

# D.A. grants over \$20,000 to programs in central city

## Neighborhood Court fines fuel the awards

BY JONATHAN NEWMAN

FIVE OF THE 11 NONPROFITS awarded Neighborhood Justice Fund grants last month by District Attorney George Gascón will address needs in the Tenderloin, and a sixth will use the money for recreational activities for SoMa kids.

Using proceeds from the fines collected in 2012 in the D.A.'s Neighborhood Courts, which now operate in all 10 police districts, Gascón distributed grants totaling \$37,800 citywide. At his invitation, nonprofits submitted proposals last year on the themes of public safety and neighborhood livability, and Gascón and his staff selected the winners.

Each nonprofit got \$3,500, except Vietnamese Youth Development Center which got \$2,800 — the amount it asked for. The others were: Self Help for the Elderly, Livable City, SF LGBT Aging Policy Task Force, Asociacion Mayab and United Playaz.

"We want to improve the look of our block, so we are replacing our old security gate and \$2,800 is what it will cost," said the Vietnamese Center's executive director, Judy Young. The gate has been broken since 2008. She hopes to have the new metal gate in place at 166 Eddy St. by late May, just before summer youth programs start.

Self Help for the Elderly will use the money to spread the word among older Asians about a scam of near-epidemic proportions in the Bay Area with more than 150 cases in the past year, but only 10 arrests so far in the gang operation.

It works like this: Asian seniors, mainly women, are stopped on the street by a group of three or four people who say in Chinese that they see a "black karma" hovering about them and their family and fortune will suffer unless a monk or

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PHOTO BY JONATHAN NEWMAN

**This iron security gate** at Vietnamese Youth Development Center, broken for five years, will be replaced using \$2,800 from the D.A.'s Neighborhood Courts fines.

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# CENTRAL CITY

# EXTRA!

SAN FRANCISCO

## 'I USUALLY EAT OUT'



PHOTO BY MARK DONEZA

**Franklin Croney**, a resident of *The Rose*, changed his eating habits, dropping from 521 pounds that put him in a wheelchair to 387 pounds. He uses a microwave to prepare meals in his room.

# Cooking in SROs

## Limited options for whipping up healthy meals

BY ERIC LOUIE

FOR THE MOST PART, 74-year-old Purita Canada gets her daily meals from the Chinese restaurants around Sixth Street. The retired schoolteacher from the Philippines lives alone at *The Rose*, never learned much about cooking and likes seeing others when she goes out.

She does, however, appreciate the limited facilities at the South of Market residential hotel where she has lived almost a decade. She has a rice cooker and microwave in her room, and a communal kitchen on the hotel's bottom floor that enables her to have hot soup before heading to Mass in the mornings.

"It's very, very cold," Canada said, still bundled up with a blanket on a weekday afternoon after a class intended to help more SRO residents cook for themselves, emphasizing healthful fare. Such classes have become a trend.

For most residents of Tenderloin and SoMa SROs, options for a home-cooked meal are limited. In their room, they might have a microwave, sometimes provided as part of the amenities. They might also have a rice maker or crockpot. Hot plates, toaster ovens and electrical skills are generally prohibited, though many residents break the rules. Some

renovated SROs have a full range in the community kitchen residents all share.

A few SROs have a mini-kitchen in each room. Mercy Housing's Arlington Hotel, in its recent major renovation that reduced it from 173 to 154 units, put kitchenettes and bathrooms in every one. John Elberling, CEO of TODCO, a prominent nonprofit South of Market developer, said TODCO put two-burner stovetops and sinks in each room as part of their recently completed Isabel Hotel renovation. TODCO similarly equipped Bayanihan House when it reopened it in 1999.

But microwaving is probably the most popular way to prepare meals in SROs. Elberling notes that many residents live alone and find it easier to make other arrangements than use the communal amenities. "Some do and some don't."

In a report advocacy groups presented to the Department of Aging and Adult Services and the Board of Supervisors' Single Room Occupancy Taskforce last summer, only a third of the SRO residents who responded to the survey said they had access to a kitchen. A fraction said they had limited access, but more than half said they had none at all. As a result, 1 in 5 of the 151 respondents said, they often skipped a meal.

Josh Vining, an organizer with the Mission SRO Collaborative who worked on the survey with the Tenderloin and Chinatown SRO Collaboratives, believes the numbers would be more woeful if they'd been able to poll more residents of hotels that do not get public funding — which are less likely to have a kitchen than the nonprofit SROs. Only a third of respondents in the "Seniors and

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