

Honoring those who perished on the street

Annual event set for winter solstice

By TOM CARTER

More than 100 people stood on the steps of City Hall in cold, pouring rain last Dec. 21 at 5:30 p.m. to give a final act of dignity to the homeless who have died on the city's unforgiving streets during the year in fair weather or foul.

As the name and age of each person was read, a Tibetan bell was struck, ringing out an eerie note that hung mournfully in the air, then faded into the night.

"It's a unique service that gives us pause to remember," says Michael Pappas, executive director of San Francisco Interfaith Council, which co-sponsors the memorial with Night Ministries. "I'm moved by it."

The memorial for the homeless will happen again — for the 26th time, same winter solstice day, same time, but across the street in Civic Center Plaza, where it also has been held in recent years. The public is welcome at this hour-long interfaith, nondenominational recognition of the dead. Organizers say about 100 names will be acknowledged and a few hymns will be sung and prayers offered.

The Health Department supplies the names, though some are John Does, and often the list is supplemented by friends of SRO residents who have died on the streets, or not.

"Yes, some have died nameless," says Rev. Maggie Henderson, pastor at Old First Presbyterian, who has helped organize the memorial. "But all these people had families. It's a sorrow."

Rev. Glenda Hope, the retired Presbyterian minister whose Network Ministries

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PHOTO: CENTRAL CITY EXTRA ARCHIVE

Rev. Glenda Hope, who pioneered SRO memorials, officiates at the memorial for the homeless in 2004.

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Tom Carter tries a new form

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Celebrations throughout month

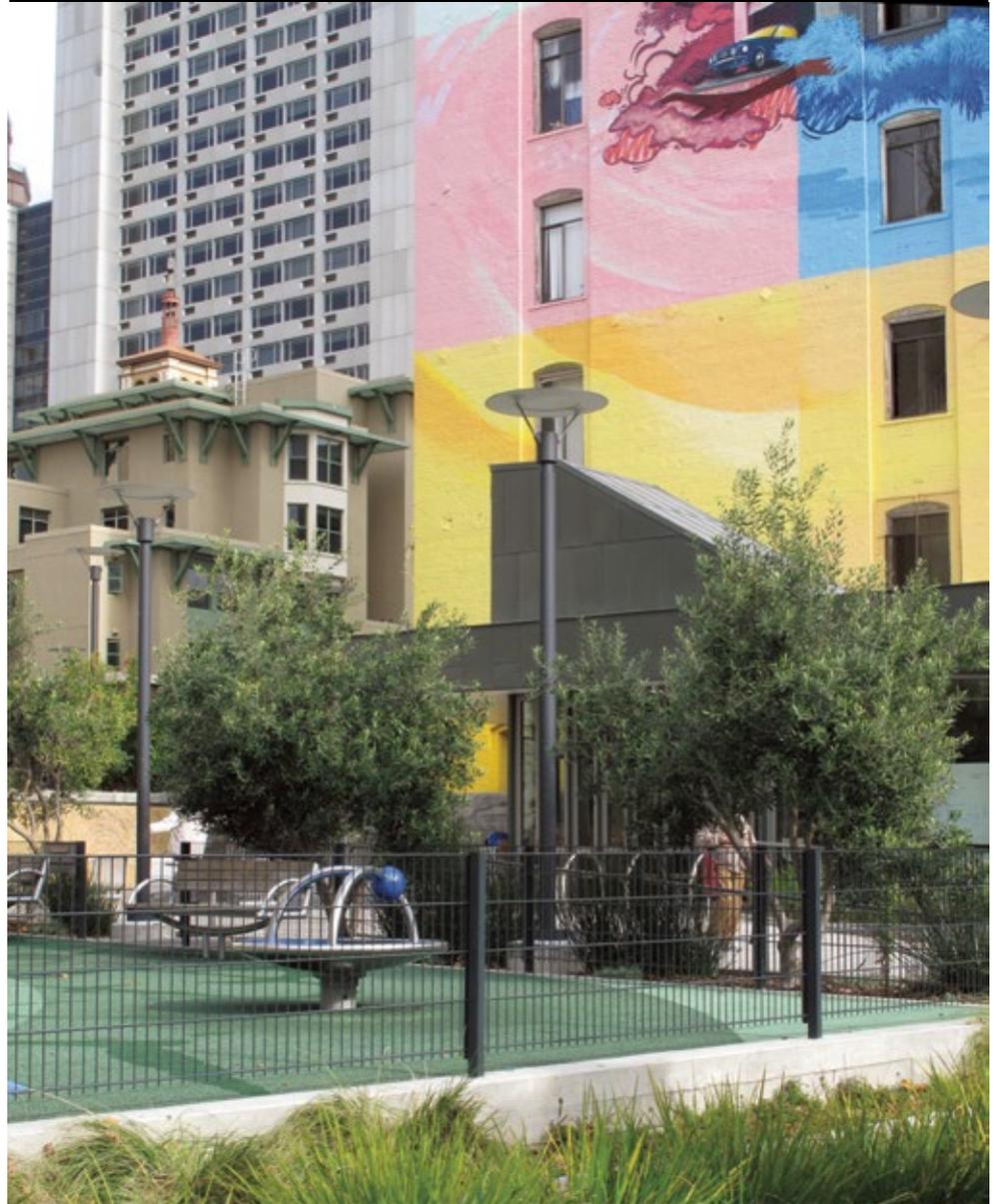
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CENTRAL CITY

EXTRA

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CONTROLLER'S RATINGS



The park feels larger than just an acre. It has something for everyone — winding paths for strolling, state-of-the-art play structures, benches for resting, visual delights of multibued, lush greenery, spacious clubhouse for indoor activities and a mural that mirrors the community.

Boedddeker is No. 9

Park tops 212 others in city ranking

STORY BY TOM CARTER
PHOTOS BY LISE STAMPFLI

A CITY STUDY has again proved what Tenderloin residents have known for two years — that their new Boedddeker Park is top notch, a shining diamond in the rough.

A controller's office team has ranked Boedddeker in the top 10 among San Francisco's 221 parks for the second year in a row. It started in December 2014 when the park reopened after a \$9.3 million makeover.

The rating for the 2015-16 year, which came out in October, gave the 1-acre site a 96.1%, good for ninth place. The previous year, at 98.8%, Boedddeker ranked No. 2 in the city behind another recently renovated park, Cabrillo Playground. The Outer Richmond site is about the size of Boedddeker and repeated at No. 1 in the latest report, dropping slightly from 99% to 98.2%.

"It's great, but not surprising," Betty Traynor

said of Boedddeker's showing. For years she has been facilitator for monthly Friends of Boedddeker Park meetings and was the steady hand when Boedddeker was criticized as a poorly designed, thick-fenced fortress hiding drug dealing that scared people away. The regular meetings and Traynor's ability to listen to volunteers' suggestions and keep improvement projects on track were a factor influencing Trust for Public Land to spearhead the complete park redo.

Boedddeker, Traynor said, continues to improve with its programs for the young and old and also has flourishing gardens of plants, bushes and herbs in the north sector near Ellis Street. There doesn't appear to be safety issues, not like before.

Five years ago, the "Park Maintenance Standards" report ranked Boedddeker near the bottom of the list. It was about the time that Trust for Public Land's Jake Gilchrist began attending

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