

TNDC comes of age

PHOTO: BILLY DOUGLAS

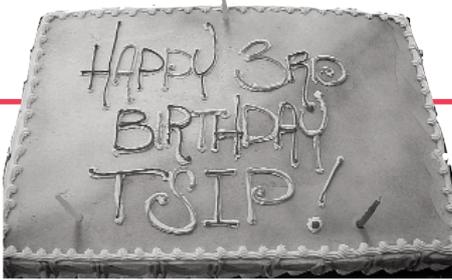


20 buildings in 21 years

"It's been said that TNDC is 'healing the heart of the city,'" said local philanthropist Sabrina Hellman, co-chair of Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corp.'s 21st birthday party. The May 2 bash — dinner for 600 at the Hilton — raised \$350,000 that will help TNDC continue to provide housing and services for 3,000 residents living in 20 buildings. "I can say with certainty that without TNDC and

other nonprofits providing low-income housing, there would be many more homeless people on the streets of the city," said TNDC Executive Director Kelly Cullen. TNDC staff, six with their Staff Heroes Awards, left to right: Sidonia Jayasinghe, Chike Udemezue, Jim Cervantes (board member), Mila Llorente, Susan S. Liao, Monique Miller, Wendy Chan, Michael Robinson and Cullen.

PHOTO: MICHAEL NULTY



Karen Oberdorfer

The fourth year of cleaning the sidewalks may be the last if the Tenderloin Sidewalk Improvement Program doesn't come up with some cash, said Shawn Collins, TSIP director, in an interview with *The Extra* after TSIP's third anniversary celebration on May 10.

Two years of seed money along with some grants, property owner and merchant contributions, were stretched into three years of Tenderloin sidewalk cleaning. But "we may not exist in 2003; we need to get a large infusion of money... we're aggressively seeking new grants," Collins said.

In December, belt-tightening measures dropped the number of days of scrubbed sidewalks from seven to five. About half the budget is spent on the maintenance of two heavy-duty rolling carts equipped with scrubbers that spit out biodegradable soap onto offending sidewalk muck but need constant replacing. The other half, said Collins, pays for personnel, currently one machine operator.

Yet, more than sidewalk grime is at stake with TSIP, said Richard Allman, one of the founders and board treasurer. "It makes a difference in terms of personal health, too," he said. "It's an important complement to all the health and social services that serve the neighborhood." And it makes a difference to the Tenderloin's merchants. In 2002, property owners added about \$45,000 to the till in a "fair share" sponsorship, said Allman, and merchants contributed about another \$45,000.

Not only is TSIP fishing for grants, outreaching to merchants and private property owners, said Allman, but it's angling for the program to be included in the city budget as well.

TSIP projected a full \$325,000 budget this year, said Allman, for two machines and two operators. The revenue projections included \$100,000 from the city, but that hasn't come through yet, he added.

"The Hotel Tax Fund helped launch this program," Allman said. "It's important to have some level of public investment in the program." ■

TSIP turns 3 with future uncertain: City funding called key to survival

PHOTOS: LENNY LIMJOCO



TSIP birthday bash: Ex-Supe Wendy Nelder, director of the Mayor's Beautification Fund, was the featured speaker. Behind her is TSIP Treasurer Richard Allman. Immediately to her right is AnhTuan Le, TSIP secretary.

OBITUARIES

Dorinda Ottey

Activist and Tenderloin resident Dorinda Ottey died on May 4 after a long illness. She was 73.

Ms. Ottey was known in recent years for her volunteer work for the Northeast Community Federal Credit Union, the Tenant Associations Coalition of San Francisco and other causes. Her good works earned her certificates of honor and appreciation from Mayor Brown and Supervisor Leland Yee.

Ms. Ottey was inspired to activism after financial considerations forced her to move from the Central Towers on Turk Street to the HUD-supported Alexander Residence on Eddy Street in the 1990s.

"She was forced to move from Central Towers, and I think that spurred her to action," said Garrett Jenkins, who is on the advisory board for the credit union.

"She had a really fine sense of the banking needs of the middle-aged and elderly people of the Tenderloin," said Michael Chan, president of the credit union's board of directors. "She offered some real insights that led to real services."



Dorinda Ottey, activist

The credit union, the only federally certified financial institution in the Tenderloin, provides financial services at low or no cost to seniors and others in a neighborhood that is home to many check-cashing outlets that take large percentages from every transaction. Chan said Ms. Ottey was "always fairly cheerful and pleasant," even as she fell ill. "She didn't have a bad word to say about anyone."

Michael Nulty, who worked with Ms. Ottey in TAC and was her neighbor at the Alexander, remembers her as "a warm person who understood the plight of seniors and did what was in her power to help."

—William Crain