

GOOD NEWS for...

S.F. MHA The Mental Health Association of San Francisco was the only West Coast organization to take home an award last month from the National Mental Health Association's annual meeting in Washington, D.C. Recognized for its annual standing-room-only conference on hoarding and cluttering, the S.F. association received the Innovation in Programming award, one of six presented at the June meeting. "These honorees are models of outspoken advocacy that break down stigma and disparities to cultural, economic and social barriers to mental health care one project, article and interview at a time," David Shern, the national association president and CEO, said in a press release. "Award winners are husbands, wives, sons, daughters, authors and tireless volunteers — and all of them strive to raise awareness and enact real change throughout the mental health movement." Besides the hoarding and cluttering conference — this year's will be Oct. 26 — S.F. Mental Health Association sponsors a semi-monthly Hoarding and Cluttering Peer-Support Group that helps consumers recognize if they have a compulsive hoarding disorder and provides training and resources to manage clutter. <http://www.mha-sf.org/index.html>. The group meets 6-7 p.m., the second Mon. and fourth Wed. of the month. Call for location, 421-2926.

SOMA AND TL Kids who got free lunches during the school year will continue to get them during the summer — and 20% more lunches will be served over last year. The program — available Mon.-Fri., June 26-Aug. 18 — at 140 locations citywide, will provide 6,000 lunches, including fresh fruit from local produce vendors. Anyone under 18 is eligible and you don't have to be enrolled in any program. The Department of Agriculture pays for it and the school district prepares and delivers the food. The San Francisco Food Bank says 34,000 kids are eligible for the meals during the school year and 25,000 partake. Marguerite Nowak, the food bank education manager, says, "Increasing to 6,000 is much needed, yet it's modest considering the scope of the need." Lunch sites also encourage reading after lunch, library visits, walks and line dancing to promote a combination of healthy food, education and fitness. The central city sites are: Tenderloin Children's Playground, 570 Ellis, noon-1 p.m.; Tenderloin Boys' and Girls' Club, 115 Jones, 1-1:30 p.m.; Shih Yu Lang Central YMCA, 220 Golden Gate, 1-2 p.m.; Salvation Army TL unit, 1 Grove, noon-12:45 p.m.; Indochinese Housing Development, 735 Eddy, 12:30-1:30 p.m.; and the Gene Friend SoMa Rec Center, 270 Sixth St.

ART AND SAFETY LOVERS June 24 was the kickoff for a mural on the Tehama Street face of the Cingular Wireless building, 951 Howard. Called "Slow Down: Children at Play," the mural will feature the faces of neighborhood kids, taken from photographs, intertwined with images of the street's trees and buildings. Cingular is funding the project, the Tehama Street Neighborhood Association is coordinating, and it is being designed and supervised by Tehama St. resident and artist Sharon Anderson. Neighbors are welcome to come help paint from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sundays, July 16, 23 and 30. Everyone's invited to the block party and unveiling of the mural in September, date and time to be announced. Information: <http://geocities.com/stehana/Tehama/Mural.html>.

If you have some good news, send it to marjorie@studycenter.org or tom@studycenter.org.

Bracing for the Big One

Disaster trainings to be offered at Glide

BY TOM CARTER

TWO months after the big earthquake centennial fuss, Erica Arteseros was trying to build a fire under the 18 people at the June Tenderloin Futures Collaborative meeting. The S.F. Fire Department lieutenant was on a disaster preparedness mission. People think disasters don't happen to them or if something does happen, the government will take care of things, she said. Apathy is her constant foe.

Her brow knitted in concentration, Arteseros delivered data like darts.

"Less than 10% of San Francisco residents are prepared (for disaster)," she said.

"There are 1.5 million people in San Francisco every day. And in a disaster, 911 would be overwhelmed by the response.

"In the 1989 earthquake, the Marina got the priority and the Sunset and Tenderloin waited. As they would again."

Arteseros looked around the room.

"How many people have ever used a fire extinguisher?"

Two hands went up, a showing consistent with the paltry preparedness figure. A few looked sheepish, as if it was a shame fire hadn't threatened them when an extinguisher was handy.

This was all to the good. Arteseros wanted people to feel any sort of guilt and sign up in droves for the Neighborhood Emergency Response Team's course at Glide, which she was touting.

"I am here to give you skills," Arteseros said.

Indeed, the SFFD's NERT program trains people on how to save lives and protect property, starting at home, and to help their neighbors. The 20-hour training is free. Six class sessions, one a week, deal with preparedness, utilities shutoffs, disaster medicine, search and rescue, team organizing, even terrorism awareness.

