at the intersection of hope and innovation

ST. ANTHONY’S AND THE FUTURE OF THE MID-MARKET DISTRICT

Born in San Francisco’s Mid-Market district, St. Anthony’s has long been a refuge of hope and an agent of change in San Francisco. Over one hundred years ago, Franciscans began passing out food to people whose lives were left in ruins after the 1906 earthquake. Today, St. Anthony’s begins construction on a New Dining Room for a new century, keenly aware of the critical role the new building will play in a rapidly changing world.

The recent boom of the burgeoning Mid-Market district, often dismissed as an eyesore, has placed St. Anthony’s at the epicenter of San Francisco’s next gold rush. Seniors, veterans, the working poor, and people struggling with physical disability or with mental health issues who turn to St. Anthony’s for a meal and safe place to land will now join a flood of software engineers, venture capitalists, and up and coming artists looking to stake a claim in the neighborhood. He shared his optimism for what he perceived as a world of new opportunities while also expressing his fears of being left out of the rising tide of prosperity.

For St. Anthony’s, the critical issue is how to embrace future innovation while honoring the past. When many San Franciscans were struggling in a post World War II economy in 1950, Fr. Alfred Masters in Business Administration, how do people who have lived in the Tenderloin for decades make a meal and safe place to land will now join a flood of software engineers, venture capitalists, and up and coming artists looking to stake a claim in the neighborhood. He shared his optimism for what he perceived as a world of new opportunities while also expressing his fears of being left out of the rising tide of prosperity. Theirs is a neighborhood poised for explosive growth. Key mid-Market developers KOR Realty Group and ZenDesk, the nonprofit organizations Community Housing Partnership, Burning Man, LLC, and American Conservatory Theater, a writer for Forbes, and a representative of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development shared their views with an equally diverse audience, including Tenderloin residents.

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Alexander Samek of KOR and Mikkel Svane of ZenDesk expressed openness to hiring residents to positions in their new offices, but would need help on what steps to take. The San Francisco Business Times’ Mary Huss asked how companies will use the payroll tax breaks they receive. “How will they know they are putting back enough into the neighborhood?”

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St. Anthony’s Executive Director, Barry Stenger, urged an integrated model of development. “We want to avoid the zero-sum battle that pits the folks all in favor of encouraging new business but callous to the concerns of current residents against those in favor of affordable housing but resistant to those who would gentrify the neighborhood.”

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St. Anthony Medical Director, Dr. Ana Valdes, underscores the importance of supportive wellness activities on prevention and community health: "All of our efforts began with a focus on our patients. In time, we realized that if we really want to have a positive impact on the health of our patients, we really need to look beyond them to our community. Patients don't make decisions about their health in a vacuum. The first thing they do is consult a family member or friend. If we wanted to really make a difference we had to widen our view. So now we take a 'community approach'. We not only engage our patients but also encourage them to bring family members, friends, and neighbors to wellness classes or activities." For patients like John, healthy activities at SAMC not only improve his diabetes, they provide community and an opportunity to give back.

Chronic disease treatment and management requires a holistic approach. St. Anthony Medical Clinic uses patient education, therapeutic counseling sessions, nutrition coaching, and group exercise classes to address all aspects of disease management. A multi-pronged approach vastly increases the chances that that patient will become an engaged, active participant in their own health. Since depression is strongly correlated with the onset and diagnosis of a chronic condition, "by helping address the mental health consequences that come from living with chronic disease, patients improve their self-care and in this way further reduce emergency room visits," notes Clinic therapist Nikku Dhesi, who works with patients individually and in groups.

Clinic patient John Frank has been coming to the Clinic for many years for his diabetes. Having been a track coach and an active sports enthusiast for most of his life, John was understandably depressed by his diagnosis and his weakening health. After some encouragement and work with Clinic therapists, John got reconnected to exercise, first with the Walking Group and later with Dexter Louis’s Fitness 101 class. This experience reminded him of the things he had always enjoyed about sports, the understanding that "we are more limited by our beliefs than by our abilities." John decided he wanted to give something back and recently made a donation of medicine balls for use in Fitness 101. As John used to tell his track team, "God has given you the talent but not necessarily the means." Knowing that he can help provide the means and positively impact people’s lives in this way is empowering and gratifying, for John, that is what athletics is all about, helping people discover what they are capable of.

