TNDC’s Birthday Dinner
Celebrating 25 years of the Tenderloin After-School Program
Friday, April 28, 2017

TNDC Pool Toss
SF’s wildest pool party of the year!
Wednesday, October 11, 2017

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THIS ISSUE:

Food Justice Leaders Making Change in the Tenderloin

Tenderloin People’s Garden Grows with the Local Community

Resident Profile:
Rickey Swiney

Partner Profile:
Bothin Foundation

Promoting Food Justice

Stephen Tennis wanted more for his neighborhood. “Candy, chips, liquor, and cigarette butts were everywhere,” said Stephen, recalling his return to the Tenderloin after a 30 year absence. “I noticed there weren’t any markets or supermarkets around.”

He soon found himself joining the Tenderloin Healthy Corner Store Coalition (TLHCSC). A project started by the Vietnamese Youth Development Center (VYDC), the TLHCSC shared Stephen’s concerns about the Tenderloin’s limited food options preventing his neighbors, especially families and children, from developing healthy eating habits.

Since 2012, the TLHCSC and TNDC have partnered and converted six corner stores into healthier spaces, providing produce and items that Tenderloin residents crave to see in their local stores, such as beans, hummus, and cooking spices. As of December 2016, TNDC has taken full responsibility of the program, housing its dedicated staff of six Food Justice Leaders, including Stephen, alongside our Community Organizing team.

The Food Justice Leaders are at the heart of the Tenderloin’s conversation on food security. “We talk to people in the area and see if the stores are meeting their needs,” said Stephen. “And then provide suggestions to those stores.”

The conditions in the Tenderloin exist because residents are excluded from the decision-making process,” explained Ryan Thayer, co-coordinator of TLHCSC. “With [TLHCSC], residents are directly engaging in the decisions and making change.”

“Without them, there wouldn’t be a coalition.”

A Note From Don

We know that affordable housing provides our tenants with the peace of mind and stability that fosters physical and mental well-being. We also know, however, that the drivers of good health extend beyond a person’s home to the quality of their neighborhood and city.

Now more than ever, residents of the Tenderloin face additional challenges to maintaining good health. Many struggle to find access to healthy and affordable food options in their local markets amid a rapidly changing San Francisco. But food is more than something we eat to survive – it’s also a way of connecting across cultures and bringing people together. As Ryan Thayer, co-coordinator of TNDC’s Tenderloin Healthy Corner Store Coalition notes, “Food is a vehicle for community change.”

We are honored to be a part of the Tenderloin community. In these pages, you will see how TNDC creates lasting impact for the people in and outside our buildings through the power of food.

I thank you for your continued support as we promote the well-being of TNDC’s tenants and the residents of the neighborhoods we serve.

With gratitude,

Donald S. Falk, CEO

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RESIDENT PROFILE: Rickey Swiney

Rickey Swiney will say he’s shy, but his smile will tell you otherwise.

Born and raised in Louisiana, Rickey has fond memories of being with his family and living at home. “Every day was my favorite day,” Rickey reflected, missing his parents who have since passed away. “I felt so safe with them.” He continued to live with his parents into adulthood until he started a family of his own.

Seventeen years ago, after losing his mom, he decided to move from the South to the West by himself. He’s lived all over the San Francisco Bay Area and survived a period of homelessness, heavy drug use, and several life-threatening accidents, including a bike crash that left the right side of his body paralyzed for months. While he admits that he has made his fair share of mistakes, he prides himself on being a survivor, living testimony to his past and his ability to move forward. San Francisco, Rickey says, made him the man that he is today.

Only one year into his time at the Ambassador Hotel, Rickey continues to grow. He volunteers at his building’s weekly food drop which provides residents with free groceries from the San Francisco and Marin Food Bank. He is preparing himself to return to Louisiana, to be the best father and grandfather he can be. He eagerly repeats “I’m ready” like a mantra and graciously thanks everyone around him.

“I’m looking at you,” Rickey says, facing Will Jensen, a social worker at the Ambassador. “You don’t know how much you’ve done. Since the first day I stepped in here, I felt it.” he continues, placing his hand on his chest. “The warmth here is real.”

Rickey’s warmth is real too. Readying himself for a photo, he can hardly keep a straight face as he dramatically stretches out on his chair, crosses his legs, and leans back as if posing for a fashion shoot. He finally lets himself burst into laughter and then settles into a soft smile.

“Amplifying Voices”

“Amplifying Voices”

Every Thursday a group of dedicated staff and volunteers carefully set out apples, celery, potatoes, and prepared meals for the morning food distribution at Yosemite Commercial Space at 476 Eddy Street. Packed with tables and shelves of food, their space is modest, but as of January, it now includes a freezer and refrigerator purchased with a grant from the Bothin Foundation.

Bothin’s added storage space allows our Health & Wellness program to accommodate a welcomed increase in food contributions from the San Francisco and Marin Food Bank and other donors, such as Trader Joe’s, San Francisco City Impact, Food Runners, Grocery Outlet, local farmers markets, and more. Bothin’s grant has also contributed several other food storage, transport, and display items, such as a professional cooking demonstration table used across six of our senior buildings.

Bothin supports low-income families, people with disabilities, and youth by providing non-profits with capital investments, such as technology needs and program equipment. For more information, please visit www.bothinfoundation.org.

PARTNER PROFILE: Bothin Foundation

Tenderloin People’s Garden Grows with the Local Community

Frequent Harvest Day volunteer and leader of NerdWallet’s corporate social responsibility program, Rowena Li, noted how the space encourages people in the neighborhood to just stop by and say hello.

“It’s subtle, but that sort of openness is refreshing among the streets of ‘for customers only’ spaces and office buildings,” commented Rowena.

The communal space has also become a welcome hub for creative collaborations to educate others on the healing power of good food and self-care. “Growing Together,” the mural unveiled by Precita Eyes Muralists last November, celebrates the diversity and history of the Tenderloin’s residents and the people who care for the garden.

In a similar spirit, TNDC and Precita Eyes have worked alongside the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and 826 Valencia to help students of Bessie Carmichael Elementary School create fruit and vegetable murals for the garden’s fence. At the end of February, students read poems inspired by the garden’s greenery and the foods they love.

“Our dream is that this partnership will serve as the first of many!”

Seven years ago, a vacant lot sat on the corner of McAllister and Larkin, just a stone’s throw away from City Hall. Now, the same corner overflows with produce for over 400 Tenderloin residents and the people in the neighborhood to just stop by and say hello. “It’s subtle, but that sort of openness is refreshing among the streets of ‘for customers only’ spaces and office buildings,” commented Rowena.

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“Our dream is that this partnership will serve as the first of many!”

Seven years ago, a vacant lot sat on the corner of McAllister and Larkin, just a stone’s throw away from City Hall. Now, the same corner overflows with kale and carrots, volunteers patting down soil, and residents gathering produce to take home with them—all watched over by the humble gardeners of Precita Eyes' new mural.

Producing 3,500 pounds of fresh produce for over 400 Tenderloin residents and engaging 200 corporate volunteers per year, TNDC’s Tenderloin People’s Garden has become a vital and vibrant part of our community.

“Amplifying Voices”

“Amplifying Voices”

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Today, the Local Community Garden is a dynamic space for an exchange of culture, knowledge, and real food.