TNDC’s Community Organizing Department mobilized Tenderloin residents to make their voices heard in the June election.
TNDC Gets Out the Vote

Campaign Registers 300 New Voters in the Tenderloin

In June’s election, Californian voters were confronted with Proposition 98 which would have amended the state constitution to do away with rent control. Nowhere would this change have been felt more strongly than the Tenderloin neighborhood, where 99% of residents are renters and the average median household income is less than $30,000.

To educate Tenderloin residents on current legislation like Prop 98 and to help them get involved in changes that will affect their neighborhood, TNDC’s Community Organizing Department mobilized TNDC residents, staff, and other community organizers to encourage voter participation among the residents in our buildings.

“Our goal was three fold,” said TNDC Community Organizer Steve Woo, who spearheaded the campaign. “To register as many people as we could, get them out to vote and help educate them on the propositions that would most affect their lives.”

This campaign kicked off in mid-April with volunteer recruitment and leadership training. “We not only wanted to have a successful voter registration campaign, we wanted to help build leadership skills for neighborhood tenants, so they will be more experienced to lead other campaigns,” Steve explained. Volunteers were trained to assist with filling out voter registration forms and to educate new voters about ballot propositions.

Voter registration activities were held in many TNDC buildings. Building residents who registered to vote were treated to pizza.

TNDC’s Housing Development Director Receives Special Recognition

TNDC’s talented Housing Development Director, Diep Do, has been recognized by Affordable Housing Finance magazine as one of this year’s Young Leaders in Affordable Housing.

Each year, Affordable Housing Finance magazine profiles housing development professionals under the age of 35 nationally who are outstanding leaders in the affordable housing and community development field. The winners have demonstrated that they are committed not only to the mission of affordable housing and community development, but have proven they can build organizations, lead programs, and usher in innovative solutions to common problems in the field of affordable housing.

Diep Do was hired as a Project Manager in TNDC’s Housing Development Department in 1999 after receiving her Masters Degree in Urban Planning and a Bachelor’s Degree in Urban Studies from UCLA. She quickly rose over the next six years to become TNDC’s Director of Housing Development, where she currently oversees a team of eight project management staff responsible for managing eleven complex housing development projects—that’s approximately 1,400 new, affordable units—with a total development cost exceeding $600 million.

Diep’s passion to create affordable housing comes from a very personal place. She was two years old when her family immigrated to San Diego from Vietnam during the Vietnam War. Her parents were challenged to find housing for a large family of seven children and lived in crowded surroundings.

“I saw that struggle,” she said. “It instilled in me the meaning of home. A home is more than a structure. It’s a place for family gatherings.”

“It’s difficult to convey just how challenging a position Diep took on at such a young age,” said Executive Director Don Falk. Facing San Francisco’s extraordinarily high development costs, the challenges...
Food for Thought
A Grocery Store in the Tenderloin?

In the spring of 2007, TNDC staff first began exploring the feasibility of bringing a grocery store to the Eddy and Taylor site. As I write this in mid-August of 2008, I would love to be able to tell you that it has become a reality—but alas, I cannot. At this stage, it’s unclear whether we’ll abandon the effort or plunge ahead. Whatever the outcome, this journey has proven instructive. In it lies the story of why bringing positive change to the Tenderloin is so difficult.

Last year TNDC commissioned a study that found that Tenderloin residents make multiple trips by public transit outside the neighborhood to meet their food needs, and that although nearly 30 convenience stores populate the neighborhood, not one of them sells the range of goods people need. And while the Tenderloin is a poor neighborhood, it also has a great deal of purchasing power, given its remarkable density (nearly 15,000 people live within a few blocks of the site). So the idea of a Tenderloin grocery isn’t far-fetched.

Yet the economics of a grocery are upside down: the rent a landlord needs to break even is more than a grocer can pay and still make a profit. Or conversely, the rent at which a grocer can make a profit is not sufficient for a landlord to cover its operating costs.

That simple arithmetic explains why the private market hasn’t built a grocery here in 30+ years, but it also illustrates the role that nonprofit institutions can play in sparking development. If a group like TNDC can bring public and charitable resources into the equation—through, say, a capital campaign, or government grants—then both grocer and landlord can operate profitably.

