moon ceremony, or you are unfamiliar with the forms, please follow others in offering incense before entering the Buddha Hall and be sure to take a chant card to guide you. The Zen Center is located at 300 Page St. For more information, contact the San Francisco Zen Center at 415.863.3136, or visit the website at www.sfzc.org.

MLK Day of Service, Jan. 19

Join us Monday, Jan. 19, for the Martin Luther King Jr Day of Service. We will be working in the Koshland Park and Garden. For more information, see the flyer at <http://www.communitygrows.org/news>. Hope to see you there!

Free Alumni Recital Series, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, January 22, 8 p.m.–10 p.m.

Some conservatory alumni stake out careers as classical soloists. Others form chamber groups that may mix standards with startling new sounds. This year's Alumni Recital Series celebrates graduates who represent the latter category. Two chamber ensembles — Aeron (flutes), and the Mobius Trio (guitars) — perform new works that explore the range of possibilities of these instruments. The Conservatory is located at 50 Oak St. For further

information, email: cramos@sfcu.edu, or call 415.503.6275.

Free Lending Circles/Credit-Building/Microloan Orientation, LGBT Center, January 22, 7:00–8:00 p.m.



Rapidly build credit by participating in this innovative program, a peer-to-peer community-lending tool, currently offering no-fee, no-interest loans. Lending Circles have been used to pay down debt, rebuild credit from a bankruptcy, put a down payment on a car, or establish credit to secure a home loan.

The Lending Circles program is administered by the LGBT Center, in partnership with the Mission Asset Fund. The LGBT Center is located at 1800 Market St. For more information, visit <http://www.sfcenter.org/programs/small-business-services/lending-circles-credit-building-microloan-programs>, or visit the Mission Asset Fund website at www.missionassetfund.org for more information about Lending Circles in general.

Japantown

Beginning Hula for Seniors classes, JCCNC, every Saturday, 9:30 a.m.–10:30 a.m.

Hula-Kupuna (seniors) classes teach both Auwana (modern) and Kahiko (ancient) hula. You will enjoy low-impact, anaerobic exercise while learning to dance and practice for performances. Classes are instructed by Mary Leong. The fee for members is \$45 per month; for nonmembers, the fee is \$55 per month. Classes are held at the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California — JCCNC — at 1840 Sutter St. If you want to try out this class — or any of the JCCNC's many other classes, such as ceramics, senior women's writing, flower arranging — before you decide, you can sign up for a free class on the website. For more information, visit the website at www.jccnc.org, or call 415.567.5505 for more information.

NOPA

SFPD Park Station community meetings, Park Station, every second Tuesday, 6:00 p.m.

The second Tuesday of each month, the Park Station holds a community meeting to provide input, express concerns, and deliver kudos. The station is located at 1899 Waller St. For further information, call 415.242.3000, or visit the website at www.parkstation.org

Community Voices

SF Credit Union continued from page 5



The Jones Street site of the Northeast Community Federal Credit Union. Photo via Google Images.

— is located in Chinatown. The credit union, which was founded in 1981, currently has 1,563 members, according to Lily Lo, the manager and CEO.

“People are switching over to credit unions because credit unions can offer more personalized services to members at a much lesser cost and less requirements,” Lo said.

All you need to join NECFCU is a government-issued photo ID, social security card and \$25 minimum deposit for a savings account.

NECFCU mainly serves the Chinatown, Tenderloin and SOMA neighborhoods in San Francisco and has three branches. The main office in Chinatown is at 683 Clay St. The Tenderloin branch is at 288 Jones St., and the Soma branch is located at 992 Howard St. There are no plans to open any new locations, according to Lo.

NECFCU provides emergency loans of up to \$300 for those who have been members for at least three months; PayDay SF loans up to \$500; personal loans; auto loans; small business loans; and tax refund loans.

“We work with members in obtaining loans even if they have less than stellar credit history,” Lo explained. “Credit unions can offer higher interest rates on their savings accounts and lower interest rates on loans and credit cards. Credit unions also have lower fees for their products. For example, no monthly servicing fee and lower fees for bounced checks and overdrafts. The bottom line goal of credit unions is to work with members and help them with their financial needs. We are focused on the individual members.”

Many of NECFCU’s clients are “unbanked”—in other words they do not have a checking account — which can make it difficult to qualify to open an account at big banks.

