

# Seniors all but snubbed by the tech tax breaks

## Elders are largely left out of CBAs

By MARK HEDIN

**T**WO MID-MARKET tech companies enjoying a tax holiday say early in their community benefit agreements that helping neighborhood seniors is a high priority, yet The Extra has been hard-pressed to find much evidence of that.

After stating good intentions, Twitter and Advor never mention seniors again in their 2014 CBAs. None of Twitter's ballooned \$388,000 to nonprofits is targeted to the elderly.

One Kings Lane, Zoosk and Spotify don't even mention the "S" word in their CBAs, though seniors comprise at least 20% of the neighborhood's population.

City Administrator Naomi Kelly in January signed off on CBAs with six companies: Twitter, Microsoft, One Kings Lane, Zendesk, Zoosk and Spotify, the latter a newbie to the tax break, but has refused to discuss the agreements with The Extra.

Last year, Microsoft subsidiary Yammer promised to devote 15% of a \$60,000 grant program — \$9,000 — to seniors, but, according to a city administrator's office report, the money ultimately went to education (37%), food justice (9%), homelessness (33%) and the arts (21%). Seniors: 0%.

In the five CBAs completed last year, however, seniors got some help. Yammer gave computer monitors to Tenderloin Tech Lab, used primarily by homeless and SRO-dwelling elderly men; the Curry Senior Center benefited from teams of volunteers from Twitter and Zendesk; and Episcopal Community Services also received volunteer hours from tech companies for some of its services that benefit seniors.

But overall, the level of support to the elderly was and is shockingly disproportionately low.

Twitter spokeswoman Karen Wickre did not respond when asked about Twitter aid to seniors, and acting community liaison Eugene Yi looped a similar question back to Wickre.

Yammer, like Twitter and One Kings Lane a Shorenstein tenant at 1355 Market, pledges 15% of a \$50,000 grant program — \$7,500 — to nonprofit organizations that benefit seniors.

Zendesk's CBA promises to include Curry Senior Center in its volunteer efforts. Community liaison Tiffany Apczynski notes that, although "our existing CBA does not directly earmark anything for seniors, the folks at Curry and the Tenderloin Tech Lab know we are here to be supportive of the services they provide."

Tenderloin Tech Lab, operated by St. Anthony's Foundation, is one obvious nexus for the community and tech workers to collaborate. And they have.

Last year, Yammer gave the Tech Lab 60 large monitors, big enough, lab manager Megan Trotter said, to allow for the enlarged fonts her clients need. The monitors were worth \$16,000.

Zendesk and Twitter send volunteers on Fridays to either conduct the classes the lab hosts daily or offer individual tutoring, Trotter said.

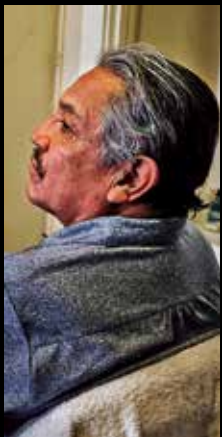
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# CENTRAL CITY

# EXTRA

SAN FRANCISCO

## SPECIAL REPORT



PHOTO BY PAUL DUNN

**Young Taek Lim** is 75, one of more than 4,000 seniors 65 and older in the Tenderloin. He sleeps on a fold-up mattress in the living room of the one-bedroom apartment he shares. He applied for public housing 10 years ago, and is still waiting. **Story on page 3.**

## Mid-Market milestone

### Tech puts stress on old and poor in central city

By GEOFF LINK

**T**HREE YEARS AGO this month, the Twitter tax break was signed into law, and the Tenderloin's fate was sealed. Central City Extra and New America Media are using that historic moment as a jumping-off point to examine the effects of the central city's transformation on seniors.

Twitter led the way for uncounted companies, including a slew of app makers and programming schools plus the restaurants and bars plying \$14 cocktails and other businesses that follow the money.

Market Street went from blight to boom in two years. After three decades in the doldrums, downtown began a westward march with City Place mall anchoring the block beyond Fifth Street.

Demolition and construction raise a cloud of dust over the street, jack hammers and pile drivers pound the eardrums. Market Street hasn't seen such bustle and change since the '06 quake.

Landlords and property managers — the shock troops of gentrification — have turned the boom into a real estate gold rush, relentlessly raising rents and legalizing claim jumping with tech companies taking over office space before an unsuspecting tenant's lease is up.

Nonprofits were first to be gentrified. Without commercial rent control, landlords have doubled and tripled rents at will, driving

out human service providers, sending them to East Bay and away from the central city. It's gotten so that a human service provider can no longer lease aboveground offices on Market Street.

The safety net for seniors, disabled, homeless, people in recovery and other vulnerable populations has been damaged since the Twitter tax break.

At this three-year milestone in the speedy gentrification of San Francisco's central city, The Extra and New America Media are collaborating to describe the change and show its effects on those who live and work here, especially seniors, who subsist on fixed incomes while the newcomers have seemingly limitless financial potential.

Living on this inner-city island of poverty, elders struggle to make ends meet while the sea of corporate wealth that has already swamped western SoMa surges north of Market Street, pushing the fringes toward the fabric.

Our portrait of the central city includes profiles and demographic data, housing options, and details the meager, city-sanctioned aid the seven tech companies with million-dollar payrolls dole out to seniors to mitigate the social and psychological effects of their tax break.

It's not that the CBAs haven't done some good. They have. But the neighborhood needs more than crumbs, consultation and cleaning up litter.

This report is part of a larger project by New America Media, "Growing Older Getting Poorer," that is funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies to generate in-depth coverage of issues seniors face wherever they live, whatever their ethnicity.

Our collaborative report will continue next month. ■



# Farmers market vendor to reopen Manor House

Menu prices will rise but be 'reasonable'

By Tom Carter

AS JOHN AKINS contemplated re-opening the noted Manor House restaurant on Jones Street — a favorite of seniors that has been shuttered more than a year since Mimi Yee gave it up — one thing was clear: menu prices will be higher.

"I'll have reasonable rates for the neighborhood," says Akins, who expects to open in mid-March. "I can't have Mimi's prices — they're reflective of 15 years ago. If there are 15 items on the menu, for example, four or five will be low-cost so anybody can afford it. But they won't be like before."

"The \$3.50 breakfast, no way I can do that. The variables have gone up. I can't afford to give it away, but I'm not there to gouge anyone."

Yee quit Manor House Feb. 18, 2013, because of her husband John's declining health. He had been the main cook, standing for long hours six days a week.

The closing ended a bittersweet story of triumph where a Chinese American waitress quit her job across town to manage a Skid Row eatery with no idea how to handle the often rough clientele, but she knew she would have to earn their respect.

Through perseverance, honesty and treating everyone with respect, she did, even if she had to chase some customers down the street to pay her. In the early days, she'd have to call the cops three and four times a day to clear away the sidewalk drug dealers.