But we’ve learned that even the prospect of a favorable rent may not be enough to attract a grocer. The perception that the Tenderloin has a high crime rate leads prospective investors to believe that they will suffer theft and have trouble attracting employees who can earn the same wage working in a safer neighborhood. The power of that perception in the minds of people who make investment decisions is incredibly strong; if you doubt it, just read the Chronicle article “Tenderloin Struggles to Get Local Grocery Store,” found at http://www.tndc.org/news/article_archives.html. Pioneering retail establishments in poor neighborhoods requires not simply public or charitable money—though that is no small problem—it also requires visionary corporations willing to take risks.

So if the economics and perceptions are such that TNDC is not able to bring a grocery store into the Tenderloin in the near future, what lessons have we learned? That one of our roles is to continue to push to change perceptions of the Tenderloin and its residents. And that we need to focus on the whole neighborhood—its safety, the nature of its residents, its prospects for improvement—not just its housing stock, so that, someday, economic development, services and jobs will flourish and the Tenderloin will fulfill its promise of being a healthy, vibrant low income neighborhood.

Your support and belief in the value of that battle are inspirations for us to persevere, and we thank you sincerely for it.

Sincerely,

Donald S. Falk
Executive Director
TNDC Welcomes New Development Director

TNDC is pleased to welcome Jane Hatch as our new Director of Fund Development. Jane, formerly the Associate Director of Major Gifts at Stanford University, has served on TNDC’s Board of Directors since September 2006 and has been a great asset to our Board’s Fund Development Committee and the Committee on Directors.

Her impressive range of experience includes a degree at Harvard and an MBA from J. L. Kellogg Graduate School Of Management at Northwestern University, volunteer development for the Junior League of San Francisco, business strategy and management consulting, and project management and grant programs aimed at supporting China’s and Mongolia’s economic, educational, and human resource development at the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau in Beijing, China. She has visited more than 32 countries.

“We are just delighted that Jane decided to join TNDC and lead our Fund Development team,” said Executive Director Don Falk. “She is remarkably talented, and we’re truly fortunate to have attracted such a well-qualified professional – a star – to help generate the resources that are the life-blood of the organization.”

Splish, Splash & Cash for kids in the Tenderloin!

The Pool Party of the Year...
Benefiting TNDC’s program for kids and their families in the TL!

Tuesday, October 7, 2008
6:00pm to 10:00pm

Poolside at The Phoenix Hotel/Bambuddha Lounge
601 Eddy St. (@ Larkin St.), in the City of San Francisco

Our Sponsors

Media Sponsors

Tickets are $125
For ticket information or purchases, please call TNDC at (415) 776-2151, or visit www.tndc.org
Resident Spotlight: Ed Secrease

Ron Hicks, TNDC’s Facilities Manager, met Ed Secrease two and a half years ago outside the Powell BART station. “I don’t normally give money to the homeless on the street,” Ron explained. “But Ed had some pizzazz, some flair…” He started giving him the change from his pocket when he saw him, stopping to chat.

Soon Ed and Ron became friends. They began meeting every Friday for lunch “powwows” at Mimi’s Café in the Tenderloin. “I kind of got hooked,” Ron said of Ed’s engaging personality. “If I didn’t show up to our lunch for some reason, Ed would come to the TNDC office to see if I was okay.” Ed became a well-liked figure in the TNDC offices. “He was always polite,” said Administrative Assistant Raven Dunn, “and always seemed to be reasonably chipper for someone living it rough.”

But despite his chipper attitude, they still worried about him. Ron remembers Ed coming into the TNDC office one morning after being beaten up and robbed the night before.

“It wasn’t fun,” Ed said of his life on the street, “and sometimes very cold.” At night he would find “campsites,” as he called them, citing a favorite near a local flower shop. He’d find three or four boxes, pull a blanket over his head, and try to get some sleep.

As they got to know each other, Ron began to urge Ed to move to the next level in his life by taking steps to get off the street and into affordable housing. After many heart-to-heart talks, Ed began the process of applying for a SRO room in TNDC’s Ritz Building. It took more than half a year to complete the necessary requirements to receive assistance from state and city agencies.

“It’s a lot of waiting,” Ron commented. “A lot of paperwork and hoops to jump through… it would be hard even for someone in a safe, supportive environment. I can understand now why a lot of homeless people don’t try. It’s almost like the deck is stacked against them.” When Ed’s application was finally accepted to move into the Ritz, his friends at TNDC were so excited.

