

# St. Anthony's celebrates 50 years of service

PHOTO: ADRIAN D. VARNEDOE

It's hard to say what the late Father Alfred Boeddeker would have thought of the celebration that took place on the streets surrounding the St. Anthony Foundation and Dining Room he created on Oct. 4, 1950. He believed that it would be needed for only a few years.

Sadly, it has been needed much longer than anyone expected, but that didn't stop the 1,000 or so people from all walks of life who came out Oct. 8 on a sunny afternoon and enjoyed the barbecue chicken and other donated goodies on.

Tables were lined up Jones while on Golden Gate people heard some jamming reggae music from George and the Wonders and other bands.

Sister Patrick Curran, executive director of the St. Anthony Foundation, explained the celebration: "We wanted to thank the people who have supported us."

St. Anthony Foundation doesn't take funds from the government; it only accepts private donations.

And without the dozens of volunteers, who worked at the celebration and the dining room and other foundation sites throughout the

year, it is hard to tell where George Washington would be without St. Anthony.

Washington, 68, told *The Extra* that he comes to St. Anthony to eat because he lives in a Tenderloin hotel that has no cooking facility and he doesn't have a choice because he can't afford to always eat out.

When St. Anthony opened, it served a few hundred meals a few days a week. Today, it's more like a couple of thousand a day.

Despite the dot-com boom, Sister Patrick Curran has seen the need for the foundation's programs increase, especially by working families. "They're making enough of a living to stay in their apartments," she said, "but the apartments are so expensive now that they run out of money for food and to pay for health care."

The city spends millions on the homeless, but it seems unlikely that the problem of homelessness will be solved soon.

So, the foundation will continue to serve those who are hungry and in need of other services. But the hope is that by the time St. Anthony's 100th anniversary comes around in 2050 there won't be any need for it then.

## A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

by Adrian D. Varnedoe



Marialma Gonzales, left, serves lunch at St. Anthony's 50th anniversary celebration.



## Shades of ST. FRANCIS

Looking down at the scene at St. Boniface on Oct. 7, St. Francis was probably smiling. Out in front of the church, dogs and cats of many breeds, birds of a feather, iguanas, a cashmere goat and, naturally, hamsters were among a longer litany of pets that accompanied their owners, gathered for the 11th year in a row for the Blessing of the Animals in the Tenderloin.

Father Dan Lackie, above, did the honors, sprinkling holy water on the animals and remarking that the pets' relationship with their owners was a reflection of their owners' relationship with others. And, for the most part, peace and harmony reigned that day.

One feisty little exception, however, was the snarling, pint-sized Chihuahua being nuzzled by the snow-white Great Pyrenees, who doesn't seem worried.



CHRISTINA KOCI HERNANDEZ PHOTOS COURTESY OF SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER

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