Yee kept menu prices amazingly low because TNDC, the building owner, gave her a break on the rent with her guarantee to keep prices down for hundreds of old-timers and other habitués of the city's poorest neighborhood. And Manor House was solid in the fabric of the community, even known in the East Bay. TNDC Executive Director Don Falk begged her to stay. But she couldn't.

"We were determined to replace Mimi with someone else who would serve the community like she did, offering food security," says Falk. "We passed up a lot of other offers, but John gave us the opportunity to adhere to that vision so we offered him a below-market rate, too."

Akins, a strapping six-footer, was standing in his Heart of the City Farmers Market stall arranging pastries and amiably chatting with anyone who came near. He has sold his baked goods there for 18 years — the \$3.50 sweet potato tart is his best seller — and in November, he will have 19 years at the Alemany Farmers Market. He also has a small hole-in-the-wall restaurant on Lombard near Gough called Golo. His business card bills it a boutique cafe.

Akins didn't know 210 Jones St. was available. "A friend who knew I was looking for a restaurant told me in June." Akins says he never talked to Falk but rather to Kirsten Fletcher of Ventura Partners, a Santa Cruz real estate development outfit with an office at 456 Ellis St. The company manages TNDC's commercial portfolio. Some years ago, it surveyed the availability of fresh food in the Tenderloin for TNDC and researched a prototype supermarket that could serve the neighborhood.



PHOTO BY TOM CARTER

John Akins (left) at farmers market sells pastries to TL activist Michael Nulty.

When Akins signed his seven-year lease in December it was agreed that prices at Manor House would be reasonable.

Akins never met Yee, never ventured into the Manor House, either, he says. All he knows is what he found when he went inside to begin a modest renovation and to replace some equipment in the 49-seat cafe. It turned out to be a \$12,000 cleanup job.

"I was shocked at what I found," Akins says. "The stove was filthy. I wonder why the place was so dirty. I've never seen anything that needed that much work."

Department of Public Health inspectors' scores for Manor House usually were mid- to high-80s, an "adequate" range, the website says. Golo scored 86 in June but 91 in January 2013 and it had

a 98 in 2011.

Akins will shop at farmers markets, Restaurant Depot, San Francisco Produce House and Costco, similar to where Mimi shopped. He hasn't decided his menu yet, but plans to be open six days a week, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., "with maybe dinner to go."

Mimi was open six days a week but closed at 3:30 p.m. She was afraid of the neighborhood when the sun went down.

What about operating in the rough neighborhood? Akins was asked.

"Yes, the belly of the beast," he says, ringing up a sale from an 18-year customer, a lady he had been teasing. "But I feed people. I'm not there to do battle. I'm a small businessman there to feed people. The peacemaker is food." ■

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I've been living in the Tenderloin since April, 2005 having moved here from the upper Van Ness Ave. and upper Polk St. districts, where I lived since 1965 when I moved to San Francisco. It's a great place to live, mainly because of its sense of community and diversity.

The Extra's reporting about the TL is excellent, right on and very, very important. Kudos to Geoff Link's "My Take" article on Twitter and Mark Hedin's articles on CBAs and the Grant Bldg. I read the S.F. Chronicle every day and I don't think they're covering these issues as thoroughly as The Extra is. I also liked the obits on Collyne Cook by Marjorie Beggs and Al Shapanus by Mark Hedin. As a senior I felt I got to know them even though I never met them.

Please keep up the excellent work!

— Ed Bellber

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**CENTRAL CITY EXTRA**

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# Seniors wait years for affordable housing

## Price is right, but short supply can't meet high demand

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

**Y**OU'RE ELDERLY and you're looking for a studio or one-bedroom in the central city where rents are low and transportation is good. Your income is low, say \$20,000.

The Extra tried to determine your chance of finding a safe, affordable, permanent roof over your head, maybe even a clean, well-lighted place. The answer, unsurprisingly: not good, unless you're prepared for a long wait, probably years.

The area is dense with thousands of affordable units in buildings owned by nonprofit or for-profit developers or the government — public housing. But most units are already taken and waiting lists are closed. The list of applicants, often longer than a building's total units, have become unmanageable. When they open, they move glacially. Applicants who are severely disabled, homeless or veterans, sometimes get extra points that advance their place on the list.

### 6 NONPROFIT DEVELOPERS

Information about housing for low-income seniors is most readily available from nonprofit developers. Their mission is to serve the community, and they work hard to get out the word about vacancies and lists. Six of those nonprofits have the lion's share of units in the central city: Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corp., Mercy Housing, TODCO, Chinatown Community Development Center, Community Housing Partnership and Asian Inc.

TNDC is the largest, with 2,354 units in 29 properties, most in the Tenderloin. Some are for families only, others for formerly homeless, some target people with mental and physical disabilities, others seniors. Nine TNDC buildings, with more than 1,200 units, have units appropriate for seniors.

Of those nine, only the Dalt Hotel at 34 Turk St. has an open waiting list — not for a vacancy, just to be on the list for a room. Put in an application and, if you meet the income criteria, you'll be put on the first-come, first-served list. When a room does open up, TNDC will select a few names, see if the applicants are still available, interested and fit the criteria. If you're No. 1, the spot, when vacant, is yours.

### 112 APPLICATIONS FOR THE DALT

The Dalt, a 177-room SRO with a grungy, troubled past including a murder rampage in 2003 when it was under a for-profit owner, now looks more than presentable and has a good reputation among tenants. Its waiting list has been open and closed several times since last year and the current round closed Feb. 21. Before it closed, 24 people were on the list; 112 new applications came in on this round.

A Dalt room without a private bath rents for \$525. The applicant's income has to be at least \$9,450 a year and no more than \$34,000 to qualify for that rent. For a room with a bath — there are only 28 — the rent is \$596 and income must be at least \$10,728.

Many Dalt residents pay less than those rents because 44 of the rooms are "project-based voucher" units subsidized by HUD Section 8. The vouchers, available through the S.F. Housing Authority, have no income requirements, are attached to specific buildings and renters pay 30% of their income. These rooms have their own waiting list.

"A person applying to us might be on more than one list for a single building, depending on the unit's requirements," says Brandon Flannery, TNDC's compliance manager. "One property might have four or five ways for us to get people into housing."

He wouldn't venture a guess about

the time it might take — months? years? — to get a room at the Dalt.

The number on the waiting list varies at other TNDC buildings: 354 for O'Farrell Senior Housing, 104 for Maria Manor, 460 at Civic Center Residence. A whopping 2,611 qualified for the lists at 990 Polk, a spiffy, 110-unit building built in 2008 on the fringe of the Tenderloin.

Not only TNDC has scant to offer.

Mercy Housing has five buildings in the central city at which many, and in some cases all, residents are seniors. Not one property has an open waiting list, and the longest list — 872 — is for Edith Witt Senior Community at 66 Ninth St., which opened in 2010. The building has 107 units, is HUD-subsidized, and residents pay 30% of their income.

Mercy's Presentation Senior Com-

munity at 301 Ellis houses 124 seniors with 489 waiting. Rents are 30% of income. Only five or six units turn over annually in this HUD Section 202 building. Section 202 subsidizes nonprofits' capital expenses for senior supportive housing and helps subsidize tenants.