“We welcome these unbanked individuals to open an

account with us so that they have a place to deposit their checks,” Lo explained. “Otherwise, their other option would be to go to check-cashing outlets, which charge a high fee to cash their checks.”

NECFCU counsels small businesses on how to file their business documents; the credit union is involved with a free city-wide program to help small businesses become compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Additionally, NECFCU offers free tax filing for low-income individuals, workshops on budgeting, saving and rebuilding credit and individual financial counseling by appointment. NECFCU also provides translations from English to Chinese.

To what does Lo attribute NECFCU’s success?

“Our success comes from building relationships with our members and helping them achieve their goals. One such story is a member who could not open an account to get a cell phone. Within months of opening an account with us, he was able to establish credit and got a cell phone. Many of our members have been with the credit union a long time and some of our staff members have become someone they feel they can trust and rely on for sound advice.”

Lo was asked what are some of the rewards of operating a credit union and what some of the challenges are.

“The reward of running a credit union is seeing our members achieve their goals and that our efforts paid off,” Lo said. “Whether it is assistance to someone trying get back on their feet or a loan to new businesses opening their doors, it is gratifying to help others realize their dreams. Our community services are needed and appreciated by those we help. A major challenge of running a credit union is the lack of funding to better promote our services and being understaffed to implement them.”

Midgett’s Corner

TABLE TALK

What is your table talk? Is it boring, funny, exciting or informative?

Some environments stimulate varied topics for table talk. Some of the following topics can be guide post for invitation to conversation: husband and wife, weather, children, partner’s relationships, recent news, finances, weight.



Interactions

Family: Some times that can be a sticky subject. Even if you as a couple decided he would be the house husband, would he be a happy camper if you came home and bragged about your job constantly? Is it a good idea for you to be constantly criticizing him about how he is raising the children or doing the housework? Especially if you both agreed on this arrangement. Coming together at the dinner table should be fun and fun sharing information. Discuss positive things at the dinner table. If there is constant bickering at the table, then you both need to discuss a different arrangement. Talking about what is wrong needs to be discussed privately. This will give the children examples about positive sharing with the family.

"Coming together at the dinner table should be fun ..."

Weather: Constant complaining about the weather it is not a great conversation topic. Why? You have no control over what it will be from one moment to the next. You might complain that it is too hot. Maybe the other person likes heat. For some the snow can be great, especially if you have a skier in your presence. Then again everyone cannot afford to go to the mountains and ski. Eating dinner could be a luxury at this table.

Children: Everyone does not want children. Are you constantly nagging your friends about having children? Why? Children are expensive because financial, emotional and health needs are greater than yours. Why? You’re the leader.

Partner: Are you dating? How long were you dating before you made the decision to live together? Are your conversations a continuation of battering each other? For example, if you choose to live with each other and one does not have a job in

the beginning of the relationship, why are you dwelling on this subject? You knew what the finances were for both of you. When you went on dates, who paid? How about the rent?

How often had you told this individual about his/her job status? What was the answer?

Relationship: Don’t brag if your friends are single. Especially if they give you that look every time you talk about Kendra or Jordan. Stop nagging about marriage or living together.

Finances: Tell me how you are making more money. Where can I find a job at a reliable employment agency? If you have a business, share your idea.

Occupations: What kind of occupation do you have? Do you enjoy what you do? Do you constantly complain about it? Are you going to quit? Is that your table talk every time when you have a conversation with someone? How do you think a person or group feels when you constantly complain? The conversation becomes boring.

Weight: Let me enjoy my meal.

Sounds as if there is nothing to talk about. Not true.

Table talk should be a positive situation. For some this might be the only time and place to have a fun social environment. Especially if you don’t get a chance to share often or have a group or individuals near you. So make the conversation pleasant.

E-mail can be sent to Midgettscorner@aol.com. She is the author of New York Flavor with a San Francisco Beat, and Brown on Brown black Lesbian Erotica. Soon to be released: I’m 77 and Still Having Fun.

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Nonprofit News

Acrosports continued from page 1

always a hit with the younger set.

Every week, AcroSports takes many of its classes on the road with its Mobile Arts Training — M.A.T. — program. More than 20 local schools and organizations such as YMCAs and Boys & Girls Clubs take advantage of M.A.T. each year.

