

# GOOD NEWS for...

**SPOKEN WORD LOVERS** The Community Open Reading series is back at the Fools Court, 234 Hyde, above the Faithful Fools Copy Shop. Scheduled for the second Saturday of each month, the readings are by locals — Thomas Carney, Kat, JJ Rush, Marsha Campbell, Richard Hack, Ra Mu Aki and Rennon among 'em — and others from beyond the TL, including playwright, poet and performing artist Charles Curtis Blackwell, who's been published internationally. Anyone,



**Ra Mu Aki** reading at the Fools Court.

pros to wannabes, can get up there to share, says a flyer, any "mode of presentation," of any written genre. Readings begin at 4 p.m. and go til — "well, til they end," said artist and photographer Keith Walker, who organizes the salon with Ra Mu Aki. The next couple of sessions, which draw 20 to 30 people, are Dec. 11 and Jan. 8. Information: 474-0508.

**TL AND SoMa AGENCIES** Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice has grants available for neighborhood organizations working to improve residents' safety or quality of life. The grants — up to \$2,500 per agency — come from Community Court fees. Proposals are due Nov. 23 at 5 p.m. Info: 554-6515 or [http://www.sfgov.org/site/mocj\\_page.asp?id=28095](http://www.sfgov.org/site/mocj_page.asp?id=28095).

**PEOPLE WHO LOVE THE 'HOOD** If you're crazy about San Francisco and know your neighborhood, consider being a volunteer greeter. Liz Smith, who worked for a successful city-backed greeter program in New York City, is signing up knowledgeable locals to talk to tourists who want to meet a real person and hear about the real San Francisco. Really. Smith has enlisted 17 downtown hotels to do outreach — from the Commodore on Sutter to the Bijou on Mason and the Phoenix on Eddy. They supply tourists making reservations with questionnaires about what they'd like to see and hear. Many are curious about neighborhoods. Smith's "Joie de Vivre" program matches a volunteer once or twice a month with a single tourist, a couple or family — no groups — for a free two- to four-hour informal orientation. Travel is by foot or Muni. No tipping allowed. Smith, who gets paid by the hotels, said she now has 25 volunteers who held 18 walking tours in the first couple of weeks. For info, contact Smith at 923-6800 or [esmith@jdvhospitality.com](mailto:esmith@jdvhospitality.com).

**PEDESTRIANS** The Community Leadership Alliance spent a year lobbying the Dept. of Parking and Traffic and the mayor's office to get metered and audible crossing signals installed at the corners of Jones and Turk and Jones and Eddy. Neither intersection was slated to get the signals in DPT's final TL Pedestrian Safety Plan, said Community Leadership Alliance Director David Villa-Lobos. Persistence paid off: The metered signals now are doing their countdown dance — you get 12 seconds to cross — and the audible signals will be installed sometime next year.

— MARJORIE BEGGS AND TOM CARTER

*This column needs regular infusions. If you have some good news (no events, please), send it to [marjorie@studycenter.org](mailto:marjorie@studycenter.org).*

## Self-help program serving 700 moves to big new digs

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

CINDY Gyori, the energetic executive director of Hyde Street Community Services, conceded that things were a little chaotic.

Thirteen days before making a presentation at the October Tenderloin Futures Collaborative meeting, she had officially opened the agency's new digs at 134 Golden Gate.

"We're still moving things out (of 251 Hyde)," she said, "but we are operational at Golden Gate — just not quite fully."

The new space is huge, 17,000 square feet, on two floors. Downstairs is the S.F. Community Clubhouse, a wellness and recovery day program that offers mental health clients peer-support, prevocational services, socialization and recreation. On the second floor, clinicians provide case management, outreach, assessment, individual and group therapy, and urgent care.

"Our goal," Gyori said, "is to help clients help themselves, so our programs are run by staff and consumers together."

Hyde Street incorporated as a nonprofit last year after 29 years as a program of other organizations, the most recent the Bayview Hunters Point Foundation. Financed through a \$2.5 million DPH contract, Hyde Street's staff of 26 serves 700 people a year.

Who are your clients and how do they find out about Hyde Street? Gyori was asked.

The agency serves adults 18 to 60. "The referral process," she said, "is that anyone can call the 24-hour Access helpline, 255-3737. The caller explains 'the issues,' and then is screened and those without insurance are referred (to us and others)."

