

NeighborhoodVoice

FROM NEIGHBORHOOD EMPOWERMENT NETWORK MEMBERS AND THE CITY STAR



The City Star is a proud partner of the Neighborhood Empowerment Network (NEN), a coalition of city agencies, nonprofits and community organizations that are sharing new ideas and best practices to make San Francisco a cleaner, greener, safer place to live. To learn more about the NEN, visit www.empowersf.org. This column will appear every Monday.

Getting Citizens Back on Their Feet

One group is cleaning up S.F. while giving locals a chance for success

By Gia Grant

Special Guest Columnist

Since 1991, the nonprofit San Francisco Clean City Coalition, better known as Clean City, has been developing innovative programs to support San Francisco's efforts to improve and maintain the urban environment.

Clean City's mission focuses on cleaning, greening and beautifying the city of San Francisco. Equally important to the organization, however, is creating employment and training opportunities for residents.

Clean City Partnership, the largest program of the agency, provides transitional employment opportunities for the homeless and very low-income through activities like street sweeping, graffiti removal and neighborhood greening.

The men and women enrolled in the program are referred through drug and alcohol treatment programs, social service agencies, shelter case managers and the criminal justice system.

While being paid an hourly wage to work on community improvement projects, program

participants receive job readiness support from employment counselors, which ranges from resume writing to computer training.

The ultimate goal of Clean City Partnership is to assist people in finding unsubsidized employment. Over the past three years, nearly 90 percent of those who have completed the four-month program have succeeded in finding employment with an average starting wage of approximately \$12 per hour.

Clean City understands it's not simple to get from the street back into stable employment. Once a participant finds employment, the Clean City Partnership program continues to provide a minimum 12 months of retention and support services. Since

2003, approximately 70 percent of people graduating from the Clean City Partnership program have retained employment for more than a year.

Through engaging and employing people in community improvement activities, Clean City is able to produce tangible results that have a lasting effect. During 2007, Clean City removed more than 20,000 bags of litter from sidewalks in the Tenderloin and SoMa neighborhoods and removed nearly 4,000 graffiti tags citywide. Also, Clean City participated

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COURTESY PHOTO

The San Francisco Clean City Coalition helps clean up graffiti as part of its efforts to improve the city.

in the collection of more than 400 tons of material for recycling and reuse throughout San Francisco.

Over the past five years, Clean City has also created several nonprofit businesses — called social enterprises — under the name Clean City Services. By operating enterprises, Clean City is able to further its mission to create more ongoing employment opportunities and generate revenue for the organization.

Clean City's social enterprises

include sidewalk sweeping, power washing, steam cleaning, graffiti abatement and special event recycling. All of these services are offered on a fee basis. Current customers include the North of Market/Tenderloin Community Benefit District (CBD) and the city and county of San Francisco.

According to Elaine Zamora, CBD district manager, "The North of Market Community Benefit District contracts with S.F. Clean City because of their professional results and com-

mitment to employing people from the neighborhood. This provides for the development and retention of neighborhood people in a healthy environment."

Maintaining and improving San Francisco's public spaces is an ongoing challenge faced by every neighborhood. Creating employment opportunities for San Francisco residents in need has long-term economic and social benefits. Supporting both of these objectives will make a lasting difference in the city.

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Who are they?

Name of Organization: San Francisco Clean City Coalition (Clean City).

Web Site Address: www.sfcleancity.com.

E-mail Address: info@sfcleancity.com.

Phone Number: 552-9201, ext. 11.

One-Sentence Mission: Clean City was established to focus on cleaning, greening and beautifying the city of San Francisco.

Next Big Event: 26th & Bartlett Planting: Free Electronic Waste Recycling Event. Drop off computers and televisions free of charge to be responsibly recycled. For more information see sfcleancity.com or call 552-9201, ext. 15.

Date: From 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Jan. 5.

Location: Ocean Beach Parking Lot (Great Highway at Fulton).