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ORGANIZATION

Organization: Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corp.

Name: Donald Falk.

Title: Executive director.

Mission of organization: To provide safe, affordable housing with supportive services for low-income people in the Tenderloin community and be a leader in making the neighborhood a better place to live.

Founded: 1981.

Milestone: TNDC will celebrate its 25th anniversary this year.

Annual budget: \$9.1 million.

Expense allocation:

Administration 9 percent, fundraising 6 percent, programming 85 percent.

Program services: TNDC operates two fundamental programs, affordable housing and tenant services.

Corporate support: 13 percent.

Corporate supporters: Union Bank of California, J.P. Morgan Chase, Bank of America, Catholic Healthcare West.

Board chair: Christine Goug.

Board members: 19, including Eileen Gallagher, Charles Casey and Tom Sebekos.

Employees: 210.

Volunteers: 21.

Events: Two annual fund raisers, the 25th anniversary gala and a celebrity pool toss.

Telephone: (415) 776-2151.

Web Site: www.tndc.org

Nonprofit Profile: TNDC

OFFICE ISSUES

Recent challenge: We experienced tremendous growth over a five- to six-year period. We bought three big buildings in a two-week period and built them all at the same time. When I joined in 1994, we owned eight buildings, 480 units and had 75 employees. As of now, we're closer to 23 buildings, 1,800 units and 220 employees. So the organizational impact of becoming a bigger corporation, of the administrative infrastructure, the procedures, the just handling the work load wrought significant changes on us.

Measure of success: We've developed on the order of 1,100 units in the last six years, all in the Tenderloin or surrounding neighborhoods.

Smartest move: We pursued three properties we refer to as the "preservation properties." All were at risk of converting to market-rate housing from affordable and altogether had nearly 500 units. We basically did them all at once, which was very risky and worked out marvelously well.

Missed opportunity: The failure of Proposition A to pass in 2004. It's just an unfortunate thing certainly for low-income San Franciscans, and I think for San Francisco. There's less capital and we're going to develop less housing as a result.

Misconception of nonprofits: That it costs nonprofit developers more than it costs market-rate developers to develop housing. ... The use of public money is highly regulated and scrutinized, and that adds cost and time. It doesn't matter if a developer is for-profit or nonprofit, the money brings with it additional cost.

PROFESSIONAL INSIGHTS

Personal path to nonprofit work: It began in my formative years around having values around social and economic justice because of my parents —

both are progressive. My father was black-listed and had to change careers back in the McCarthy era. He lost his security clearance as an engineer. Another part of it is that there's an idea in Judaism which means 'to heal the world,' so there's a real Jewish ethic around making the world better.

Toughest aspect: The lack of resources. We take outsized real estate risks in relationship to our balance sheet.

Most surprising aspect: That a group like TNDC is actually at some level a player in the San Francisco real estate market. I'm thinking of the Business Times map you do every year. I look at that map and see an awful lot of TNDC development throughout it.

Biggest pain: Constantly raising money instead of doing the work itself.

Greatest pleasure: Working with committed, smart, diverse people, both at TNDC and generally in the community-development world.

INTROSPECTIONS

Best recent moment: Seeing people move into the family housing project that we just finished, Curran House.

Worst recent moment: When one of our senior managers decided to move on.

Dream for another life: Writer, musician or baseball player.

Greatest inspiration: My parents.

Down time: I read, exercise or play sports, play bridge, sleep.

Causes: Poverty-related issues and class issues.

Most like to meet: Paul Robeson, not only as someone interesting to talk to, but also as a renaissance man who did not compromise what he stood for even at great personal cost.

— Sarah Duxbury



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Donald Falk
Executive director, Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corp.