Since 1990, NERT has trained 15,000 people as key responders, Arteseros said.

Although earthquakes have done the major damage, there's now an emphasis on terrorism. It is covered in the fifth session along with procuring equipment to distribute. For equipment or materials that are commandeered for emergency use, Arteseros says, the law now allows owners to be reimbursed for what they give up.

An emergency kit and "determining who" shares it is key to survival, Arteseros said. "My 7-year-old niece is helping pack the kit," she said. "You need to involve people."

Will there be shelters in a disaster? someone asked.

"Don't count on it," she said. Some shelters have been predetermined, other possibilities are being studied, but she would not reveal specific locations.

"Keep a (battery-run) AM-FM radio handy," she advised.

Neighborhood activist John Nulty asked if Twin Peaks would be the only safe place in the event of a tsunami.

Arteseros didn't give a direct answer.

Do we have an early warning system for tsunamis? someone asked.

"Not my area of expertise," she said.

"We'll all meet on Potrero Hill," someone piped up, to laughter.

Chaplain Earl Rogers of the Rescue Mission asked how employers should respond.

Macy's, the Federal Reserve Bank and The Gap are have disaster plans and supplies, she said. Charles Schwab has "food and water on every floor."

What about stored water and what if it doesn't get replaced every six months?

"In a disaster, I'd drink it," she said. "But change it anyway." In the worst of times, she added, drink toilet tank water, adding 2-3 drops of bleach per gallon to purify it.

The Rev. Glenda Hope, Collaborative moderator, said she didn't think she could do all six NERT sessions a few years ago but was so inspired after the first one that she sailed through all the rest. "I felt so empowered," she said. "I'll be 70 in two weeks and weigh 110 pounds and if I can do it, anybody can. I really encourage people to do it."

The Tenderloin NERT training will be in Glide's Freedom Hall, on Tuesdays, 6-9 p.m., July 25-Aug. 29, according to the NERT office. Call (415) 970-2022 for information.

The day after Arteseros' visit, a 4.7-magnitude earthquake jolted Gilroy and Morgan Hill, causing no damage but was felt in Marin County. The U.S. Geological Survey puts the odds of a major quake hitting the Bay

Area by 2036 at 67% and figures it will take up to five days for help to arrive.

COMMUNITY JUSTICE VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Representatives of the Community Courts in the Tenderloin and SoMa made a plea for more volunteers to help mete out justice in their own neighborhoods.

Community Courts were started in 1998 by the district attorney's office and other government bodies in response to the rising number of misdemeanors clogging the court system. Misdemeanor cases didn't allow the victim to participate in holding the offender responsible, but the victim can in the city's 12 Community Courts.

These alternative courts give residents a say in determining what discipline fits the crime: fine, community service, program or referral.

"A cop is there and somebody from the DA's office, and a volunteer explains the process," said Mark Ellinger, a photographer who has served on the SoMa and TL courts since 2001.

Volunteers get a four-hour training, go on an availability list and rotate into service, three or four on a panel.

"We ask questions of the offender and discuss what the solution might be," Ellinger said. "We try to get the offender to assume some responsibility. There are a lot of substance abuse, homeless and mental health issues.

"It's just one day a month and it's up to 2½ hours at the most. It's really worth it. You work with the DA's office and police and I've always been real skeptical of them. But they really engage with us."

Lisa Block, director of Safety Network and the court's liaison for SoMa and TL, said she has

➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



CENTRAL CITY EXTRA is published monthly by San Francisco Study Center Inc., a private nonprofit serving the community since 1972. The Extra was initiated through grants from the S.F. Hotel Tax Fund and the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund. It is now assisted by the Kosblan Committee of the San Francisco Foundation. The contents are copyrighted by the San Francisco Study Center, 1095 Market Street, Suite 602, San Francisco, CA 94103.

PHONE: (415) 626-1650

FAX: (415) 626-7276

E-MAIL: centralcityextra@studycenter.org

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER: Geoffrey Link

SENIOR WRITER/EDITOR: Marjorie Beggs

REPORTERS: Tom Carter, Anne Marie Jordan, Ed Bowers, John Goins

DESIGN AND LAYOUT: Lenny Limjoco

DESIGN CONSULTANT: Don McCartney

PHOTOGRAPHERS: Lenny Limjoco, Mark Ellinger

CONTRIBUTORS: Adrian D. Varnedoe, Diamond Dave, William Crain,

Mark Hedin, John Burks

EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

David Baker, Michael Nulty, Debbie Larkin, Nicholas Rosenberg,

Brad Paul, Tariq Alazraie

Central City Extra is a member of the
SAN FRANCISCO NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION