

GOOD NEWS for...

NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS Sign up for a free eight-week, after-school ceramics course at Boeddeker Park and turn fantasies into art, starting in October. Ceramics instructor Ilana Crispi, who taught 6- to 13-year-olds in the park's first series ending Aug. 2, has limited the class to 10. "The kids have less inhibitions than adults," Crispi said. They learn about clay and ceramic firing in a 3-foot-high kiln. "It's not just about pottery," she says. Each creates a storybook while simultaneously working with clay, sculpting characters and drawing on flat pieces or cups or bowls. Then they present the finished story to the group. "Half lion, half tiger, half amazing," Crispi called one project. The classes are funded by the city Arts Commission. An earlier kids' video project also funded by a commission grant didn't get off the ground at Boeddeker. The format called for kids to interview oldtimers for their life stories and no seniors stepped forward to be interviewed. Information: Marina Shterenberg at Star Mountain Art, 235-9644.

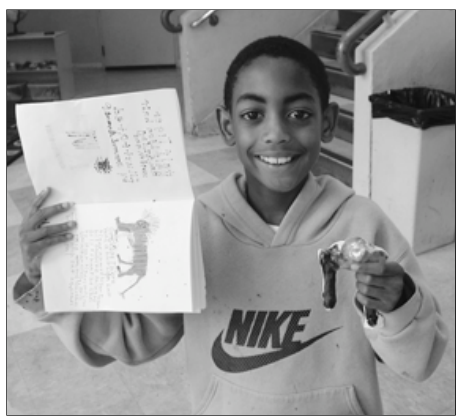


PHOTO BY STAR MOUNTAIN ART

Amani Grant-P from the Christian Academy shows the storybook he made and the ceramic sculpture to illustrate.

YOUR HEALTH The 12th annual Tenderloin Community Health and Safety Fair's list of free services doesn't disappoint: blood pressure checks; dental screenings for kids; hepatitis B screenings; Head Start sign-up; information on Medi-Cal, food stamps, tenants' rights, breast health, becoming an organ donor and emergency preparedness; massages from Care Through Touch; senior Bingo; children's games; art station and mandala-making project for all ages; raffle; bag lunch for the first 500 participants. "We also may have acupuncture," said fair Chair Andrea Jorgensen, "and California Pacific Medical Center will be giving flu shots if they're available by that date." More than 50 health and safety service providers — speaking seven languages, with interpreters available — will be at the event, Saturday, Sept. 29, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Tenderloin Community Playground, 570 Ellis. The popular fair last year drew 600 people and involved 100 volunteers, Jorgensen said. Fair sponsors are St. Francis Memorial Hospital, S.F. Hilton, Chinese Community Health Plan, S.F. Chamber of Commerce, S.F. Health Plan, Safety Network and Starbucks Coffee. Information: 474-0508 or andj001@sbcglobal.net.

If you have some good news, send it to marjorie@studycenter.org or tom@studycenter.org.

Leery of Boeddeker makeover

Chilly reception for park redesign that Trust for Public Land set up

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

IT has pretty colors and a thoughtful layout, but the proposed makeover for Boeddeker Park, unveiled in June at a Friends of Boeddeker Park meeting and vetted in The Extra in July, came in for some serious community criticism.

Friends Chair Betty Traynor was on hand for an Aug. 8 presentation before the Tenderloin Futures Collaborative along with Jacob Gilchrist, a manager of Trust for Public Land's Parks for People project who's coordinating the pro bono park design.

"Parks for People is looking at having Boeddeker be one of its projects," Traynor said. "The Trust met with the Friends, did a walk-through and created a model — it's a new vision for the park but it's just a proposed design for now."

Gilchrist passed out copies of a rendering of the design, describing the proposed renovation as "a big challenge," and went on to list some of the park's current problems, at least as the architects saw them: "When you're actually in the park, you can't see all areas of it, plus it has triangular spaces that aren't used well. Also, the closed gate on Ellis makes it feel significantly less safe, since you can't get out."

Ten Trust designers and another 15 volunteers from local architectural firms have contributed \$25,000 in pro bono services to get the plan this far, Gilchrist said. The cost to actually implement the design is unknown, he added, and he didn't clarify Parks for People's role in implementing the makeover, if the Friends and residents decide to go with this plan.

"Well... I'd like to know: What is the impetus for all this?" asked resident David Baker. "Is it just change for change's sake? Does it include concern for any of the people who live in the neighborhood? Does it exclude some people? Is it simply for beautification?"

Traynor attempted an answer: "Originally, the idea was to renovate the play area. But reducing the fencing was also a consideration."

The spiked 6-foot fence around most of the park gets replaced in the design plan by a fence that separates the basketball court from a playground west of the circular lawn and from a wide flight of stairs to the sidewalk.

"Without fences, the park will wind up being used by all those people who now are lined up outside," said resident Ed Evans, former member of the Mayor's Disability Council. But he conceded that the park needs to change. "Mercy Housing planned a picnic in the park — it was a tough sell, even with protections in place."

Other criticisms came from Steve Conley, TL Community Benefit District board member and executive committee member of Alliance for a Better District 6.

"I echo the issue of whether this is safer than what we have now," he said. "Also, do we really need the basketball court? The current one isn't that functional. And do we need a better place to



Artist's rendering of the pro bono redesign plan for Boeddeker Park.

play cards? The placement of the green lawn seems misplaced. This plan also closes off the view of the park from the police station — shouldn't the open area of the park be visible to the police?"

Collaborative meetings have shrunk from 90 minutes to an hour, and the 10 minutes allotted to the Boeddeker presentation were up before Traynor or Gilchrist could respond. As usual, the Rev. Glenda Hope, Collaborative chair, asked for a show of hands for continuing the discussion. The nays carried.

The next afternoon, at the regular Boeddeker Friends' meeting, park renovation again was on the agenda. Resident David Villalobos said seniors he'd talked to about the plan felt "blind-sided" by the designers, who hadn't consulted them. "They'd never dreamed of a complete redesign — they were 100% opposed."

Traynor said that the architects were, in fact, proposing a more elaborate design than she had expected. "I thought it would be just the play area," she said, "but they saw a bigger vision — it doesn't have the (current) closed-

in feeling and the nooks and crannies."

Reached a few weeks later, Traynor said next steps are to continue to present the plan to neighborhood groups like the Alliance for a Better District 6 and the benefit district as well as to SRO tenants and tenant associations.

"We're also going to do a short survey for adult users of the park," she said. "We'll ask them to respond to the design plan and also ask what they'd like to see in the park."

And down the line there'd be a meeting with Rec and Park's capital division to see how they view the project. "We'd need to see where we are on their list of parks scheduled for renovations — maybe we'd be part of their next bond issue." Rec and Park is proposing a \$185 million general obligation bond for the February 2008 ballot.

Even with Rec and Park money, the Friends still would have to raise private funds to renovate Boeddeker Park according to Trust for Public Land's plan, Traynor said. ■



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