

# Brown targets 3 'pockets' in 'hood



PHOTO BY TOM CARTER

**Presentation Senior Community**

social workers  
Karen Kielb and  
Naomi Chau tell  
Capt. Brown about  
safety problems the  
seniors face.

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also promoted stay-away orders, where the court order that convicted dealers to stay out of the area where they were arrested.

Brown, acknowledging that she had "big shoes" to fill, said that as of yet she had not been thoroughly briefed by Shinn. A few days later it caught up with her at the March meeting of the Tenderloin Futures Collaborative meeting (see sidebar).

Even so, Brown had by then developed some priorities of her own.

"I have several pockets I want to clean up," she told *The Extra*. "The 300 block of Leavenworth, U.N. Plaza in front of Carl's Jr. and Turk and Taylor. But the challenge is the

number of officers. We need more. You can do so much more when you center on a location, but then you tend to neglect the rest of the district because of lack of staffing. Police work is often displacement—clean up an area, then the activity moves somewhere else like Market Street.

"Southern (station) has the same problem dealing with Sixth Street."

Later, as Brown made the neighborhood rounds to introduce herself at meetings, she emphasized the cauldron the Tenderloin had been for her. It shaped the way she deals with people. She has an easy manner of speaking, listens well and connects to people.

"This is where I learned life's lessons, where I got wisdom—from the streets," she told participants at the Tenderloin Futures Collaborative March meeting. "And it comes from giving people that extra five minutes, and giving them respect. I learned so much. There's very little I wouldn't do for this community."

Brown started her career as a beat officer in the Mission and has additionally worked at Northern, Bayview and Richmond stations. By comparison, her Tenderloin Task Force experiences in 1991-94 were indelible. Brown was often "riding alone" as a sergeant. Headquarters, before the 301 Eddy St. station was built, was in the Hibernia Bank at Jones and McAllister. Officers getting ready for a shift could hear drug deals being made outside the station windows. And TL streets were meaner then, Brown said.

"The incidence of crime was higher," Brown said. "More homicides, more violence. Every day was quite an adventure."

"When I worked here you just didn't go into Boeddeker Park. It was a very frightening place. I knew two officers who worked the park and they told me they were losing their perspective on life and had forgotten there was a great, decent

world out there.

"Now, I look over there and see 100% improvement, relatively speaking. The Tenderloin is a very different place (now) and the officers are very committed to that park. I have found the same very high work ethic."

"But what I remember most is the mental-ill and how very sad and tragic it is that they are not better taken care of."

Once in 1994, near the end of her TL assignment, Brown and an officer responded to a call just outside the station. A belligerent, bedraggled man had been babbling to people at the bus stop about a cigarette lighter and threatening them.

"He had long stringy hair and was horrendously dirty," Brown said. "I took him to the ground. I could feel under his clothes how thin his arms were and how loose his skin was. And this awful smell came up from him. I noticed he had rubber bands around two fingers holding them together. They were gangrenous. His body was rotting."

"This was a human being that we (society) had seriously neglected. It broke my heart."

The man was not arrested but was held for psychiatric evaluation.

At another meeting at Presentation Senior Community on Ellis next to Boeddeker Park, Brown showed her eagerness to address immediate concerns. The tidy three-year-old senior residence houses 135, many of them frail.

"I'd be happy to take it a step higher if you're having no luck," she offered to Sister Karen Kielb, a Presentation social worker who brought up traffic safety issues outside that she had raised months ago with the city. Down-and-outers on Ellis pose another problem as they wait for free meals from Glide across the street. The nonresident elderly who walk on

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