There has been significant public discussion recently on the role of neighborhoods on health. The HBO documentary Weight of the Nation demonstrated clearly that ‘where’ we live determines in large part ‘how’ we live, not to mention ‘how well’ we live. Put simply: ‘wealth = health.’ That assessment does not bode well for the health of impoverished neighborhoods like the Tenderloin, where poverty and its attendant health disparities weigh heavily on the community: 61% of the neighborhood’s population live below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, 3 out of 4 children live below 100% of the FPL, and it has the highest rates of preventable Emergency Room visits in the city. Chronic disease is costly, disproportionately affects the poor, and yet it is largely preventable.

St. Anthony Medical Clinic (SAMC) places prevention and chronic care management at the center of patient care. The patients who make St. Anthony’s their medical home represent the poorest segment of an already challenged community. Among the top ten causes of preventable ER visits are conditions seen every day at SAMC: asthma, COPD, diabetes, pneumonia, and their precursors: overweight, obesity and hypertension. “A majority of the most-costly health conditions are preventable,” asserts a 2007 study prepared by The Prevention Institute and The California Endowment with The Urban Institute entitled, ‘Reducing Health Care Costs through Prevention.’ By educating patients in chronic disease self-management, St. Anthony’s clinic is helping to reduce the number of preventable ER visits impacting the city’s resources.

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a holistic approach to health
COMMUNITY COMES FIRST AT ST. ANTHONY MEDICAL CLINIC
staying clean means staying connected at Fr. Alfred Center

ST. ANTHONY’S DRUG AND ALCOHOL RECOVERY PROGRAM

“Keep coming back.”
“Stay connected.”
“You need us and we need you.”

Encouragement and advice like this is offered during graduation ceremonies at the Father Alfred Center. St. Anthony’s year-long drug and alcohol recovery program for men. Upon graduation, a resident has achieved a year of sobriety and a readiness to live and work outside of the community of support found in the house.

As many of the alumni who regularly attend graduation will tell you, staying in touch with Father Alfred Center staff and current residents is often an essential ingredient of a successful recovery after graduation.

Eric Booker graduated from the Father Alfred Center in October of 2011. “I feel in order to stay clean, I need to stay connected to the program,” Eric says. He attends graduation every month, and goes back to the house three times a week, every Monday night to lead a process group of five residents and twice more to meet with his two sponsors. His work with his sponsors and other residents entails listening to their stories and struggles with the recovery process and sharing his own. “I just tell them what my experiences have been like,” he said.

Battling addiction and the difficult process of recovery are things Eric knows well. He began using drugs at the age of fifteen in his home state of Texas. It would take him twenty years to achieve the sobriety he knows today. Over those years he had run-ins with the law and experienced homelessness, at one point spending three years on the streets of San Francisco. One day when he was leaving St. Anthony’s Dining Room after coming for a meal, a Dining Room staff member told him about the Father Alfred Center. “I just knew I had to do something different,” Eric said of his decision to enter a recovery program.

It’s a fact of the recovery process that people relapse, and often achieving lasting sobriety takes multiple attempts. At the Father Alfred Center, counselors and staff encourage former residents who have relapsed to re-enter the program and start the process over again, knowing that success is always possible the next time. For Eric, graduation and completion of a year in the program came after entering the program for his fourth time. He credits program staff, who knew him well and believed in him, with providing the motivation to return and succeed. “I ran into one of the counselors (after leaving the program), and he said ‘come on back, come on back.’”

Today, three years sober, Eric works as the manager of the St. Francis Living Room, a day program a few blocks away from St. Anthony’s, where low-income seniors receive a free meal and a safe, comfortable place to sit, play games, and enjoy the company of others.

Eric’s path to continued success is built on a commitment one day at a time to staying connected to a recovery community and to helping others. Going back to drugs just doesn’t fit into his life anymore. “I would have to tell my sponsors that they need to find a new sponsor ‘cause I had gone back out,” Eric said. “I don’t see myself doing that.”

ANNOUNCING ST. ANTHONY’S NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BARRY J. STENER

In St. Anthony’s 63 year history of serving the poor in San Francisco, Barry is the seventh Executive Director.
Below is an interview with Barry J. Stenger (BJS) and Suzanne R. Swift (SBS), Chair of the Board of Directors.

WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE ST. ANTHONY’S BY 2020?

BJS: I would like to see St. Anthony’s as a sustainable organization that has the resources to respond to the needs of the poor in a way that maintains our tradition of dignity and respect for all people.

SBS: I would like to see us putting ourselves out of business. We can do this by addressing systemic issues of poverty and connecting those issues to the services we provide to the poor. As the new Executive Director, I invite people out there in the community who share this vision to get involved.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ST. ANTHONY’S SHOULD POSSESS?

BJS: The Executive Director should have a keen feeling for the Franciscan spirit and an understanding. In these challenging economic times, we face the need for increased funding while more people come to us for services. In order to be successful, the Executive Director must gain respect from a diversity of cultural, political, and economic communities in the Bay Area, and be able to tell our story to those who want to help us fulfill our mission.

WHEN DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT ST. ANTHONY’S?

BJS: I first heard about St. Anthony’s from our founder, Fr. Alfred Boedeker. Every year around Christmas I would see him talking about St. Anthony’s on those one-minute television spots. My links to this community go back even further: my grandfather went to elementary school at St. Boniface in the late 1800’s. I volunteered at St. Anthony’s as an undergraduate student at USF in the early 70’s. A few years later as a seminary student at the Franciscan School of Theology, I was part of a brush and somewhat self-righteous group of friars who in the name of social justice and systemic change challenged Fr. Alfred’s commitment to charity. It’s hard to believe that nearly 40 years later, I am walking in his shoes as the new Executive Director.

WHAT IS ONE THING YOU THINK PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT BARRY?

BJS: You would be surprised to know how long Barry has been a part of St. Anthony’s. Because of this, he cares deeply about the people we serve. I think he is uniquely suited for this role because of his history with the Franciscans as well as his academic achievements. Barry holds a Doctorate from the University of Chicago, taught ethics at the Graduate Theological Union, and has 14 years of experience in fundraising, including six years as the Executive Director for Franciscan Charities and eight years as Development Director at St. Anthony Foundation.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING ST. ANTHONY’S?

BJS: Having the capacity and resources to help us meet the needs of our community. Even though we want to be out of business, it’s hard to imagine that will happen anytime soon. Until it does, our challenge is to keep the Franciscan spirit alive and well. We hold the responsibility of channeling San Francisco’s generosity to ensure we meet the basic needs of our most vulnerable citizens.

SBS: St. Anthony’s is a venerable organization that has been at the heart of St. Anthony’s, passed away February 26, 2013. Michael not only served as a Board Chair for nearly 9 years, but was also a staunch advocate for the poor in San Francisco, as well as a leader in the broader Catholic community. Michael’s devotion and gifts caring for others touched the lives of many people at St. Anthony’s and the larger recovery community. His love and concern knew no bounds.
Two years ago, St. Anthony’s announced the launch of the Campaign for a New Dining Room. Their goal was to serve more people more efficiently in a new building that would stand up to the challenges of the 21st century. Today, the ground is clear, the foundation is about to be poured, and we are on track to open the doors in the fall of 2014. This January, St. Anthony’s marked the groundbreaking for the new building at 121 Golden Gate Avenue, the site of our original Dining Room.

The campaign to complete the building is in the final stages. We have just $2.5 million left to raise on the $22.5 million project. We plan to complete the campaign by June 13th, the Feast of St. Anthony of Padua for whom St. Anthony’s is named. With only 10 percent of the campaign goal to raise, we are inviting our supporters one last time to be part of San Francisco history by participating in this once-in-a-hundred-years opportunity to build a New St. Anthony’s Dining Room.

The Frances K. and Charles D. Field Foundation has stepped forward with another matching challenge of $100,000. Once again, this grant will double the impact of any gift to the campaign. Your gift will have a lasting effect on low-income people in San Francisco for many decades to come.

Our goal was to serve more people with legislation around hunger. St. Anthony’s is a green organization. As much as possible, we buy supplies made from reused materials and we recycle what we have used. Much of our food is recycled before it comes to us, from the Food Bank, from food companies, and from people’s canned goods supplies at home. We compost what is left. But recently, a long-time volunteer in St. Anthony’s Dining Room gave new meaning to the term “reuse.”

