

Tax break tech help too tech for the TL

Yammer's training
uses software that
group doesn't have

By MARK HEDIN

THE TAX-BREAK TECH companies got an earful from some of the neighborhood organizations they're benefiting, and a warning from a city official to keep the benefits flowing, at the Citizens Advisory Committee meeting in September.

The city also got lambasted by community members for lax monitoring of the community benefit agreements.

Representatives of several nonprofits came before the committee to describe how the promises of tech support made by Twitter, Microsoft, One Kings Lane, Zendesk, Zoosk and 21Tech in their agreements have been working out.

The six "beneficiaries" who spoke up expressed gratitude for the help they've gotten, yet were unafraid to point out some shortcomings.

Diana Yu, employment specialist at Vietnamese Youth Development Center, was effusive about three students landing \$15-per-hour, part-time summer internships at Zoosk and Zendesk.

On the other hand, she said, Yammer's training at a lab in the Westfield Centre used equipment more advanced than the youth center's, "so we can't use the shortcuts and could not utilize the training."

Kathie Lowry, Larkin Street Youth Services chief development officer, said Twitter granted the agency \$15,000 last year, even before it had signed its CBA, but still doesn't have a system to request a renewal, as she normally does with other benefactors. Lowry was asked by panel member Robert Marquez about the promotional tweets that Twitter's report touted as part of its contribution to Larkin Street.

"We don't have the capacity to take advantage," Lowry said. "Ad campaigns are something we weren't able to engage in." She added that Larkin Street would "welcome people who are experts in the (tech) field" along with "training, hardware and software — and money."

Dilraj Kahai, 21Tech co-founder, had in tow the head of a local firm it says it is mentoring. He presented Joe DiPasquale, CEO and founder of Regroup, a mass-messaging company he was teaching such things as procuring government contracts and how to register with the city as a minority-owned company.

Because Regroup has numerous and varied investors, DiPasquale told the committee, it has been unable to register with the city as a minority-owned firm. Kahai took pains to inform the committee that DiPasquale is part of the LGBT community, but that is not a qualification for a minority-owned designation for purposes of winning city contracts; only ethnicity counts.

Under questioning from the panel, DiPasquale said he met Kahai some years ago at a Silicon Valley event and kept in touch, and had recently moved his company to San Francisco.

DiPasquale told the committee that 21Tech's assistance — begun last year, prior to 21Tech signing the CBA — has been

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NO. 138

PUBLISHED
BY THE
SAN FRANCISCO
STUDY CENTER

OCTOBER
2013

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CBD trial toilet
is for men only

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OBITS:
2 WHO DIED

William McLeroy,
Brenda Bowman

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CENTRAL CITY

EXTRA!

S A N F R A N C I S C O

'SHE'S A SAINT'



Rev. Glenda Hope, founder and executive director of S.F. Network Ministries, drew a crowd of 360 at her farewell dinner, a fundraiser for her pet project, the SafeHouse for former prostitutes.

HOPE RETIRES

Ministry ends after 41 years serving the TL

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TOM CARTER

REV. GLENDA HOPE shrewdly put it all on the line by linking her retirement swansong to a fundraiser for one of her cherished programs, S.F. SafeHouse for women escaping prostitution. And it paid off.

More than 360 guests who had been touched by her 41-year career with Network Ministries converged Sept. 25 for the festive evening at Patron Hall in St. Mary's Cathedral to honor the diminutive 77-year-old Presbyterian minister and use their credit cards. Most paid \$125 to be there.

It was also the 15th anniversary of SafeHouse, started by Hope and Sister Rosina Conrotto, and Hope's biggest fundraiser ever. SafeHouse has graduated more than 250 women.

Her announced goal from the raffle and auctions was \$25,000 and, hopefully, she said, someone might toss in a house that the program could call its own. Now, SafeHouse is in a leased building in the Mission. It accommodates 10 women for up to two years, its programs helping them reshape their lives. But expenses are hefty, such as \$1,000 for eight weeks of psychotherapy and \$500 for eight weeks of case management.

"I had a dream that Larry Ellison moved to New Zealand and gave his house to us," Hope said at the lectern, her typical wit nearly bringing down the house. "But," she added wishfully, "there's someone here tonight who is going to give that house to us."

SafeHouse began after Hope had sought out women of the street, not for religious conversions or repentance, only to ask what they needed most in their lives. A safe place to live, they said. And that became Hope's goal. "The women broke my heart, the way they were broken," Hope said.

Among the crowd that had trolled vegetarian food islands during the silent auction were several SafeHouse graduates. One, Toni Eby, was a featured speaker. A military veteran who fell on hard times in her early 20s, she said she had become homeless and dispirited. An addiction led to prostitution. She was broke, she said, with no hope for the future, then no will to live.

"Six years ago I came with nothing but the clothes on my back," Eby said, her voice quavering. "And I was greeted by a loving staff."

Treatment programs followed that helped her deal with the trauma of street life. SafeHouse paid for her college courses. Now she works at the SafeHouse desk, has a 3.67 GPA and is well on her way toward a degree.

"It truly, truly works. She gave us hope."

Eby got the second of three standing ovations of the evening. The others were for Hope.

The entire evening was a Glenda Hope lovefest. At the hall entrance, sipping a glass of red wine, her hair stylist hovering, she greeted most with her trademark warm hug.

People not just in the Tenderloin but throughout the city and the Bay Area have known her as a multidimensional woman of the cloth with ideas and action, resolve and stubbornness tempered with a droll sense of humor, aggressively supportive and alternately defiant. Her low, slow Georgia drawl seems incongruous for her slight, 100-pound frame and white hair. Her clerical collar, winsome smile and compassionate blue eyes have worked wonders for her from the street to City Hall. In battle, the smile vanishes and the eyes glaze into an icy stare. She's been

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