The clinic doesn't dispense meds, Gyori said, but staff psychiatrists and nurse practitioners can write 'scripts.

Ed Evans, a member of the Mayor's Disability Council, noted that getting the mentally ill to take their meds can be a problem.

"We believe that the best way to treat people is a collaboration between clinician and consumer," Gyori responded. "I don't want my staff to be parole officers for meds."

Peer support, like what Hyde Street offers through the Clubhouse, can help to encourage responsibility, she added. "Then we make other services available as people need it — we treat them with respect."

Now that you're no longer on Hyde, will you change your name? Gyori was asked.

"No," she said. "We'll still be Hyde Street Services — we'll just be on Golden Gate."

That's almost back to where she started in 1975 as a paraprofessional with the fledgling clinic. (She's now an LCSW.)

"We were the Tenderloin Clinic then," Gyori said, "in a storefront at the YMCA, at 200 Golden Gate."

### HIV/AIDS GROUP EXPANDS

What began as a one-year project to assess the breadth of HIV/AIDS services in the Tenderloin is expanding to an evaluation of the neighborhood's health services in general, Tracy Brown of TARC (Tenderloin AIDS Resource Center) told the Collaborative.

The Tenderloin Collaborative Workgroup was the moniker given to

more than two dozen health providers' efforts to collect HIV/AIDS services information and share strategies. Their work culminated in a 50-page report, published online in March.

"We're still meeting — the third Wednesday of the month — but we're broadening our discussions to track services, accessibility, duplication and gaps for all health care here in the Tenderloin," explained Brown, who facilitates the group's meetings. He promised to keep TFC apprised of the group's progress. [See sidebar.]

### NEW THEATER ON TURK

John Wilkins and his Last Planet Theatre company had spent five years treading the boards all over the Bay Area when he happened on a 3,800-square-foot dream: the old ballroom of the Oasis Apts., 351 Turk, for lease and affordable. He snapped it up.

Wilkins told Collaborative members a little about the eight-person company, which was just completing the run of its first show at the new site — Wallace Shawn's "The Designated Mourner." And he was glowing from a Guardian review by Robert Avila: "The company remains as brazen as ever . . . with a giddy exuberance all its own . . . [A] sharply executed, thoroughly inebriated production."

The new house, which seats 65 and can hold up to 110, has a 40-foot-deep, 23-foot-wide stage, good-sized for a small theater, Wilkins said. Beneath the boards, he found old Kliegel pop-up stage lights. He's not using them but left them in place, charming relics of the days when live bands played for dancers in the ballroom.

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## \$19.2 million from city for AIDS

The Extra caught up with TARC's Tracy Brown to find out a little more about the Tenderloin Collaborative Workgroup's report.

There was no lead agency and no grant to do the work, Brown explained. The project started when several providers approached Dr. Sandra Hernández, executive director of San Francisco Foundation, about the lack of good service stats and the need to coordinate services.

"The foundation's Community Health Program sponsored the convening and facilitation of experts working with neighborhood people," Brown said.

The Extra asked Brown why he had presented the report half a year after it was published.

"It wasn't so much a final report," he explained, "but an internal tool for participating providers, to put in writing what many of them already knew, perhaps for more organizing."

An estimated 2,000 to 2,500 Tenderloin residents are living with HIV or AIDS, the report says. Of these, 500 to 1,000 are homeless or marginally housed, and 1,300 to 1,500 also are mentally ill and have a substance addiction. Another 1,200 people in the Tenderloin

have HIV but don't know it.

The city's AIDS Office gives TL agencies \$16.8 million for care and treatment and \$2.4 million for HIV prevention, but some of that funding is used to serve people who live outside the neighborhood, the report states. The full cost of funding TL programs is unknown, the report concedes, because it did not collect information on privately supported services.

The work group undertook an ambitious mapping project to determine where the providers are located and what services they offer — both generally and as a primary service. For example, 10 agencies reported that they provide HIV antibody testing and counseling, but only three — API Wellness Center, Larkin Street Services and TARC — offer it as a primary service.

Of the 28 agencies that responded to the survey, about a third were outside the neighborhood, but, like Meals on Wheels or S.F. General Hospital's Ward 86, they serve all city residents.

For the Workgroup report, go to <http://tarc.org>. Click on Resources, scroll down to HIV Prevention Plans and click on Final Report. ■

— MARJORIE BEGGS



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