In addition to M.A.T., AcroSports has a community outreach program that offers subsidized and free classes to schools and other institutions that serve children in need. The center earmarks 10 percent of fees generated by classes for the program. It also receives support through grants and private donations.

The outreach program lets AcroSports provide fitness activities to schools in less affluent areas of the city — including Jean Parker Elementary in Chinatown and June Jordan School for Equity in the Excelsior district — that have a limited or no P.E. curriculum.

AcroSports also partners with City Youth Now to bring exercise classes to girls and boys incarcerated in San Francisco's Juvenile Hall. City Youth Now is a nonprofit that supports youths



Above: Youth at AcroCamp learns circus fundamentals at the week-long day camp for ages 6-12. Below right: Students exercising in adult flexibility classes. Photos by Scott Saraceno.

in the San Francisco foster care and juvenile justice systems by funding services that promote stability and personal growth.

"We've had great success with AcroSports," said Amanda Hart, City Youth Now's managing director. "They've been willing to bring in many different activities, like tumbling, acrobatics, break-dancing — even just fitness training in a fun way with music. The kids are really into it."

Johnny Bradford — AcroSports outreach and offsite manager — is equally enthusiastic. He said he enjoys watching the participants' self-esteem and confidence grow as they master new skills, whether it is a simple forward roll or a difficult back flip.

"These are kids who don't get out of their cells much for physical activity," Bradford explained. "The classes are only 45 minutes, but in those 45 minutes they get to express themselves in healthy competition. They can get energy out in a controlled environment, yet also have a lot of freedom to challenge themselves."

Teens interested in becoming an AcroSports teacher, or gaining hands-on experience in marketing, fundraising or other business practices, can apply for an internship. Students who excel in AcroSports outreach or M.A.T. programs and want to take their skills to the next level can participate in Acro-Bound, an intensive on-site training program.

"We've had several people who have moved on directly from AcroSports to Montreal's National Circus School," said Huntington. "It's a very competitive school that requires advanced skills to get into."

Other AcroSports alumni have gone on to perform in Las

Vegas shows, on cruise ships and in Cirque du Soleil. The center is also auditioning break dancers, acrobats and other artists to create its own urban circus troupe, which will put on several shows throughout the year.

Huntington is proud of the talented performers AcroSports has produced. She is also proud of what AcroSports gives back to the local community.



"A lot of people who come in for birthday parties or pay for classes love our programs," remarked Huntington. "But many of them have no idea the extent that they're also helping others when they choose AcroSports."

To learn more about AcroSports, go to www.AcroSports.org.

Meals continued from page 4



Meals on Wheels recipients include [left to right]: Laurie, 106, centenarian; Nancy, 76 retired social worker; Ro, 78, homebound elder; Ben, 78, veteran; Inga, 78, disabled elder; Harold, 84, retired shipyard fireman; and Bill, 101, retired librarian. Photos courtesy of Meals on Wheels.

Belfield further said that a partnership with the University of San Francisco helps to engage small groups of students in 2-3 hours of service projects at the home of a participating senior. Certain classes require this service project as part of a student's curriculum, according to Belfield.

In March 2014, the Emergency Food Kits program launched. Belfield said the goal of that program is to provide 2-day supplies of food and water to participant seniors in the event of an emergency.

There was a big push over a 4-month period to get the program up and running, according to Belfield. During that time, about 1,900 seniors received their emergency food kits with the help of ten corporations, including Lyft, Uber, and Twitter.

With the torrential storms

of early December, one could understand how important emergency supplies could be for vulnerable seniors. In the event of flooded streets and similar conditions that may make it difficult for drivers to reach those who depend on the service Meals on Wheels provides, it is easy to see that these kits could make a big difference.

To deal with such anxieties, Meals on Wheels of San Francisco employs about a dozen professionals as part of their social work team, according to Thorp. These professionals seek out solutions if a driver notices a potential problem. Thorp said that drivers have been trained to look out for things, as well as to be the eyes and ears while providing companionship.

The social work team is 2-tiered. One is a bilingual team and the other is a home-delivered meals program team.

In one instance that Thorp related, a driver noticed that a senior had a dog, but had no means to wash it. The social work team swiftly enlisted a volunteer such as Dunn to remedy the situation.

Thorp offered many other examples of proactive measures taken over the years by Meals on Wheels.

