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## Home Sweet Home

### CAAP Benefits Program houses nearly 250 homeless in its first months

“It came as a shock,” said Lorenzo Cardenas from his new SRO apartment at the Graystone Hotel on Geary Street. “I was staying at the St. Boniface shelter, and I went to see my GA worker. He said ‘I’ve got good news for you—you’re getting a room.’ I didn’t even know I was on a list. I moved in on May 14th.”

Cardenas had been homeless for several years and was unaware that the new CAAP Benefits Program, known as CBP, meant that he would have a room in a city-leased SRO hotel as soon as one came available. To his surprise, he became one of 245 homeless San Franciscans to be housed in the program’s first few months. “I have a degree in automotive and diesel technology,” he said, “but when I was in the shelter I couldn’t buy any tools because they’d be stolen. I’m starting to slowly but surely get a tool kit built up now. This apartment is going to help me a lot. I’m happy with it, and I’m hopeful. I see a light.”

The Graystone is one of four SRO hotels that the Department of Human Services has brought online since the CBP program started in May. These hotels, located primarily in the Tenderloin and Mission districts, represent nearly 500 new units to date and have enabled DHS

to offer permanent housing to one-third of the people who entered the CBP program during that time. They are leased by DHS from the building owners through nonprofit agencies which are responsible for providing property management and on-site support services. These hotels bring to more than 1,300 the number of supportive housing units DHS has brought online through its SRO housing program.

“We put out a request in September 2003 for building owners who were interested in participating,” said Scott Walton, Supportive Housing Program Manager for DHS. “About a dozen came forward at that time, and with the positive publicity, we’ve heard from more own-



Amy Layne

Lorenzo Cardenas relaxes in his new home at the Graystone Hotel.

I extend a warm welcome to the staff and community partners of the Department of Aging and Adult Services to the City and County of San Francisco Human Services Agency. As the article at right describes, HSA is the newly established umbrella agency for the Department of Human Services and Department of Aging and Adult Services. A partnership of our two departments seems like a natural fit, and we're going to do some exciting work to build an integrated system of long-term care for aging and disabled persons. This consolidation will also produce administrative savings to help us preserve services



Trent Rhorer

As part of a related citywide effort to improve performance and efficiency, HSA and other city departments have engaged in the rollout of SFStat. It's an executive information system implemented by Mayor Newsom, modeled on Baltimore's highly successful CitiStat program, to track and assess outcomes in a variety of personnel and programmatic areas. We look forward to the further development of this government accountability process to increase coordination between city departments, identify issues and trends, and determine strategies to improve performance.

I'm pleased to announce that, for the third year in a row, DHS was named the top government fundraising team for the annual AIDS Walk. The DHS team raised over \$11,000 for the benefit of Bay Area AIDS Service organizations. Given how hard my staff is working every day to achieve more with less, I'm especially proud of this accomplishment. Congratulations—and thank you.

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# Merger Preserves Services

## DHS and DAAS join forces and cut costs

The Department of Human Services and the Department of Aging and Adult Services were organized under the umbrella of a single Human Services Agency (HSA) on July 1, 2004. It's an organizational change designed to preserve crucial social services and minimize layoffs while saving the City of San Francisco approximately \$700,000 per year.

Program staff of HSA-DHS and HSA-DAAS retain their independence and separate operations, while administrative support services such as finance, budget, accounting, personnel, information technology and contract administration have merged. The commissions of the two departments also remain separate, in particular to assure that the needs of the aging and adult disabled communities are not overlooked. While some staff members have moved, most will stay in their current offices.

"Clearly this change is going to result in cost savings while keeping services in place," said Phil Arnold, Director of Finance and Planning, and the Chair of the committee formed to integrate the two departments. "There is a great deal of overlap between the kinds of services that DHS and DAAS provide, and I think that there's going to be an opportunity now for DAAS clients to access a broader range of services than they have before by virtue of this merger. DHS also has a very good track record of leveraging outside funding to maintain services, and we think we can help DAAS with that as well."

