

SoMa Health Center opens with housing

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Slot. She advocated for better housing and health care and was a charter member of the SoMa clinic when it opened. Skillful and unflagging over 60 years, Westbrook served on many boards and presided over the San Francisco Housing Authority Commission. In 1999, the National Association of Community Health Centers gave her its Lifetime Achievement Award.

Westbrook, 96, could not attend, but was represented by 10 family members, including the youngest, Evelyn Snelgro, 4, her great-great-granddaughter.

"This helps fulfill the city's objective (to provide more low-cost housing)," said Mayor Ed Lee, one of more than a dozen speakers over 2½ hours. "I want the governor to come here and see how we've done this," he said, making a pointed reference to Redevelopment's role, providing about a third of the project funds for the clinic, Range said. Its \$4.5 million bought the land and started construction and, as a result, banks got on board and completed the financing.

Westbrook resident Jocelyn Kwa, a single mom with two kids, said through tears that she was "trying just to survive" when her name was chosen from a pool of 2,000 in a housing lottery. She and the children occupy an 880-square-foot, two-bedroom



Dentist Gemma Ferrer, in her state-of-the-art dental clinic with six chairs in the SoMa Health Center, will soon be joined by a second dentist.

apartment. "I just feel so lucky," she cried.

The main building on Seventh Street houses the health clinic and 30 units above. The four stories of housing behind it face Moss Street and contain 19 apartments, a laundry, multipurpose community room and computer room with five PCs for residents' use.

Families that qualify for the unfurnished, one-, two- and three-bedroom units must earn no more than 60% of Area Median Income levels, \$67,860 for a family of four.

The health clinic opened in May with 42 full-time administrative, IT and medical employees, headed by three doctors. It expects to double its multiethnic patient load from 75 a day at the Minna Street clinic to 150 a day, or 10,000 patients a year — 65% of them expected to be uninsured. Many are double- or triple-diagnosed with mental health, substance abuse and chronic medical conditions, Range said.

The clinic, closed Sundays, charges on a sliding scale based on federal poverty guidelines. It is one of the 10 facilities comprising the San Francisco Community Clinic Consortium, which includes Curry Senior

Center, Glide Health Services and Saint Anthony Free Medical Clinic.

The dental clinic is especially impressive: six chairs with the latest equipment. And the patient load, most with cavities and gum disease, is about 20 a day, up 20% from Minna Street, said Dr. Gemma Ferrer, now the only dentist but soon to be joined by a second.

"Everything here is top of the line," said Range. "We were only going to have one chance at it, and I wanted it to last a long time."

People are awed by the quality. "When people come in off Sixth Street their demeanor changes," Range said. "They're polite and cooperative. They'll take care of it. That's the attitude."

The old Minna Street building, formerly a warehouse that was a gift from Adelm LoPrest, will be the next project. Range wants to turn it into a mental health clinic, costing \$4 million.

"We get a challenging clientele down here and we need to meet the challenge," Range said. "We'll call it the LoPrest Clinic." ■

Frank Mackey, like all other tenants, had to furnish his 665-square-foot, one-bedroom apartment on the third floor of the four-story building on Moss Street.



PHOTOS BY TOM CARTER



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	2 person - \$33,390 per year (maximum income) \$760 per month (minimum income)

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GOOD NEWS

MUSIC LOVERS Bankrolled by \$4,100 in TL CBD grants, Boeddeker Park's stage will offer at least seven summer and fall music concerts. People in Plazas music got \$2,100 and returns to Boeddeker Park for the first time in three years at noon on July 19, Aug. 16 and Sept. 20, it was announced at the Friends of Boeddeker Park's May meeting. At least four more concerts will be scheduled for the park through a \$2,000 CBD grant to the Friends. Chair Betty Traynor said the jazz group Melvin and the Mellotones, which cancelled June 21 as the first concert in that series and was replaced by a jazz trio, plays Aug. 14. In another announcement, tai chi sessions will continue at the park on Thursdays, 11 a.m. to noon. ■

— TOM CARTER



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