The story is the same for other Mer-

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## ELDER PROFILE



PHOTO BY PAUL DUNN

**Young Taek Lim** sits in a familiar chair in his old barber shop on Ellis Street that he had for 25 years. It is now called YSA Barber Shop. Lim has been on the public housing waiting list for 10 years.

## Gentrification keeps retired Korean barber in housing limbo

BY ARUNA LEE

**Y**OUNG TAEK LIM for 25 years cut hair at his own shop in the Tenderloin. Today, he sleeps on a mattress in the living room of his one-bedroom apartment, which he shares with another elderly Korean to keep up with rising rents.

Lim says the tech boom has heightened his feelings of financial insecurity and social isolation.

"The Bible keeps me company, especially during the holidays," says the 75-year-old Korean immigrant. "Sometimes I'll go out fishing on Pier 39."

Lim arrived in San Francisco from South Korea in 1981 with his then-wife and three sons. He soon opened a barber shop on Ellis Street, in the center of what was then, as now, an area known for prostitution, drugs and poverty.

He named his shop OK Barber.

The neighborhood's low rents allowed Lim and other entrepreneurial immigrants to set up shop here. He eventually banked enough to buy a small condo with his family on Eddy at Larkin Street.

In those days, more Koreans were living in the Tenderloin. "We used to call that building across the street the 'Kimchi apartments' because there were so many Koreans living there," Lim notes, pointing to a building directly across from his one-time business. Kimchi, a fermented cabbage dish, is a staple of Korean cuisine.

### FEWER KOREANS IN TENDERLOIN

Today the Korean community in the Tenderloin has largely disappeared, replaced by a growing Latino population, Southeast Asians and immigrants from the Arab world.

"I knew nothing other than my home and my barber shop," explains Lim, whose neatly coiffed hair and tanned skin belie his age. After his divorce in 1997, Lim sold his home to pay for his children's college education. He resettled into the one-bedroom apartment where he now lives.

It's gritty, but the location was ideal — just a block from his old shop. And, at \$1,200 a month, the rent back then fit his budget.

But when Lim retired in 2008, he was forced to rely

on his \$800-a-month Social Security check. His rent has since jumped to \$1,800, forcing him to rent out his bedroom to cover the cost. He now sleeps on a fold-up mattress in the living room.

Nearly 1,200 Koreans 65 and older live in San Francisco, according to the 2010 U.S. Census. About 20% of them live alone on fixed incomes. Rising costs, Lim says, are fast eating into the life savings he put away when he sold his condo. He now sees public housing as his only hope of escaping the financial downward cycle.

"Things aren't like they used to be," Lim sighs, looking out the lone bedroom window. "Getting into public housing is my only hope, but it's like trying to get blood from a stone."

He applied 10 years ago, and is still waiting.

### 26,000 ON WAITING LIST

San Francisco Housing Authority officials say it's hard to know how much longer it will be before Lim is placed. Of the Housing Authority's 40 properties across the city, only two are in the Tenderloin.

Demand, meanwhile, continues to rise alongside home prices and a rental market that's highest in the nation.

Rose Dennis, a Housing Authority spokeswoman, says applicants are given priority based mainly on age, income, disabilities and whether they are veterans.

But with 26,000 households on the waiting list, Dennis says the SFHA stopped taking applications for public housing in 2010. It closed applications for Section 8 housing in 2001.

But for Lim, the uncertainty over when and where he will eventually be able to settle is a daily struggle. "I feel like I have a right to vote, but no right to live."

As he speaks, a U-Haul truck pulls up outside his place. Two young men hop out and begin ferrying their belongings up the flight of stairs to their new \$2,400-a-month one-bedroom unit. It's cheap as San Francisco prices go.

■ Aruna Lee is Korean media monitor and reporter for New America Media.





PHOTO BY PAUL DUNN

**Jose Mendez, 64**, had a bad accident on the job 10 years ago and can no longer work. He now lives on a fixed monthly income below the federal poverty level.

## ELDER PROFILE

# Retired groundskeeper lives on \$868 monthly

By NGOC NGUYEN

**J**OSE MENDEZ, 64, has lived at the Hartland Hotel on Geary near Larkin for seven years.

Having lived on the street and in shelters, Mendez is grateful to have a roof over his head. His room is small, but it has a bathroom. No kitchen, but he makes do with a hotel-size refrigerator, toaster oven and microwave. He's made a home there.

Cutting board perched on a wooden stool, he cuts cilantro, onions, jalapenos and limes to make ceviche — a dish of raw fish cured in citrus. Mendez's version will have "seven types of seafood," he says. He bought them all from a Chinese-owned business in the neighborhood.

He enjoys sharing meals, and often cooks for his Bible study group that meets twice weekly in his room.

"You wouldn't believe it. There may be five to seven people in this room — children sitting on the floor," he said.

### TERRIBLE ACCIDENT

Mendez tended the grounds of University of California campuses in San Francisco for 24 years. He ticks off with pride some of the facilities he helped to maintain: Clarendon, Laguna Honda, Parnassus, Laurel Heights and Mount Zion.

As a groundskeeper, Mendez traveled around the city "clearing/blowing leaves," painting, sanding and other work.

Mendez had a terrible accident on the job; while carrying a ladder, he tumbled down several flights of stairs. He spent a week in bed unable to move. A doctor told him he could no longer do strenuous work.

"That was my retirement," Mendez said.

Standing in his small room, Mendez points to a walking cane that hangs by the door, easy to grab on his way out. That fall occurred more than a decade ago, but it has left physical and emotional scars.

Mendez experiences pain, numbness and tremors, especially on the left side of his body, from his hand to his leg. He sees a therapist twice a week, he says, and often talks about the accident that changed his life.

After the accident, Mendez says, he became depressed and turned to

drugs and drinking. He eventually lost his family and became homeless. He spent the next six years on the street and bouncing from shelter to shelter. He eventually found a home in the Hartland.

"I waited three years to get this room," he said.

### \$38 TO SPEND EACH WEEK

Mendez lives on \$868 a month from Supplemental Security Income. The money gets directly deposited and is managed by Tenderloin Housing Clinic (THC), the nonprofit that operates the Hartland Hotel and other properties under city contracts. Every month, he says, THC automatically deducts about \$500 for rent and a bit more for utilities. Mendez gets what's left: \$38 every Thursday.

He typically spends most of it on groceries, with \$30 a month going toward co-pays for his medicines and \$15 for laundry.

"As soon as I get my check, I go to the store," he said. "I have a list. I buy this and this and that, and the next day my wallet is empty. But I have supplies for the week. Then I wait till next Thursday for another check."

Mendez says he stretches the money by volunteering at food pantries at St. Anthony's and Glide Memorial United Methodist Church, where he can sometimes bring food home. He also relies on those places for donations of clothes, bar soap and a toothbrush.

