

"Okay, people, let's green!" SoMa residents, students and children grab brooms and pitch in at Asian Neighborhood Design's cleanup effort in and around Minna and Russ streets. It was the first community cleanup of the area and the first sponsored by AND. The largest contingent, from United Players, wore "Save the hood" T-shirts.

60 volunteers clean SoMa street to Latin beat

BY PHIL TRACY

SOUTHSIDE

THE first community cleanup day of a small slice of SoMa took place May 31 as 60 or so people gathered at Tutubi Park, at the corner of Russ and Minna streets. Sponsored by Asian Neighborhood Design, the cleanup was restricted to Minna between Sixth and Seventh streets and the stretch of Russ between Minna and Howard.

The work force was composed of neighborhood volunteers, including residents of Minna Park family housing complex, a 26-unit building along with Tutubi Park, which was built by AND in 1999. Other agencies providing volunteers included the Safety Network, the Department of Public Works, Rec and Park and the Employment Training Center trainees of AND, whose program teaches building skills, chiefly for use in the construction industry.

A major contributor to the turnout, according to AND's Nicole Combs Walker, who organized the event, was United Players, a SoMa program of violence prevention and leadership training that put 25 to 30 young people to work. Rudy Corpuz, founding director, referred to his group as "a tribe" and said its mission is to "save our communities." The sentiment is best summed up by the slogan on the group's black T-shirt, "It takes the hood to save the hood."

They swept streets, painted over graffiti, touched up the park fence and cleaned up the park. After introducing city officials and the seven team leaders, Walker thanked the AND Latin house band and said, "Okay people, let's green."

Grant Din, executive director of Asian Neighborhood Design, said this was the group's first time organizing a cleanup in SoMa, though AND had participated in cleanups in other neighborhoods.

He said the group recently relocated to 1021 Mission St. and had worked with several other architectural projects in SoMa besides the Minna Park family housing complex.

Tutubi Park is private, a part of the housing complex and designed as one of

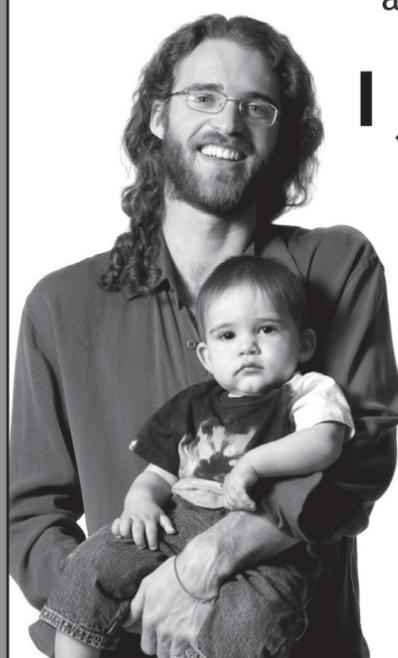
the housing's main egresses. Thus, city rules prohibited Rec and Park from taking the park over, Din said. It serves as a semi-private park for the project residents who each has a key. The fence is not to keep the neighborhood out but to provide security for the children, including those who do not live in the complex, playing within it, Din said.

Din said Asian Neighborhood Design was started in 1973 by several Asian students from U.C. Berkeley who wanted to increase affordable urban housing stock. It eventually moved to San Francisco and has recently worked on such varied projects as Friendship House American Indian Healing

Center on Julian Street in the Mission and renovating the façade of the Faithful Fools offices and copy shop in the Tenderloin.

In addition to architect design and employment training, Din said AND has programs in family and youth resources, including an after school homework club with 15 to 20 students, and a community planning program that has produced a 2005 demographic survey of San Francisco's eastern neighborhoods ("There Goes the Neighborhood") and neighborhood profiles of both SoMa and the Tenderloin in 2004.

All publications, plus The Material Handbook, "to share knowledge about building materials and design strategies ... for low income people in San Francisco" are downloadable for free from AND's Web site www.andnet.org in pdf format. ■



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