"We have a whole system in place if a senior is not responding when the driver is there," Thorp said. "We will contact emergency services if needed."

For all the well-intentioned efforts throughout the year, as well as during the holidays, the homebound could at certain times be left to themselves. Thorp said that the capacity to provide service varies from individual to individual.

Dunn gave insight into how difficult it can be for seniors during the holidays as opposed

to the rest of the year. He has volunteered each Thanksgiving since 1988.

"The holidays are emotionally rough on a lot of us, and it can be brutal on the lonely homebound elderly," Dunn said. "Some withdraw and become quite sad."

"It's a little better during the rest of the year, but it always depends on the individual," Dunn continued. It is the New Year, and resolutions abound. With the end of the holidays is a new beginning. Perhaps the New Year will bring Meals on Wheels of San Francisco closer to their next benchmark,

As for serving seniors three meals a day — that would be quite a New Year's resolution!

More information can be found about Meals on Wheels at <http://www.mowsf.org/>.

Practicing a positive outlook for transforming failure into success

By Erik Peper, PhD

- All of a sudden I no longer procrastinated.
- I felt more motivated to get things done.
- After practicing this exercise for a week, my productivity significantly increased.
- I felt more in control of my life in a fun way that made me feel successful.
- Every time I did it, it increased my mood, confidence and energy levels.

— Responses by students



Putting off something we set out to do can leave us feeling unproductive, drained of energy, and guilty. Procrastination can also contribute to dysphoria, depression, and self-recrimination. When people reflect upon their own activity, they often use blaming language such as “I should not have done that.” . . . “That was stupid!” or “What was I thinking?” The challenge is how to change this blaming language — through which the person continues to rehearse how they have failed — to positive and empowering language and images. By changing the language, students at San Francisco State University demonstrated a significant increase in productivity and energy and a reduction in procrastination as shown in figure 1.

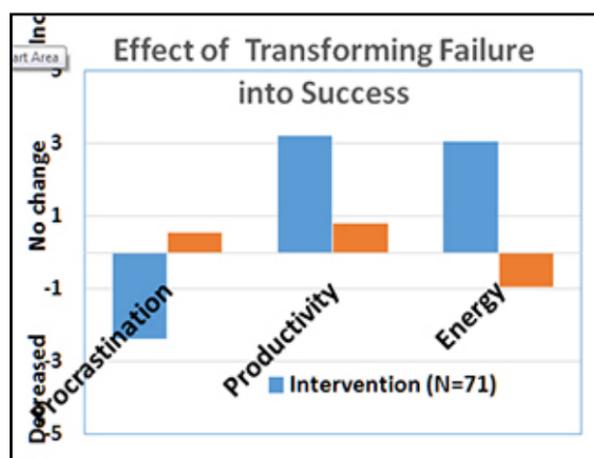


Figure 1

Mentally reviewing and ruminating over the failure only increases the probability that you will repeat the same mistake again and again. Each time we rehearse by imagination an action in our mind or by thinking, we are strengthening those behavior patterns. Imagined and real activities have a similar effect. When you say, “I should not have done that,” you are

actually rehearsing what you did not want to do thereby increasing the likelihood that you repeat it again.

How we talk to ourselves may affect the outcome. A person thinking about stopping to smoke can describe her/himself as, *I am becoming a non-smoker*, or, *I am trying to stop smoking*. Seeing yourself as a nonsmoker leads to a more successful outcome. Focus on the positive outcome, and success is more likely.

Athletes and performers practice rehearsing their desired performance in their mind’s eye. For example, when a golfer hits the ball into the pond, the golfer acknowledges that he/she missed the hole and then asks himself/herself, “What was the problem?” Instead of constantly repeating, “I should not have hit the ball into the pond,” the golfer explores how he/she should have hit the ball so that it would have landed on the green. One factor that was forgotten was the crosswinds. The golfer then imagines exactly how hard and in what direction to hit the ball. He/she mentally rehearses the corrected stroke many times, each time seeing the ball landing on the green and rolling into the fifth hole. Later that day when a golfing partner asks about what happened, he/she answers, “It went into the pond, and let me tell you how I would hit it now.” Thus, the past error becomes the

trigger to rehearse the new behavior.

How to transform failure into success

After becoming aware of something we regretted, and we wished that we would not have done, or done differently, play “Monday morning quarterbacking, since hindsight has 20/20 vision.” This means that the moment you notice yourself thinking, “I wish I’d done that differently,” interrupt the thought and accept that you could only have done what you did given your history, skills, and environmental factors at that moment. Accept what happened and recognize that you are now ready to explore new options. Take a breath,



Mottos and graph courtesy of Erik Peper, PhD. The graph is Figure 1 in a slide presentation, “Change in Self-Report of Procrastination, Productivity and Energy Level.” Reproduced by permission from: Peper, E., Harvey, R., Lin, I-M, & Duvvuri, P. (2014). Increase productivity, decrease procrastination and increase energy. *Biofeedback*, 42(2), 82-87.

relax, and then ask, “If I could have done this over, how would I do it now given the new wisdom I have gained?” Use the following five-step process each time you catch yourself blaming yourself for something you did.

1. Think of a past conflict or area of behavior with which you are dissatisfied.
2. Accept that it was the only way you could have done it under the given circumstances.
3. Ask, “Given the wisdom I have now, how could I have done this differently?”
4. See yourself in that same situation but acting differently, using the wisdom you now have — rehearse this step a number of times. When rehearsing, it is important to see and feel yourself completely immersed in the situation. Be very specific, and engage as many of the senses as you can.
5. Smile and congratulate yourself for taking charge of programming your own future.

The following is an example of transforming failure into success the next morning after catching myself and blaming myself for pigging out on pastries and pizza the previous night.

I walked into the kitchen and as I started to go to the fridge, I stopped, took a gentle breath, and exhaled. I asked myself, what was I feeling? I felt lonely. I paused. Then I turned to the sink, got a glass of water and drank it. I took another breath, pulled up the chair and reached for my cell phone and called Frank. We talked for a few minutes. I hung up the phone, walked to the bathroom, squeezed peppermint toothpaste on my toothbrush, brushed my teeth and went to bed.

By mentally rehearsing a new desired action, I interrupt and transform the conditioned pattern, which when done often improves health and performance. Remember, only you can change yourself. You can only rehearse what you have control over. If there are experiences which were outside of our control — for example, being abused as a young child — then the adaptive response is to acknowledge and accept what happened, and reaffirm that you are no longer the same person as when the experience occurred. Then take a deep breath and relax, and let go — while knowing that this personal experience has taught you a set of coping skills that have nurtured your growth and development.

Make this practice part of your life, and experience the similar success that so many of the students reported such as:

The more I “revised” the failure into success, the more it became productive.

I felt more empowered, and that it gave me more energy.

I felt more motivated to get things done.

After practicing this exercise for a week, my productivity significantly increased.

The more I imagined changing my habits, the more I followed through getting things done.

Erik Peper is a professor in the Institute of Holistic Health Studies, Department of Health Education, San Francisco State University. His contact information is as follows: erik.peper@gmail.com; his blog is at www.peperperspective.com; and he may be contacted via his website at www.biofeedback-health.org.

Corporate Philanthropy

EDGE Funders builds stronger alliances between funders and donors

By Rebecca Duran

When funders come together for the EDGE Funders Alliance, it is not because they all fund the same thing, but rather a whole array of sectors — such a women's organization in West Africa, farmers' networks in Latin America, and environmental groups in the U.S. — something that differs slightly from other funding networks.

EDGE Funders Alliance is a community of donors engaged in domestic and international grantmaking, and a shared belief that equity and justice are critical to furthering sustainable global well-being.

The alliance was formed in July 2012 through the merger of two funding networks: Grantmakers without Borders, which brought together funders and donors who supported work in Africa, Asia, and Latin America; and the Funders Network on Transforming the Global Economy — formerly the Funders Network on Trade and Globalization — which focused on global economic issues, according to the alliance's director, Mark Randazzo.

Randazzo said that EDGE has about 70 formal foundation members, some who pay dues and only sign up as members, and many others who participate in our various activities. He stated that some of them fund outside the U.S.; some of them fund inside the U.S.; some of them fund at the state level or national level, or even internationally; and some of them fund locally.

Randazzo said that the thing that links all of them is the recognition that "global is important." He felt that the main concern about philanthropy is that it is sometimes too regionally-focused and can be focused on measurable, achievable outcomes with short-term commitments.