Mendez keeps his small room tidy. A Bible rests on a neatly made bed. Dishes, cups and silverware are stacked in plastic baskets on top of a dresser.

It's not always easy to maintain cleanliness, though. Two adhesive "bug" strips behind the fridge collect scores of roaches. And, Mendez says, until recently, he had a bedbug problem.

Still, he takes the annoyances in stride. He says he focuses on what's important.

"I love it [here], because everyone treats me good," he said. "I don't want to fight anybody. I'm kind to everybody." ■

*Ngoc Nguyen is environment editor of New America Media and lead NAM editor on this report.*

# Gauging poverty

## Elder Index realistic — feds' rate not

By PAUL KLEYMAN

**A**LONG WITH the War on Poverty, the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) turns 50 this year, but most economists agree the measure has failed to keep up with changing times. It increases a bit each year for inflation, but the original formula remains flawed.

That's why in 2011 California became the first state to adopt a new, more accurate measure, the Elder Index, as a planning tool for service agencies for seniors. Developed by the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and Wider Opportunities for Women's Elder Economic Security Initiative, the measure is being applied nationally.

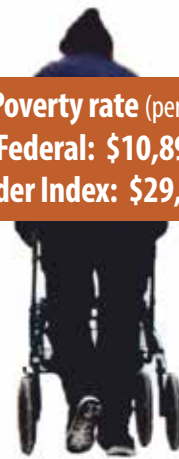
The Elder Index shows that people 65-plus in California need two to three times the income that the federal rate suggests will cover today's costs for food, health care, housing, transportation and other basic needs.

Back in 1964, government economists based the poverty rate on the assumption that food accounted for one-third of household budgets. To determine a typical poverty level, they calculated the price of the lowest-cost market basket — and tripled it to get a subsistence-level household budget. That became the federal poverty line. It doesn't even include health care costs.

In pricey San Francisco, for instance, the FPL for one person is \$10,890. But the Elder Index shows that a single renter here needs \$29,144 — almost triple the official amount — just to get by. That's according to UCLA's Center for Health Policy Research, which crunched the numbers for each California county.

Using the Elder Index, UCLA found that half of California seniors are struggling to make ends meet, while the FPL, which remains the official gauge for determining eligibility for many public

**S.F. Poverty rate (per person)**  
**Federal: \$10,890**  
**Elder Index: \$29,144**



benefits, shows only 9% of the state's seniors are impoverished.

Although the study did not drill down to San Francisco's neighborhoods, U.S. Census data show that official poverty levels for elders in the central city are at 32.6%, compared with 13.6% city-wide. Even with the area's subsidized rent, 2 in 3 central city seniors live hand-to-mouth.

Check these online resources for more information:

- Federal Poverty Level, <http://bit.ly/1knRDpa>
- Elder Index becomes official California gauge, <http://bit.ly/1aVYxTO>
- Wider Opportunities for Women's Elder Economic Security Initiative, <http://bit.ly/1gCP9T4>
- Elder Index for each California county, <http://bit.ly/NDIIg7>

*Paul Kleyman is director of Ethnic Elders Newsbeat at New America Media and a NAM editor on this report.*

# Nonprofit housing seniors

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

cy properties. At Dorothy Day Senior Community, 54 McAllister, 312 people are waiting for one of 100 coveted units. Larisa Abramova, senior property manager there, can't guess how long they may wait.

"We didn't have anyone move out in 2013," Abramova says, "though it's possible two or three may this year."

The Madonna, 350 Golden Gate Ave., with 70 units, has 678 people waiting. More than half of its tenants are seniors. Rents range from free — for a few residents coming out of Laguna Honda Hospital — up to \$777.

### TODCO BUILDINGS FOR SENIORS

Nonprofit developer TODCO, a longtime force South of Market, has eight buildings, four for seniors only, but none has an open waiting list. The list is open, however, at the Knox, 241 Sixth St., where the rent is \$560 for a 10½-by-18-foot room, minimum income \$866 monthly for a single person. Another open list is for TODCO's Bayanihan House, 88 Sixth St. Rent is slightly less here, \$545 a month, and the rooms are a few square feet smaller.

With such bad odds, seniors looking for housing have to put in applications whenever waiting lists open up. But finding out about those lists takes some sleuthing. The Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development

posts a monthly Affordable Family Housing List on its website that includes private and nonprofit developers' waiting lists: property name and location, types of units, income requirements, rent, how to apply and sometimes, but rarely, the expected wait time. The list, despite its name, is not only for families.

### LOTTERY AT MAIN LIBRARY

The list appeared to be up to date, but when The Extra called the first entry, for AvalonBay Apartments, 55 Ninth St., the phone was disconnected. The listing was for 33 below-market-rate units — studios and one- and two-bedroom apartments — with the lowest rent, \$939 a month, for a studio. Studio applicants' income must be at least twice the rent.

More persistence uncovered the results of a Jan. 28 lottery for the 33 units, held at the Main Library. The units are part of the city's inclusionary housing program requiring market-rate housing developers to put aside a percentage of their units as affordable housing. The lottery list ran to 499 applicants.

Another source of open waiting list information is Affordable and Low-Income Housing Opportunities, a chart maintained by Episcopal Community Services and Curry Senior Center and funded by the S.F. Department of Aging and Adult Services. Limited to nonprofit developers' properties, it offers similar



# Running the numbers on central city seniors

There are 4,343 people 65 and older living in ZIP code 94102. That comprises much of the Tenderloin, including the debilitated-for-decades Lower Eddy/Leavenworth portion, which 15 years ago was the target of a major neighborhood improvement project funded by the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund. The citywide numbers in the charts are based on the 2010 Census population for San Francisco of 805,240.

More than half of the seniors in the central city live alone, and 30% are on fixed incomes that keep them below the federal poverty level, which is about \$907 a month. Jose Mendez, for example, profiled in this report, gets \$868 a month from Sup-

plemental Security Income, and that has to cover his rent, utilities, food, medication, laundry and everything else.

Seniors in the central city — Tenderloin and western SoMa — are 63% nonwhite, with 1 in 4 Asian, 1 in 5 Latino and 10% black.