DAAS is already familiar with mergers—four years ago the departments of Public Administrator, Public Guardian, Public Conservator, the Representative Payee Program, the Commission on the Aging, and the County Veterans Service Office were combined to create DAAS. In the last two years, Adult Protective Services and the Senior Escort Program were absorbed by DAAS as well. "The intent with these mergers was to provide a more coordinated effort to serve seniors and adults with disabilities," said Darrick Lam, DAAS's Executive Director. "I think it's important that issues pertaining to the aging and persons with disabilities continue to be on the front burner, and hopefully the DHS and DAAS merger will allow that to continue."

Shireen McSpadden, HSA-DAAS Deputy Director of Programs, sees benefits for her department in the merger. "I can't stress enough how much we'll benefit," she said. "We're going to get so much more support in terms of back office functions such as accounting, information technology and support services. It's been a real frustration because we haven't had that. DHS has a great infrastructure. The DHS staff members have just done a really amazing job in making us feel welcome and letting us know what they have in place already. Some of their staff members have taken on a huge responsibility in helping us."

McSpadden noted that it's important that each department continue to maintain its autonomy after the merger. "DAAS is a \$30 million department while DHS is a \$500 million department," she said. "Our advocates for aging adults and adults with disabilities have worried about us being swallowed up by this big infrastructure, but I think our separate commissions will keep that from happening. This can be a very positive change for us."

I can't stress  
enough how much  
we'll benefit.

Shireen McSpadden

# Home Is Where the Meal Is

## Pilot program delivers hot meals to SROs

**Without a kitchen**, it's hard to stretch a food budget. Residents of single-room occupancy hotels face this reality every day. Although some are fortunate enough to have a small refrigerator and a microwave in their rooms, most have no way to heat or store food.

Michael Gause, Case Manager at the Seneca Hotel for the Tenderloin Housing Clinic, sees the impact on his clients every day. The Seneca boasts 200 rooms; nearly 90 residents receive food stamps. "A lot of our people have to resort to soup kitchens towards the end of the month," he said. "There is a lot of cheap food available here on Sixth Street, but it's mostly donuts, hamburgers and hot dogs—it's not nutritious."

Because the Seneca Hotel is a joint project of the Department of Human Services and the Department of Public Health, it was one of the first selected to take part in a pilot program. Called SRO Meal Delivery Service, the program will provide hot meals up to five days per week to residents who are also

food stamp customers. The meals will be prepared and delivered by two San Francisco nonprofit agencies—Meals on Wheels and Western Addition Senior Citizens Service Center—at a cost of \$3.75 per meal. Residents will have the amount deducted directly from their food stamp EBT card.

"We're starting with 10 SRO hotels," said Ylonda Calloway, DHS Food Stamp Program Analyst. "None of these hotels has kitchens and the residents can't cook in their rooms. This will bring some normalcy into their lives—at least they know when they get home they'll find a hot dinner waiting for them."

The program will do more than provide needed nutrition. "These meals will help staff strengthen relationships with clients and build a bridge to other needed services," said Calloway. "Delivering food to a central place in the SRO provides staff with a great opportunity to connect with residents when they

come to pick up their meals—it's a respectful, unobtrusive way to check in on someone. When a resident doesn't pick up their dinner, it's a red flag that something may be wrong. The staff or a fellow resident has a wonderful reason to see how someone is doing. That kind of care and concern builds community."

Calloway is having free sample meals delivered to SROs for tastings to kick off the program. During her recent visit to the Seneca, she set up her table just in time for Western Addition Senior Citizens Service Center to arrive with steaming hot meals in thermal delivery packs. Residents began to inquire about the meals immediately. "There's definitely interest in the program," said Gause, "but the best recruitment will be word of mouth from the people who first sign up for regular meals. When others see that they have meals waiting for them, it's going to be better than any other outreach we can do to get the word out."

The meals provided by Western Addition Senior Citizens Service Center provide all of the calories needed for one day.

**This will bring some normalcy into their lives—at least they know when they get home they'll find a hot dinner waiting for them.**



Ylonda Calloway in the lobby of the Seneca Hotel, San Francisco.