"So, you say your issue is food justice, for example," Operations Manager Lamar Gibson pointed out. "Then you need to be aware of what other food justice funders are doing — where they succeeded, where they had challenges in their work."

According to Gibson, for a foundation, three years is seen as a long-term commitment, and he believes that foundations need to focus on their work in longer terms.

"EDGE wants to emphasize, if not collaboration — because people should spend their money where they want to — then at least in alignment," he said.

In terms of concerns, the main focus is thinking about



Operations Manager Lamar Gibson. Photo courtesy of EDGE Funders Alliance.

how to shift the tide of all the issues they collectively care about in a more systemic way.

"We're not focusing on specific issues and challenges in philanthropy, other than just the big goal of trying to get philanthropists to think about their role of challenging systems and making systemic change," said Lola Ibrahim, the program and communications manager. "So that we can really see meaningful results in the world — and not just addressing the problem as it happens, or walking away from it and not thinking about the root causes of each problem."

Rules in the global economy, trade rules, banking rules, and financial rules all have an impact on everything funders care about, and in EDGE they all share a systemic analysis that there are global economic problems and an economic crisis.

"There's a climate crisis; there's a larger ecological crisis; there's a social crisis; a crisis in democracy — all of these crises are linked," Randazzo said. "So, you have to approach these things systemically."

Another common belief is that the grassroots organizing sector — meaning community-based organizations working on problems of that community — need to be part of the solution to the problem, those organizations, their networks and their nongovernmental allies — NGOs.

"There are lots of nongovernmental organizations that aren't necessarily community-based, who lend certain expertise and work very close with those groups," Randazzo said. "The people who are the most vulnerable, who are the most impacted by the system we have now, have to be part of building new and better societies in the future."

EDGE sends out a weekly electronic newsletter to members, holds periodic webinars and learning calls — around an

initiative or an issue with funders and their grantees; they also organize delegations of funders who have been involved the World Social Forum every year — a large gathering of NGOs and grassroots activists — and they also organize with other funder networks delegations for the climate negotiations.

But what Randazzo said he believes is the most important event each year is the Just Giving Conference, of which the next one which will take place in Baltimore on April 8–10.

The main focus of the 2015 conference will be a continuation of the 2014 conference, which is called "Just Transition to the Next Economy."

This is a concept that Ibrahim said is more prevalent in movement circles and is fairly new to philanthropy; the conference provides the space for conversations for what it would look like, as well as bringing in practitioners working in the field and movement generally.

The conference brings together up to about 200 funders and donors and another 50 or so activists from around the world for 2–3 days, coming together from the U.S. and other places around the world to learn new things, to network, and to strategize.

Funders who are interested in a specific issue will come together in a space where they're trying to build and show connections between all of the issues and provide an opportunity for the groups and funders to zoom out to the bigger picture.

According to Ibrahim, activists and community leaders who have set up working models that have worked to shift systems in their communities speak to philanthropists at workshops so they can give these real world examples and share what philanthropy tools and methodologies have worked best in those instances.

Ibrahim further noted that engagement labs create spaces for philanthropists to talk about initiatives they are running, and to get people to collaborate and envision solutions together.

Out of the collaboration towards these common goals develops more projects and

initiatives. One of these is the Building Equity and Alignment for Impact program — the BEA Initiative, where the formula is equity plus alignment equals impact.

The BEA Initiative was launched by the Overbrook Foundation in July 2013 after a meeting of four people from four philanthropic organizations — which included the Overbrook Foundation, the Kresge Foundation, the CS Mott Foundation, and EDGE Funders Alliance.

The Overbrook Foundation is a member of EDGE Funders Alliance and Samantha Harvey, a program manager and environment program associate of Overbrook, is on the board.

Randazzo said that attendees spent a couple of days working together; others present included Greenpeace U.S., the National Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club, Union of Concerned Scientists, and about 26 grassroots environmental justice organizations.

Daniel Katz, the senior program director of the environment program at Overbrook, wanted to figure out ways to build stronger alliances between national groups and grassroots groups in the U.S., and to try to figure out way to build better collaboration.

There was the concern that they seemed to be going backwards, even with all of the resources foundations have put into climate issues over the decade.

"If we want impact on policy, on changing society around these issues, then there needs to be greater alignment between the national groups and the grassroots groups, and that means more equity than there is," Randazzo said.