Ed enjoys the freedom of being in his own place. “I can leave my dirty clothes where I want to,” he joked. “And I have a bed instead of someone’s floor, or some concrete.”

But it takes a lot of adjustment to transition from being homeless to maintaining a home. “I’ve never experienced so much pressure,” he said about his life in his new apartment. Following rules, managing a limited income, adhering to a regular schedule, learning to live with neighbors… it is a new way of life that many homeless individuals have a hard time adjusting to when they no longer live on the street.

TNDC has nearly 300 units designated to house the formerly homeless like Ed, and 17 on-site social workers provide free voluntary support services to help them retain their housing.

“I really appreciate TNDC’s patience,” Ed said. “They aren’t like an average landlord, they try to help me stay where I am. But that’s the main thing: keeping the apartment. It’s hard. But I don’t want to disappoint anybody.”

Ron is proud that Ed has pushed himself to get as far as he has, but continues to gently urge him to take the next step to stabilize his life. “When he’s ready,” Ron said, “we’re going to try to get him a job on TNDC’s maintenance crew.

“I’m so glad we could give him a chance when he had no one else to help him. This has made me realize that any of us could find ourselves in his situation… even though we don’t think so, any of us could be just a day away from having nowhere to go.”
This June, 14-year-old Sandra took her very first trip on an airplane. A TNDC After-School Program participant, she and 13 others experienced the college campuses and culture of Boston on TASP’s 9th Annual College Tour. “I was scared,” she said of her first airplane flight and trip away from her family. “But it was great.”

TNDC’s After-School Program (TASP) opens up new horizons for the Tenderloin youth who participate in its educational and recreational activities. Many are children of low-income families and experience outside their dense inner-city neighborhood is limited.

The Annual College Tour encourages participants to consider college as an option by exposing them to campuses around the country. Because most will be the first generation in their family to attend college, making them feel comfortable with the notion of college life makes it more likely they will attend.

This year, a group of 14 TASP participants benefited from a 10-week workshop to prepare for the college application process, culminating in June with the College Tour to Boston which included visits to the campuses of Harvard, MIT, Boston University, Wellesley College, and Babson University. Previous trips have exposed youth to the colleges and culture of cities like New York City, Washington, D.C., New Orleans, Philadelphia, and Chicago.

“It’s an educational experience all around,” said Program Manager Laura Choe. “With all the traveling, visiting campuses, navigating public transportation and urban streets, being away from home, and comparing everything to what they’re familiar with back in San Francisco.”

Trip highlights included hands-on exhibits at the Museum of Science, the echoes inside the Mapparium, a huge, lighted glass globe based on 1935 world geography at the Mary Baker Eddy Library, and the MyTown Youth Tour, led by high school students, of neighborhood and activist histories among Boston’s immigrant communities and communities of color.

“It was very exciting to have such a large group of first-time travelers and to see their insights and reactions,” Laura said.

Roberto, a 14-year-old freshman at Lowell High School, felt like he was a student attending college when he visited the campuses. “Now I know what the system is about,” he said. “I know what I need to do in high school to get into the college I want. For example, I learned that AP courses count more than regular classes, so if you get a B in an AP course it’s better than an A in a regular course because it shows that you challenged yourself.”

For Sandra, currently a sophomore at Lincoln High School, the College Tour got her thinking about what she wants to be when she grows up and what she needs to do to get there. “It made me realize I have a long way to go,” she said.

TNDC Gets Out the Vote

While participating in a discussion of the propositions that they would be voting for in the June election. Other campaign activities included phone banking and literature drops, and on Election Day campaign organizers and volunteers were busy knocking on doors, encouraging registered voters to vote.

In 15 participating TNDC buildings, the percentage of tenants registered to vote increased from 42% to 61%, an increase of 300 new voters. 59% of registered voters turned out to vote in the election compared to 40% for the City of San Francisco.

“The response we got was amazing,” said Muriel Burholz, a West Hotel resident who helped to get her neighbors involved in the campaign. “People were so grateful that we made the effort. Many of them didn’t know how much these issues will affect them.”