Amy Layne

"We give them a healthy serving, so most of our customers have enough left over for a snack as well," said Frederick Hubbard, the Center's Executive Director. "I do believe that if they ate just one of our meals a day they'd gain weight and be healthier." Hubbard describes the Center's meals as soul food—Southern-style dishes that include an entrée, green vegetables, potatoes, rice and lots of fresh fruit.

Calloway knows that many residents spend a good portion of their time waiting in line or at appointments in order to fulfill the conditions of their public aid. If they miss a meal at a soup kitchen, that meal isn't going to be waiting for them later in the day—it's lost nutrition. Home-delivered meals will make a big difference. "Most of these people are participating in programs to become self-sufficient," she said. "Our goal is for this to be another service to help them gain stability."

# Serving Up Second Chances

## Sears Fine Food and formerly homeless staff ready for work

“When I came to this country from Korea at 24 years old, my friends and I were homeless for a time,” said Man J. Kim. Today he’s a successful businessman and President of Lori’s Diner International. “When we first arrived here, my friends and I didn’t have any place to stay. We met a mother who had three teenagers and was on welfare. Here we were, four young men she had just met, but she wanted to help us. She let us stay with her for several months, even though she had so little money that she was buying her milk with food stamps. She became like my mother—I still talk to her every week. I want to always remember her and repay the kindness that she showed us to somebody else.”

Kim saw his chance after hearing DHS Executive Director Trent Rhorer speak to the Union Square Association. “He made some remarks about one of the Mayor’s new initiatives,” said Kim. “I thought maybe if there were people who had been homeless who were ready and willing to work, I’d like to give them a second chance.” Lori’s Diner had recently purchased Sears Fine Food, a San Francisco landmark restaurant which was about to close due to financial trouble, and put \$1 million into its renovation for an August 16th re-opening. Kim now needed to hire up to 50 employees.

Kim spoke with Rhorer, who connected him with the One Stop Center at 3120 Mission Street. Harold Walker, Business Services Manager for the One Stop Center, initiated a city-wide recruitment to find homeless or formerly homeless individuals who could work in the restaurant. He contacted representatives at the CalWORKs and PAES programs, homeless shelters, assisted housing providers, and employment training providers. “I indicated to Mr. Kim that we would be working with people who had really good case management and permanent housing supporting them, and that he’d only be meeting with people who were qualified and ready to work,” said Walker. “Mr.

Kim was looking for hosts and hostesses, wait staff, prep cooks, line cooks, bus people and dishwashers. More than anything, I think he was looking for people who were motivated to work, regardless of their level of experience.”

Walker and his staff waded through more than 300 phone calls to hone the field down to those people who eventually were interviewed by Kim. “We started screening them from their first phone calls, when we asked them to follow simple voicemail instructions,” said Walker. “Then we met with about 180 of them in person.” This group received an orientation to job readiness and interview skills, and learned about the importance of having voicemail and email, a Social Security Card and legal identification, references, a master application, a resumé and a cover letter. They also received tips on their presentation and interview skills.

“At the third meeting, when Mr. Kim was going to be present, we had 49 people all lined up in rows of chairs,” said Walker. “We gave them a pep talk before he came, and so did Trent Rhorer. When Mr. Kim walked in, you could see he was flabbergasted by how good they looked. We were so proud of them! They were all in white shirts with black pants or skirts. You could just tell they really wanted to work. I heard Mr. Kim say to his assistant that our group looked better than those who’d responded to his newspaper ad.”

Kim hired 21 people from the group over a period of three days of interviews, filling nearly half of his positions from the One Stop Center. “Harold sent me very good people,” he said. “They were really anxious to get a job. My point of view was that they didn’t have to be the best qualified people. I just wanted to give the job to the people that really needed it, hoping that it could somehow change their lives. I was pleasantly surprised that these people really had different attitudes.” One candidate was a single mother of two children and had been in prison. Another person was a

I just wanted to give the job to the people that really needed it, hoping that it could somehow change their lives.