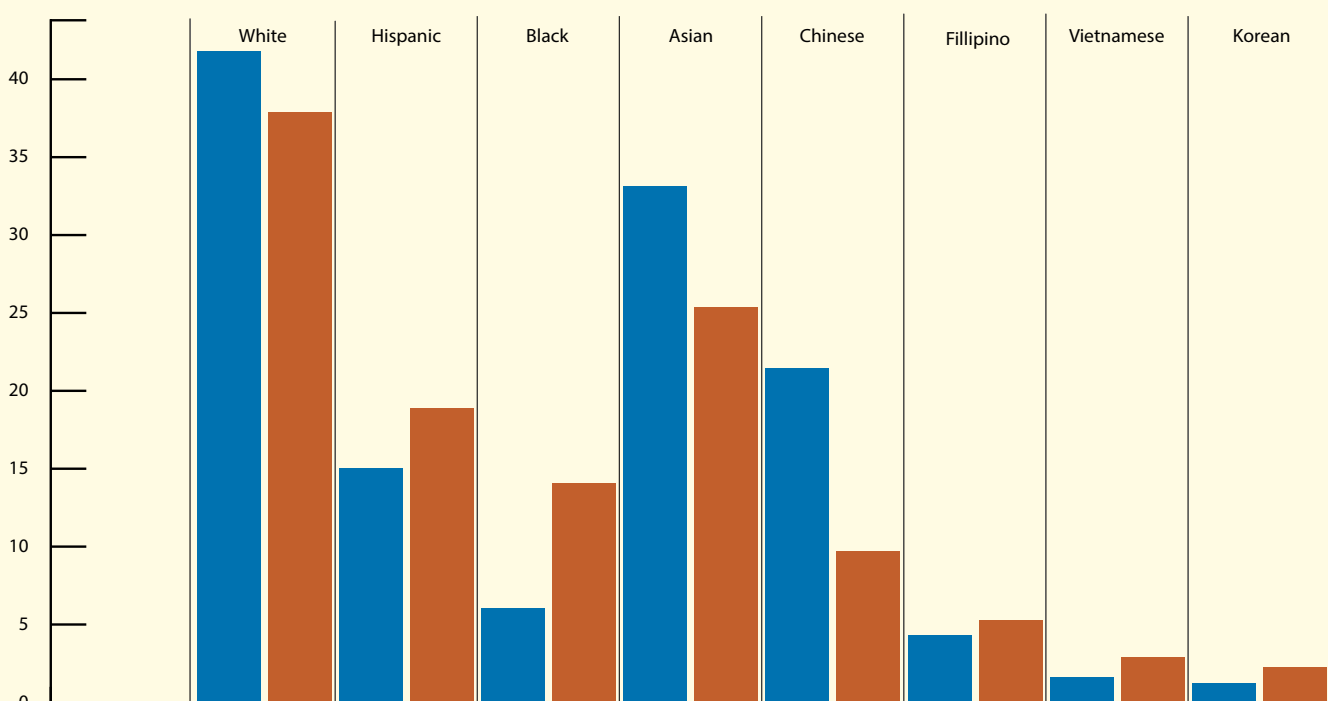
The accompanying charts offer details of the data, and the Elder Profiles in this report put faces on the numbers. The resulting portrait depicts widespread poverty in a ghetto of elders who have no prospect of increasing their income while all around them are people whose wallets bulge with disposable income.

— Geoff Link

## Over 65, Race/Ethnicity

Percentage Citywide and Tenderloin (94102) for each race/ethnicity

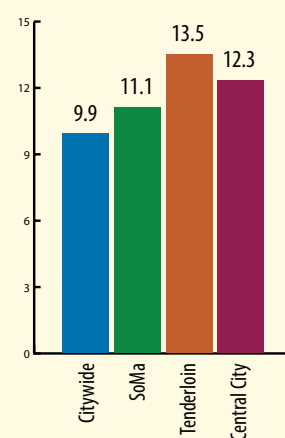
Citywide  
Tenderloin



Source: U.S. Census 2010

## Percentage of Elderly Living Alone

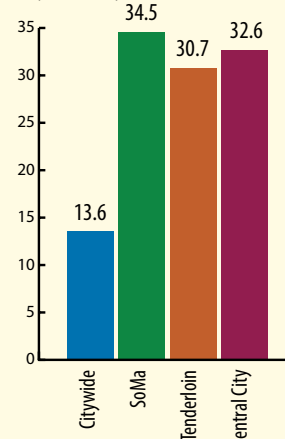
(65 and older)



Source: U.S. Census 2010

## Percentage of Elderly Living Below the Poverty Line

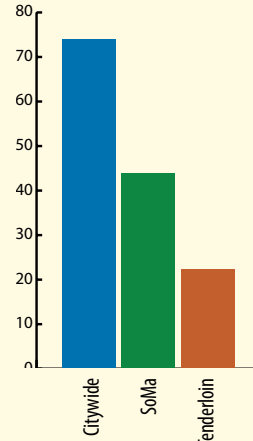
(65 and older)



Source: American Community Survey, 2008-2012 estimates

## Median Household Income

(Dollars in thousands)



Source: U.S. Census 2010

# Seniors' best bet to luck into a room of their own

information to the Office of Housing and updates monthly.

For general, practical information about the housing application process, a good online source is [openhouse-sf.org](http://openhouse-sf.org), a nonprofit that helps LGBT seniors find affordable housing and social services. But the information is general, concise and clear, and a good place to start looking.

## PURGE LISTS EACH YEAR

Housing providers try to purge their lists annually by sending letters to applicants to see if they're still interested, a Sisyphean task. At the same time, they know they're operating in a saturated market, so they encourage anyone searching for low-income housing to put in multiple applications. The result: lists that exaggerate the number of those out looking but typically are so long they discourage seekers.

A few nonprofit developers with open waiting lists do have vacant units.

Chinatown Community Development Center, which owns 25 properties citywide, has four in the central city and two with open lists. At the 96-unit William Penn Hotel on Eddy Street, rooms ranging from \$460 to \$541 a month require income to be 1½ times the rent, up to a maximum of \$36,050 a year. The William Penn's list has been open for a year, according to its receptionist, with two units vacant.

"We have many moving in and out," she said. About 60% of the residents are seniors. The hotel is part of Public Health's Direct Access to Housing program for chronic inebriates, formerly homeless and other adults at risk.

CCDC's Turk Street Family Housing's list also is open with studio rent at \$899, minimum income \$21,336. Turk Street also takes Section 8 housing choice vouchers — vouchers that are transferable and can be used at any property that accepts them. The Turk Street receptionist said no studio units are available but that 30 or so people are on the waiting list — low, he said, because the building is being renovated.

## 300 APPLIED FOR 2 VACANCIES

The waiting list at Canon Kip Community House, 705 Natoma St., closed Feb. 28. The 103-room SRO, owned by Episcopal Community Services, only accepted applications from people with a "certificate of homelessness" from a city or nonprofit agency. Rent, subsidized by several programs including HUD's Shelter Plus Care, is \$455. Two rooms were vacant when the list opened. The first 100 on the list who are eligible will be placed in a lottery this month. Last April, when Canon Kip had two vacancies, 300 people applied.

Asian Inc. has 10 affordable housing properties citywide. The five in the Tenderloin — with 161 units, studios to

three-bedrooms — have open waiting lists and all accept Section 8 vouchers. Studio rents range from \$862 to \$1,050. Though a handful of units are open among the five, Asian Inc. estimates the waiting list for 575 Eddy St., with the top studio rent, at six months to three years.

## 1,546 NEW APPLICATIONS

In December, Community Housing Partnership purged its waiting list to get it to a more manageable size for the 241 units in its four Tenderloin SROs — the Senator, San Cristina, Iroquois and Jordan residences.

