

Show me the money

Practical pitch to be counted makes sense to all

BY TOM CARTER

IN early March, Nabila Mango was in the Islamic Society lobby at 20 Jones St. when a man entered, went to the bulletin board and began to read a 2010 Census poster. "Are you Arab?" she asked.

He nodded. "Then write 'Arab' on question nine when you get your census form," she said. "It's under 'other.' It means more money for us."

Mango's Ayadi organization is one of four nonprofit partners handling Tenderloin outreach for the census. It's one of the city's undercounted neighborhoods, where elusive ethnicities have missed landing more than a few federal dollars for programs that affect them.

Arabs weren't counted until the 2000 census — Middle Easterners were expected to list themselves as white. But the 2000 census counted 1.2 million Arabs nationwide, about 35,000 in San Francisco. After 9/11, though, Arabs so feared reprisals and discrimination some changed their names, Mango said.

"Stand up and be counted" is a challenge in the Tenderloin

Getting Arabs now to "stand up and be counted" is a special challenge, as it is for many immigrant groups. Yet "get the money" for their neighborhood is a mighty motivator. Over the next 10 years, the federal government will send nearly \$5 trillion to cash-strapped states, counties and cities based on population, some of it headed into neighborhoods for a range of programs, from maternal and child health programs, special and vocational education, block grants to affordable housing. Communities of color and low-income areas have commonly been undercounted.

The mayor's office estimates that San Francisco is undercounted by

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CENTRAL CITY

EXTRA

SAN FRANCISCO

MOST MEMORABLE



PHOTO BY LENNY LIMJOCO

Reactions to her TL mural rank as artist Mona Caron's most moving neighborhood memory.

Tenderloin moments

Many recall turning points in the hood

THE Tenderloin is a special place — historical, residential, action-packed. Dirt poor with gritty streets, it's rich in history, art and humanity. Crime is rampant, though it's not all strongarm stuff: More than half the arrests are drug-related. The Tenderloin is the face of human services in the city and the heart of its diversity. It's a most memorable place to live and work.

The Extra, with the help of journalism students at S.F. State enrolled in Professor Jon Funabiki's Ethnic News Service class, asked a number of folks active in the life of the neighborhood to recall their most memorable moment in the Tenderloin. Here are their recollections.

When the mural came to life

MONA CARON, Muralist

"I JUST had an incredibly memorable moment when I unveiled my mural (March 5). It's been a huge thing for me. The Tenderloin has been the most responsive and involved community that I've ever done a mural in and it's been a pleasure. It really took the cake," said Mona Caron, a San Francisco muralist with major works at the Muni tunnel below the Mint and at Duboce between Church and Market.

Caron's recently completed mural at Golden Gate and Jones streets portrays people of the Tenderloin and the neighborhood landscape. A huge crowd attended its unveiling, some of them immortalized in the artwork.

"It's really life imitating art imitating life," said Caron. "Some people dressed exactly the way I had portrayed them in the mural. I had seen someone carrying a painting of Michael Jackson when he had just died and I put him in the mural carrying that painting and he came to the opening carrying it."

"There are so many different communities intermingling in the same place. It's rich in the human sense. I met so many people who are doing amazing things with that community, like total rock stars," said Caron. "There's such a variety of people from different backgrounds, and it's dense. It merits a little more love put into its public spaces. Not a monetary richness but in terms of variety of cultures, and all the knowledge that comes with that. It's so full. I only managed to scratch the surface." ■

—LINDSEY LEAKE

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PHOTO COURTESY SEACC

During the Feb. 7 Tet Festival on Larkin Street, Vietnamese flocked to the Southeast Asian Community Center's census booth with raffle tickets.