Man J. Kim



photos by Amy Layne

Harold Walker, Jeong Kim, Man J. Kim and Trent Rhorer celebrate the re-opening of Sears Fine Food.



Arlecia Cooper, Shelly Leonard and Maria Elena Galicia greet visitors to the ribbon-cutting ceremony at Sears Fine Food. All three found their jobs through the Career Link Center.

former drug and alcohol addict who had been clean and sober for the past three years. “A lot of them had that kind of past, but it didn’t matter to me as long as they had a will and a positive attitude to change their lives,” said Kim.

Walker and his staff received calls of thanks for days after the hiring process concluded. “I attended the Sears Fine Food employee orientation,” he said, “and everybody was coming up and saying thank you and thanks to all my workers. They were just so happy.”

Kim is hoping other Union Square businesses will follow his lead. “Union Square has many large employers like Macy’s, Saks, Neiman Marcus, and a lot of hotels,” he said. “I told them that these people from the One Stop Center are really good people to work with. I think this may change their minds. We’ve just proved that these people are good, qualified workers, and I don’t see any reason why the other big employers shouldn’t join in as well.”

## One Stop Center Reaches Out to Employers and Job Seekers

The success of the Sears Fine Food hiring experience came only one month after the One Stop Center completed a significant reorganization which changed the way it serves both job seekers and employers.

“Our objective was to provide a higher level of service with fewer staffing resources due to the budget situation,” said Jim Whelly, Deputy Director of Operations for DHS’s Workforce Development Division. “We are pleased to say we really hit the ground running. We had only been reorganized for a month, and this was our first big initiative under this effort.”

The One Stop Center has been reorganized for three reasons. “First, we want to provide a better assessment for Cal-WORKs and PAES Welfare-to-Work participants so they’ll learn more about their strengths and abilities,” said Whelly. “We also want to connect Welfare-to-Work job seekers to the San Francisco One Stop System and provide placement services for job seekers. But just as important, we want to dedicate resources to engage the business sector to partner with both the

Welfare-to-Work and One Stop systems.”

The reorganization started with phase one on July 1, when job placement specialists were moved from DHS sites into the One Stop Center. The goal was to

**We are pleased to say we really hit the ground running.**

*Jim Whelly*

mainstream Welfare-to-Work participants with the general job-seeking population, and to provide more staffing resources for the general population as well. The change also included increasing the number of job clubs available, and the development of a database to help quickly match job seekers with employers. Employers will now be assigned one account representative who will work with them directly through employee recruitment, linkages to tax credits, connection to subsidies for customized training, and more.

Phase two, beginning October 1, will focus on an expanded job readiness ap-

praisal process for Welfare-to-Work participants. Over the course of a full month, each participant will attend job readiness classes daily on topics such as job-seeking skills, interviewing and developing a resumé. Staff members will also screen for any barriers to employment such as learning disabilities or areas where participants lack needed skills. The month will culminate in the development of Welfare-to-Work employment plans tailored to each participant’s needs.

“If your objective is to provide opportunities for disadvantaged individuals by connecting them to the labor market, it’s smart public policy to also assist the business community in growing so that they provide more employment opportunities,” said Whelly. “Deserved or not, San Francisco has acquired a reputation of being unfriendly to business. This is a way for us as city workers to present a friendly and receptive face to the business community, and help our Welfare-to-Work participants find jobs at the same time. We’re linking economic needs with workforce development.”

ers since then. They seem interested even though we negotiate a per-unit price that's lower than they've been charging. That's probably because we pay for 100 percent occupancy, we're offering 10-year leases, and we handle all of the property management issues except for any major structural issues that might arise."

When an owner proposes a building, DHS staff embark on a series of steps to get it ready. The building is inspected and brought up to code at the owner's expense. A nonprofit service provider is selected to manage the building, provide on-site support services and negotiate the terms of the lease with the building owner. The nonprofit providers also meet with the current residents of the building to explain upcoming changes and assure them that they will not be asked to leave their homes. On the day the building is opened under the new management, nonprofit staff are on site and ready to start screening tenants to fill the vacancies.