"We had 2,340 people on the list, and we got it down to 280 active names," says CHP's Anna Bolton, a veteran Tenderloin organizer. "Active means they're next in line to be processed, but in the last 90 days, we've also gotten 1,546 new applications." At the end of February, there were 16 vacancies, she adds, but all had tenants ready to move in.

Rents at CHP's four buildings, listed as 30% of income, are subsidized by HUD with vouchers handled by the S.F. Housing Authority.

The Housing Authority is what HUD calls a Public Housing Agency, and, according to Rose Dennis, Housing Authority spokeswoman, is responsible for overseeing almost 10,000 vouchers for low-income housing and 40 public housing sites citywide.

Only two of those are in the Ten-

derloin and are specifically for seniors: 72 studios and 24 one-bedrooms at 350 Ellis St. and 77 studios and 23 one-bedrooms at 660 Ellis St. Also, South of Market are the two huge Clementina Towers, each with 339 studios and 72 one-bedrooms for seniors.

That's more than 800 public housing units in the central city. Chances of getting into one is nil. SFHA closed its public housing waiting list in 2010 when it reached 31,000 applicants, many with more than one household member. The waiting list for Section 8 housing vouchers was at 12,000 when that list closed 13 years ago.

## 40,000 LETTERS IN 6 LANGUAGES

The agency is aggressively purging its lists now, Dennis says. "In October, we sent out 40,000 letters in six languages asking if people wanted to stay on the two lists. Only a few letters came back with nonworking addresses and more than 25% of people responded." She encourages all on the list to contact [sfha.org](http://sfha.org).

"Housing is so scarce in the city that the competition for it is high-pitched," she says. "If we don't hear from you by December this year, you'll be removed."

Among the 6,476 households living in public housing citywide, 60% of the residents are elderly and 70% disabled.



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**6 YEARS  
IN A ROW**



## RICHARD FEAR A Tenderloin love story

Richard "Tank" Fear and Tanya Oliver met six years ago at the Wharf and became a unit of a scruffy bunch of homeless folks who slept by the bell tower, a small wooden chapel at Pier 45, until they got scattered by the pier work for America's Cup.

The big-bearded, florid-faced Mr. Fear and Oliver were pretty tight. He was rotund, 5 feet 10, about 350 pounds with a gift of gab, and she was alternately gentle and loud, three years older, a woman with a soft, unlined face and warm eyes who loved him.

"He'd panhandle at the Wharf for money or food," Oliver said before Mr. Fear's Feb. 11 memorial at the Arlington Hotel. "He was good at it." Affably chatting in a hoarse, gravelly voice with a twinkle in his eye made him an attraction." Oliver said. "He was pretty well known. 'What's goin' on, big guy?' they'd say. He loved people and kids and animals."

She marveled how generous he was. "He always gave the food away to people who needed it, and he gave me anything he found. He supported us."

A Department of Public Health homeless program, Direct Assisted Housing, put the pair in the Arlington four years ago. Mr. Fear had serious health issues that street living exacerbated. Even so, he had been a man of wanderlust all his life, and adjusting to an SRO roof wasn't easy.

"He had never stayed in one place very long," Oliver said. "He rode trains all over the United States, and he was



COURTESY ARLINGTON HOTEL

in and out of prisons for 26 years." His body was covered with tattoos, some of them he applied himself in prison, she said, which is where he got the nickname "Tank." He was born in San Bernardino, and had a brother and sister social workers couldn't locate.

"And when he first came to the Arlington he'd still go stay outside. I'd get angry and try to make him stay in. But he enjoyed the outside — until his health got worse."

Indeed, their loud, raging arguments a couple of years ago got her 86ed from the Arlington. She landed at the Elm Hotel two blocks away. After a while, she was allowed to visit.

More than 20 mourners showed up at Mr. Fear's memorial. On a table in front was a burning candle, a small bouquet and four photos of him — Oliver had brought three. In ever-declining health, Mr. Fear was hospitalized in late December. But two weeks later, against medical advice and roaring at the doc-

tors and the visiting Oliver, he checked out and returned to the Arlington. The staff expected the worst was nigh. Three weeks later, Feb. 4, he died in bed of undisclosed causes.

Mr. Fear was 54. He was the Arlington's 10th death in seven months, putting "our community through the wringer," said Melissa Eaton, the lead social worker of three for the hotel's 153 residents. Checking Mr. Fear's age in the records before the ceremony, homelessness takes "20 to 30" years off a life, she said, shaking her head.

It was hard to lose a resident as popular as Mr. Fear, despite his shortcomings.

Rev. Paul Trudeau conducted the memorial. After quoting Scriptures and leading a prayer, he invited any remembrances of Mr. Fear. Rev. Trudeau, succeeded the retired Rev. Glenda Hope — who made Tenderloin memorials an important community builder as the SROs' de facto chaplain.

Oliver, in the first row, rose slowly to face the mourners. Since Mr. Fear's death a week earlier, she had stayed in bed, grief-stricken and isolated in her Elm Hotel room. She had hardly eaten.

"I'm not prepared," she said weakly. But she continued calmly to sum up the life of the man she loved for six years through a tempestuous relationship.

"He'd still go out there," she said. "And it was cold out there. But he learned to love this place (the Arlington). And he got close to me. His socialization was panhandling. He loved people and children. And I think he loved me. I'm glad you're all here."

Eaton recalled how friendly Mr. Fear was to everyone, though sometimes his temper flared and he shouted gruffly at people. But he never failed to apologize, and so genuinely, she said, you could see the sorrow and regret in his eyes. He bore a resemblance to Santa Claus, she said, and despite his deteriorating health he remained optimistic. He was pursuing his GED, she said, a task made more difficult by his illiteracy. At the hotel's canned food giveaways he'd choose by the label image.

His sense of humor was constant, said a man who worked at a SoMa health clinic Mr. Fear frequented. "He always showed it, and I really admired that about him."

"He was a child of God," Trudeau said. Oliver nodded.

"I didn't even want to go to the store," she said. "Word got around (about his death). I almost didn't come, but I'm glad I'm here."

"Richard loved you, Tanya," Eaton spoke up. "He told me many times."

Suddenly, it was over. A handful of mourners, some from Mr. Fear's homeless days at the bell tower, hovered over the pictures. Oliver kept thanking them for coming. They talked about having another memorial in Washington Park for the old gang.

"Look," said one, picking up a photo. "He put on more weight here."

"Yeah," said a smiling black man, "that's why I called him, 'Bigs.'"

Then Oliver picked up the photos, leaving one for The Extra, and went back to her room at the Elm. ■

— Tom Carter

# 'We want tech companies to do their part in the community'

➤ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Zendesk "catered our holiday party," Trotter said, and on Feb. 28, Mayor Lee and District 6 Supervisor Jane Kim were on hand at the lab as Zendesk, the lab and Gray Area Foundation for the Arts launched [www.link-sf.com](http://www.link-sf.com), a low-income resource database accessible from mobile devices. Twitter hosted a "Women and Tech" event and consulted with the lab on a Twitter feed and social media strategies.

Twitter and Google have visited during their day of service events and the lab also benefits from discounted Microsoft software from the San Francisco-based nonprofit TechSoup, Trotter said, a service that it offers to nonprofits nationwide.

## NO AID FROM TECH

"We did not and do not currently get any support for our computer lab" from the tech firms, Monte Cimino, Curry Senior Center's director of programs, said. The lab — seven desktop computers, a printer and a scanner — is used throughout the day five days a week and Curry hosts five classes weekly in English, Cantonese, Vietnamese and Lao, covering general computer skills, social media, searches and Skype use.

Curry Executive Director David Knego said the center serves 2,000 clients per year, and 300 every day — 200 for meals, 30-40 at the health clinic, 10 at the counseling program and 20-30 at the computer lab. Curry also provides 13 units of housing for formerly homeless seniors.

"We're a place to be," he said, citing the center's movies, computer lab and case management services. But apparently not for many of the tax-break tech companies.

Knego singled out Zendesk for its volunteerism. "They're probably No. 1 in our eyes, everybody knows they're the big dog, because she (Apczynski) calls you back, she shows up." He also mentioned Salesforce, a non-CBA company Curry considers "one of our biggest corporate partners" through its volunteerism and financial support.

## 'We want the city to expect tech companies to pay their taxes and not throw a thousand dollars here or there but to create a cohesive plan with serious funding for housing and jobs.'

Jessica Lehman

SENIOR AND DISABILITY ACTION

Knego says Salesforce is "sort of the kings of corporate giving. They give a lot of time, they give a lot of money." Hilton Hotel and Giving Tree have also been active, he said.

At Episcopal Community Services, Bruce Beery, director of development, said the organization last fiscal year served 9,628 seniors, including about 200 in supportive housing. Episcopal Community Services operates on a \$19 million budget, mostly from federal contracts administered by the city, but generates \$1.2 million of that through individual donations and foundation grants with corporate philanthropy accounting for a smaller piece of the pie, Beery said.

## 'LIBERAL VOLUNTEERISM'

"We feel that we enjoy good support from the tech companies — of course, we would like to do better. We have been working hard to develop those relationships," he said.

Beery cited "liberal volunteerism" from the companies — hundreds of hours.

Zendesk, which Beery described as "a company that's in the lead among companies that have CBAs," provides financial support and volunteers.

"They're very new to this game," Beery said of the tech companies in general. "They are not great yet at some of these kinds of things. We are working to expose them to our financial support opportunities."

"To our knowledge we don't have any money coming in — it'd be nice," said Sue Corst, director of the S.F. Senior Cen-

ter, which serves 1,500 elderly per year. "I can't blame the tech guys; I don't have the time to follow up," she said. "We have not yet expected or anticipated anything — not that we wouldn't appreciate it."

"I know that there've been a variety of collaborative efforts to reach out, but we haven't gotten any direct money or phone calls."

## NEEDS HELP WITH DATABASE

Teresa Imperial of the Veterans Equity Center also said they are going it alone in terms of receiving any aid from tech newcomers. "We have not received any phone calls," she said. "None of the tech companies have proactively reached out to us." Imperial said the center needs help setting up its database.

The plight of the elderly and others in need in the central city is summed up by Jessica Lehman, executive director of Senior and Disability Action.

"Unfortunately, the Tenderloin and South of Market have seen a lot of really scary and negative impacts of changes from the tech industry moving in — chiefly eviction and displacement, particularly of seniors," she said.

"Every day, we have seniors and people with disabilities coming in who are in crisis about housing. We're also seeing the impact of the housing crisis on people's health. We're not currently getting any assistance."

"We could definitely use financial support to keep our programs going," Lehman said. "What we want is not a handout. We want tech companies to do their part in the community."

"Support is always welcome," Leh-

man said, "but we're hesitant because we want to see the big picture get addressed. The big picture is volunteers or legal assistance are a Band-Aid on the bigger problem. It's very doable for these companies to get together with the city to build more affordable housing, better job training, implement policies to prevent eviction."

## 'CREATE A COHESIVE PLAN'

"We want the city to expect tech companies to pay their taxes and not throw a thousand dollars here or there but to create a cohesive plan with serious funding for housing and jobs."

"There's been talk of tech workers volunteering. We need the management of tech companies to recognize that community service is not a replacement for affordable housing, fair housing policies and for jobs."

"My co-worker was talking about seeing some Twitter employees cleaning the sidewalk and we were saying that getting rid of trash in the streets does not address the bigger mess of evictions, displacement and the housing crisis that we're seeing."

"The city says they're not causing evictions, but they're part of a housing market where speculators benefit by evicting people."

"Another thing we're dealing with is not only hearing about seniors and disabled getting evicted, but nonprofits like ourselves being unable to stay in the neighborhood and provide services. There are so many pressures on nonprofits."

Senior and Disability Action is a reflection of just those kinds of pressures, the product of a mid-2012 joining of forces between Senior Action Network and Planning for Elders when rising rents forced them to flee their offices at 965 Mission St. and move together four blocks away. ■

## ERRATA

In the February issue of the Central City Extra, Supervisor David Chiu's legislative aide was incorrectly identified. His name is Judson True.



# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## ARTS EVENTS

**This Woman's Work.** CAP Celebrates Women's Herstory Month, March 14, 1009 Market St., 5-7 p.m. Reception for artists from Hospitality House's Community Arts Program and group exhibition.

**"Ubu Roi,"** through March 9, EXIT on Taylor, 277 Taylor St. Original play by Alfred Jarry premiered in Paris in 1896. Modern adaptation by Cutting Ball Theater with a translation by Rob Melrose. Info: theexit.org.

**"Pretty in Ink"** author Trina Robbins, March 27, Main Library, 6-7:30 p.m., Latino/Hispanic rooms A & B., discusses her history of women cartoonists, dating back to 1896. Book sale follows the event. An exhibition of the book runs through June 4, Main Library, 4th floor. Info: sfpl.org.

**The Right Now Improv Trio,** March 28 and 29, 8 p.m. Exit Theatre, 156 Eddy St. Info: theexit.org.

**"Mommy Queerest,"** through March 29, EXIT Studio, 156 Eddy St. One-woman comedy by Kat Evasco and John Caldon, performed by Kat Evasco, presented by Guerrilla Rep and DIVAfest. Info: theexit.org.

**"The Magic Flute,"** a 1975 film by Ingmar Bergman, March 29, 1-4:30 p.m., Main Library, Koret Auditorium. Presented by Merola Goes to the Movies, showcasing classic operas and performances, with each film introduced by a participant in the Merola Opera Program. Info: sfpl.org.

## REGULAR SCHEDULE HOUSING

**Tenant Associations Coalition of San Francisco,** 1st Wednesday of each month, noon, 201 Turk St., Community Room. Contact Michael Nulty, 339-8327. Resident unity, leadership training.

## HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

**CBHS Consumer Council,** 3rd Monday of month, 5-7 p.m., 1380 Howard St., Room 537, 255-3695. Consumer advisers from self-help groups and mental

health consumer advocates. Public welcome.