“I look forward to doing the same thing again with Prop B,” she said.

www.tndc.org  Summer 2008
Bothin Foundation Provides New Vehicles for TNDC

With 25 buildings scattered throughout the Tenderloin and adjacent neighborhoods, TNDC employees have a lot of traveling to do during the course of a day. But up until this spring, TNDC’s two utility vehicles—an unreliable, unwieldy 1989 Chevrolet pick-up with rearview mirrors held in place with duct tape and a 1991 Chevy pick-up with over 160,000 miles on its speedometer—just weren’t cutting it.

After learning of TNDC’s need for reliable, safe means of transporting equipment and supplies to maintain our properties and donated items such as food and clothes for our low-income tenants, the Bothin Foundation awarded TNDC $33,600 for the purchase of two new vehicles—a 2007 Dodge Caravan and a 2005 Chrysler Town & Country van, both with a three year warranty.

TNDC maintenance worker Alfonso Napoles-Rincon was excited when he saw the vans for the first time. “I felt like a kid receiving a new toy,” he said.

“Besides getting vehicles that are 20 years newer, these new vans provide better security.” With the transition from our old truck beds to enclosed vans, TNDC employees will now be able to load and unload tools, furniture, and donated items without exposing them to weather or theft.

“I also love that the vans are mechanically much better,” he said. “We don’t have to worry about breaking down and getting stuck on a road.” TNDC would like to thank the Bothin Foundation for helping us bring greater safety to our staff, work more efficiently, and provide superior service for our tenants. As Alfonso said, “having these vans allows us to fulfill the expectations we set for ourselves.”

Help support TNDC for the Long Term!

Please help us ensure that affordable housing is available for low-income San Franciscans for years to come by including us in your estate plans, through a bequest or another planned gift like a charitable trust or insurance annuity.

Please contact Julie Doherty, Major Gifts Manager, at (415) 358-3965 or jdoherty@tndc.org.

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Donor Spotlight: David Devine

Anyone who recognizes bassist Charlie Haden on David Devine’s cell phone ringtone knows that he is an avid jazz fan. The music is both restless and engaging, like David himself. His love of Be-Bop era jazz began in the early 1960’s when he and his wife Lee spent their honeymoon in San Francisco. “We came here for vacation and basically never left,” he quipped.

Devine Properties made its humble beginnings in business with a few residential apartment rehabs in the 1970s. It was during that time that David became keenly aware of the desperate need for low-cost housing in San Francisco. “I’ve seen the Tenderloin evolve over the years into a viable and interesting neighborhood,” he observed. “Many people think of the Tenderloin as gritty place to be avoided, but I don’t think of it that way. More people should know about the work of TNDC and other aspects of the Tenderloin that make it a true neighborhood for all kinds of people.”

Always with a view to the future, the Devine family chose to put down roots by devoting time and resources to local causes that they are passionate about: housing for those who need it most, education for low-income children, and local land conservation that will preserve the Bay Area’s open space in perpetuity. David and Lee have been doubly blessed this summer, celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary in June surrounded by family, and soon after welcoming their second grandchild Luke into the world.

David can’t help but put his energy and focus to work, and over the years has followed his disparate passions—serving on the Board of Directors of deSaisset art museum of University of Santa Clara in San Jose; becoming an enthusiastic proponent and investor in the new Yoshi’s in the Fillmore district; and all the while continuing to build Devine Properties to include industrial and commercial real estate throughout the Bay Area and beyond.

He is one of TNDC’s longest continual supporters, and along with two other groups, has named TNDC as a beneficiary of a Charitable Remainder Trust. “It’s right up my alley in San Francisco and Oakland!” David credits both his grandmothers with shaping his bequest to TNDC. On his mother’s side, Aline Barnsdall was a significant art collector and an early and active fundraiser for environmental conservation; and paternal grandmother Katharine Devine was a devout woman who imparted to her grandson a way of living deeply informed by Catholic values.

Now semi-retired, David travels to split his time between San Francisco, Sonoma, and Los Angeles, where he has family and business interests. When he is not hiking the windswept hills above Glen Ellen or spending time with grandchildren, David remains active in the music program at St. Dominic’s parish in San Francisco and actively pursues his lifelong appreciation of jazz.

“Many people think of the Tenderloin as gritty place to be avoided, but I don’t think of it that way.”