Sister Agnes noticed the quantity of eggs St. Anthony’s uses and found a way to stretch the usefulness of these donated eggs beyond their life as food. Meticulously cutting dune-sized holes into the bottom of the eggs, she extracted the yolks and whites for our guests’ meals and gently packed the empty shells back into their cartons. She then sent them off to a group of schoolchildren for their next life. A few weeks later, her generosity hatched: four beautifully decorated shells filled with confetti. Those were samples from ones that the children had sold at a fundraiser for the school. They instructed supporters to crack the delicate shells on their heads to be showered with confetti in celebration of their donation.

The thoughtfulness, the sense of community, and the joy embodied in Sr. Agnes’ gift to these children remind us that even an egg shell destined for a compost bin can be reborn into a donation that lives as many lives as it changes.

On May 22nd, a group of St. Anthony’s staff, guests, volunteers and supporters will climb onto a bus in the early morning hours and drive to Sacramento to fight hunger. Participants in Hunger Action Day, an annual lobby day at the State Capitol, join in a rally, share stories from their respective communities and meet with legislators to advocate for policy that will diminish hunger and food insecurity. St. Anthony’s offers guests the opportunity to participate in Hunger Action Day and speak with legislators about how they are personally affected by legislation around hunger. Last year, Morris, a resident of the Father Alfred Center, spoke to an aide of State Assemblyman Tom Ammiano about the importance of AB 828, a bill that would end the current ineligibility of those with a drug-related felony conviction to receive food stamps. As someone who lives with the challenges of the recovery process each day, Morris understands that access to adequate and nutritious food is a necessary component of sobriety. “I want to re-enter society doing the right thing,” Morris said. “This is one stumbling block that will definitely slow me down.”

Peggy, a guest of St. Anthony’s Dining Room and Social Work Center, attended Hunger Action Day with her husband Michael. Both are Tenderloin residents who make use of community meal programs like St. Anthony’s and Glide. Peggy participated in Hunger Action Day because of her belief that access to food is a basic human right. “Everybody deserves to eat,” Peggy said. “Why would you deny someone what they need to be healthy?”

St. Anthony’s is honored to work with many companies, helping their employees “give back” through meaningful team-building volunteer opportunities. Companies, large and small, from all over from the Bay Area, including the emerging Mid-Market district, bring their employees to St. Anthony’s to volunteer. “They prep and serve food in the Dining Room, sort clothes in the Free Clothing Program, assemble hygiene kits for the Social Work Center, and offer key skills-based volunteer expertise in the Medical Clinic and the Tenderloin Tech Lab.”

Following the recent recession, it became clear that corporations intend to have more holistic relationships with the organizations they support in order to maximize the value of both their contributions and the less tangible benefits they and their employees receive from doing this work.

To develop the potential of our corporate employee program, we have asked group volunteer coordinator Dolores Gould to serve as our first Manager of Corporate Relations. Dolores will find more opportunities for more corporate and business employees to experience St. Anthony’s and bring their special talents to our guests.

“Our goal is to develop long-term relationships with our corporate partners,” says Dolores. “We can be their partner of choice for significant volunteer activities, for company-led drives, and for philanthropic investments that make a real impact.” Several corporations have engaged in drives to collect needed items for St. Anthony’s guests, such as socks, scarves and toiletry items.

St. Anthony’s is delighted with this opportunity to engage more people through the companies they serve.

If your company would like to partner with St. Anthony’s, please call Dolores at 415-592-2407 or email to dgould@stanthonysf.org.

ST. ANTHONY FOUNDATION

Problems
- Dining Room
- Free Clothing Program
- Social Work Center
- Medical Clinic
- Fr. Alfred Center Residential Drug and Alcohol Rehab Program
- Tenderloin Technology Lab

Get Involved
- Volunteer
- Donate
- Advocate

Employees from online payment company Square volunteer in the Dining Room.

A gift to St. Anthony’s makes a wonderful wedding gift or birthday present. It also raises awareness with your loved ones about the work you care about so much. Check the gift boxes on your remit envelope and provide an address and we will send your loved ones a card telling them you’ve made a gift in their honor. Donations can also be made online at www.stanthonysf.org.

A final call to help build the new St. Anthony’s Dining Room

IT HAPPENS ONLY EVERY HUNDRED YEARS

Partnering with corporate employees

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