**Healthcare Action Team,** 2nd Wednesday of month, 1010 Mission St., Bayanihan Community Center, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Focus on increasing supportive home services, expanded eligibility for home care, improved discharge planning. Light lunch. Call James Chionsini, 703-0188 x304.

**Hoarding and Cluttering Support Groups,** weekly meetings at various times, conducted by Mental Health Association of San Francisco, 870 Market St., Suite 928. Info: 421-2926 or mentalhealthsf.org/group-search.

**Mental Health Board,** 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m., City Hall, room 278. CBHS advisory committee, open to the public. Call: 255-3474.

**Tenderloin Healthy Corner Store Coalition,** 4th Thursday of the month, 3 p.m., Kelly Cullen Community Building, 220 Golden Gate Ave., 2nd floor auditorium or 5th floor gym. Public meetings to discuss legislation that encourages corner stores to sell fresh food and reduce tobacco and alcohol sales. Info: Jessica Estrada, jessica@vydc.org, 771-2600.

## SAFETY

**SoMa Police Community Relations Forum,** 4th Monday of each month, 6-7:30 p.m. Location varies. To receive monthly email info: 538-8100 x202.

**Tenderloin Police Station Community Meeting,** last Tuesday of month, 6 p.m., police station Community Room, 301 Eddy St. Call Susa Black, 345-7300. Neighborhood safety.

## NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT

**Alliance for a Better District 6,** 2nd Tuesday of each month, 6 p.m., 230 Eddy St. Contact Michael Nulty, 820-1560 or sf\_district6@yahoo.com, a districtwide improvement association.

**Central Market Community Benefit District,** board meets 2nd Tuesday of month, Hotel Whitcomb, 1231 Market St., 3 p.m. Info: 882-3088, http://central-market.org.

**Friends of Boeddeker Park.** Meetings continue during park renovation, 3rd Thursday of the month, 3:30 p.m., Un Cafecito, 335 Jones St. Info: Betty Traynor, 931-1126.

**Gene Friend Recreation Center Advisory Board,** 3rd Thursday of month, 5 p.m. Works to protect SoMa resources for all residents. Gene Friend Rec Center, 270 Sixth St. Info: Tim Figueras, 554-9532.

**North of Market/Tenderloin Community Benefit District.** Full board meets 3rd Monday at 4 p.m.. Call 292-4812 for location or check nom-tlcbd.org.

**Safe Haven Project,** 4th Tuesday of each month, 3 p.m., 519 Ellis St. (Senator Hotel). Contact: 563-3205, x115, or centralcitysafehaven@gmail.com.

**SoMa Community Stabilization Fund Advisory Committee,** 3rd Thursday of month, 5:30 p.m., 1 South Van Ness, 2nd floor. Info: Claudine del Rosario, 701-5580.

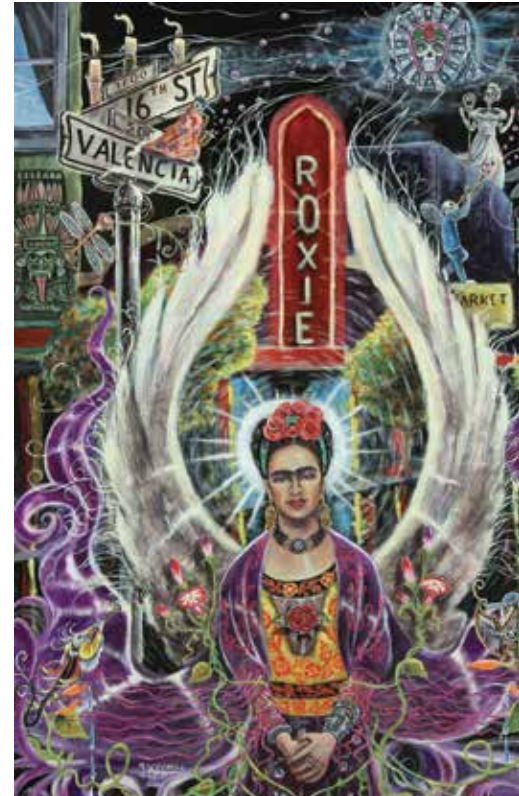
**Tenderloin Futures Collaborative,** 3rd Wednesday of the month, 11 a.m.-noon, Tenderloin Police Community Room, 301 Eddy. Presentations on issues of interest to neighborhood residents, nonprofits and businesses. Info: 820-1412.

**Tenderloin Neighborhood Association,** 2nd Friday of month, 842 Geary St., 5 p.m. Nonprofit focuses on health and wellness activities to promote neighborly interactions. Info: tenderloinneighborhood@yahoo.com.

## SENIORS AND DISABLED

**Mayor's Disability Council,** 3rd Friday of month, 1-3 p.m., City Hall, room 400. Call: 554-6789. Open to the public.

**Senior & Disability Action** (formerly Planning for Elders/Senior Action Network), general meeting, 2nd Thursday of month, 9 a.m.-noon, Universal Unitarian Church, 1187 Franklin St. SDA Housing Collaborative meeting, 3rd Wednesday, 1 p.m. HealthCare Action Team meeting, 2nd Wednesday, 1010 Mission St., (Bayanihan Community Center). For info about SDA's Survival School, University and computer class



**This Woman's Work** artist *Ronnie Goodman's "Freda: 16th and Valencia," 2013, acrylic on canvas.*

schedules: 546-1333, www.sdaction.org.

## DISTRICT 6 SUPERVISOR

**Jane Kim,** member, Land Use Committee, School District, Transportation Authority; chair, Transbay Joint Powers Authority Board of Directors; vice-chair Transportation Authority Plans & Programs Committee  
Legislative aides: Sunny Angulo, Ivy Lee and April Veneracion Jane Kim@sfgov.org 554-7970

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94116, 94122	March 7, 8, 9
94108, 94109, 94115, 94118, 94121, 94123, 94126, 94129, 94133	March 14, 15, 16
94102, 94103, 94104, 94105, 94107, 94111, 94112, 94124, 94130, 94134, 94158	March 21, 22, 23

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<b>Hotel Isabel</b> located at 1095 Mission <b>CLOSED OUT</b>	SRO – 1 Person Shared Bath Each room has a sink, micro-wave, refrigerator, 2- burner stove, closet and single bed.	1 person \$33,360.00/Year No Minimum Income	30% OF INCOME Requires a Certificate of Homelessness
<b>Bayanihan House</b> (Non Assisted Units) located at 88 – 6th St. & Mission. <b>OPEN WAITING LIST.</b>	SRO – 1 Person, Couple Shared Bath Single 10 ½ x 12 – Double 12x12 In the Unit there is a sink, micro-wave, refrigerator, 2-burner stove, closet, single bed, community kitchen, 24 hour staff & surveillance, laundry facility	1 person \$30,275.00/Year Couple \$34,580.00/Year Minimum income of \$877.40/Month	Move in Deposit \$545.00 Rent \$545.00 Utilities included

TDD: (415) 345-4470