Randazzo pointed out that studies have shown that when it comes to resources that foundations in particular provide, 90 percent goes to the big national organizations, and little goes to grassroots organizations.

"One of the ways to get impact is to get alignment and to have alignment is to have more equitable distribution of resources so that more support flows to the grassroots groups and their networks, and equity in terms of relationships between the groups," Randazzo said.

Randazzo explained that groups that have big budgets and are focused on Congress tend to move very quickly and deploy grassroots groups on their agenda, and tend to focus on specific, targeted policy-oriented

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[Above and below left]: Peace tiles at Koshland Park; doll at Community Grows garden. Photos by Paul Kenyon Krantz. [Below right]: Fava beans and hops at Please Touch garden; photo via Google Images.

the New Liberation Garden, which is located on the corner of Divisadero and Eddy Streets. New Liberation Garden is named after New Liberation Church, located nearby, which owns the lot and has granted Amy Weiss permission to grow the garden. Amy is currently the leading organizer of the New Liberation Garden, and has been since she decided to reestablish the garden over a year ago.

New Liberation Garden is currently being used as a demonstration garden, since it is too small to be seriously cultivated for food production. That being said, everything grown at New Liberation Garden is planted with a specific purpose in mind, and most of the crops are edible.

New Liberation Garden is a small space, but keeping it growing at full potential takes a fair amount of work. Amy has big plans for agricultural projects that could take place at New

Liberation Garden and in the surrounding neighborhood, but she knows that she cannot make them happen all by herself.

Visitors and volunteers are most welcome at New Liberation Garden. The best time to visit is on Tuesdays from noon until 2 p.m. More information about the garden is available at www.nddivis.org.

Another demonstration garden — called Please Touch — is located near Civic Center. Please Touch is open to visitors on Wednesdays from noon until 5 p.m.



Beyond making safe, quiet spaces in our otherwise loud and sometimes dreary neighborhoods, some people see commu-

nity gardens as holding much greater potential, such as the potential to get youths engaged in healthy activities.

Community Grows is a locally based nonprofit focused on using community gardens to promote a lifestyle that is healthy and inspired for employable youths.

Community Grows was established in 1994 in response to tremendous needs in the Western Addition. Those needs included a lack of employment, a lack of green space, and a lack of healthy cooking opportunities.

From the start, Community Grows took over stewardship of Koshland Park, which is located on the corner of Page and Buchanan Streets. Koshland Park is named for the Koshland family who funded the park's creation. Community Grows stepped in to keep an eye on the park, making sure it stayed clean and safe. Community Grows then opened up a community garden on one corner of the park, where they continue to teach local youths to grow vegetables.

Within ten years, Community Grows had founded four parks and small gardens at several schools, including Rosa Parks, Booker T and Cobb Elementary.

Having established a number of safe green spaces, Community Grows continues to focus on growing healthy youth by providing nutrition and cooking classes, garden education and professional development.

Community Grows serves

several thousand youths in and around the Western Addition and is made up almost entirely of volunteers. One ongoing program organized by Community Grows is called Seed to Mouth. Seed to Mouth is an after school cooking class serving over 200 elementary school students.

Another ongoing program is called BEETS — for Band of Environmentally Educated and Employable Teens. The BEETS program focuses mainly on youths aged 15–19 living in the Western Addition. It provides opportunities for garden and food education, as well as a 4-month internship and assistance in finding a job upon completion.



Community Grows depends largely on donations to keep its programs running. Shakirah Simley of the Community Grows advisory board would like to strongly encourage those who are able to make a donation to Community Grows so that the nonprofit can continue to expand the reach of its programs in 2015.

For those who are interested in volunteering with Community Grows, a volunteer form can be found online at www.communitygrows.org. Also, the Koshland Garden site is open daily for anyone who would like to stop by and see what is growing.

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campaigns — while a grassroots focus is on the whole spectrum of issues a community is concerned about.

The local groups also tend to be more accountable to a membership; decisions take longer to

be made; and you have to consult with your community.

“Many of us are looking at Paris for the climate negotiations at the end of next year,” Randazzo said. “From the funder’s side, we’re looking at

how do we support all this work, how do we support the NGOs that are engaged in the negotiation, and putting pressure on governments, and also how do the funders support this building of relationships between various

groups and extend that beyond the BEA Initiative.”

More information can be found about EDGE Funders Alliance at www.edgefunders.org.

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