Although homeless advocates had worried that CBP participants would displace existing tenants, Walton said "I can honestly say we have not displaced anybody. We're not taking housing stock off the market—it may have been technically active housing before, but it usually wasn't very functional. The occupancy rate has been from 30 to 50 percent in these buildings. We're filling the vacancies with CBP participants, and they can stay in the units even if they change benefit packages later. The existing tenants are not only welcome to stay if they're tenants in good standing, but they're welcome to use the case management services we're adding to the buildings."

Many tenants have appreciated the changes that have come to their SRO hotels through the CBP lease-ups. Not only have elevators been repaired, carpets replaced, walls painted and plumbing fixed, but the buildings are staffed 24 hours per day, reducing the parade of strangers through the halls, and there are now grievance and repair procedures and fair visitor policies.

Sabrina Pickford was a resident of the Elm Hotel on Eddy Street for five years before Episcopal Community Services of San Francisco became the building manager on July 1st as part of CBP. "It's been better since they took over," she said. "Things are more humanized. I used to call this place the 'nightmare on Elm Street,' but I feel safer, and I sleep better now that there aren't footsteps overhead and yelling every night. The case managers are very helpful—I need to reach out to them more, but I had a good mother and she taught me to try to take care of things myself."

Resident Herbert Wallace moved into the Elm in July through CBP after months of living in shelters. "I went to a meeting with my PAES worker and they said they had a room for me," he said while sitting in on a Monday morning coffee hour in the lobby. "I was asked if I was willing to take housing over cash and I said 'yes, any day.' I was so thankful to be someplace steady. The support services are vital—this place could not hold up without the case managers being here. This building feels safe."

Scott Ecker, Support Services Manager at the Elm for Episcopal Community Services, supervises three full-time on-site case managers who provide services to residents of the hotel's 80 units. "Episcopal Community Services holds the master lease to the building, and we subcontract to John Stewart Company for the property management portion," he said. "We're nearly finished with our rent-up process. There were 31 tenants here prior to our coming in, and we have 72 people living in the building now. We've had nothing but positive experiences here so far. Normally you'll have a few issues come up when you have a large number of move-ins at once, but it



Sabrina Pickford, a long-term resident of the Elm, has seen positive changes in her building now that it's under new management.

It's been better since they took over. I sleep better now that there aren't footsteps overhead and yelling every night.

Sabrina Pickford



The Pierre  
450 Jones Street  
87 units

hasn't been the case. Everyone's been so grateful and appreciative of this program."

Ecker's staff conducts an extensive intake with new residents to determine what their needs might be, and offers a welcome basket to encourage them to visit the office, which is located at the hotel. "The relationship starts there," said Ecker, "and from that point on we develop plans with short- and long-term goals and work with the clients to meet them. Our case managers spend part of their day in their offices so they can be available for walk-in and scheduled meetings, and part of the day out escorting clients to appointments outside the hotel."

Services are extensive but completely voluntary, as Ecker stresses in person and via the information packets given to residents. Case managers will essentially assist with any aspect of food, clothing and shelter. They help residents obtain food stamps, learn about meal sites, pantries and delivered meals, and obtain free clothing, linens, furniture and small appliances such as refrigerators and microwaves. They make referrals to health clinics, medical insurance options, mental health programs, substance abuse services, employment opportunities and vocational programs. They walk clients to the nearby Housing and Urban Health Clinic and advocate for them with other agencies. And they organize extensive programs in the building, from coffee hours to Bingo games, relapse prevention groups to cooking classes. The list, the workload and the staff's energy seem endless.

"It's a lot," admitted Travis Hamilton, Lead Case Manager for the Elm. "It's really hectic, especially when you have so many people moving in all at once. But it's a rewarding job. The new people coming in have been amazing. They've been really grateful to be housed. I was expecting some resistance to them having such a small amount of money to live on per month after their housing was covered, but people have just been very, very happy. It's been nice."

Like the other case managers, Hamilton has a case load of approximately 35 residents. He spends part of his day in his office at the Elm, and the rest escorting residents to appointments or facilitating meetings. His clients have been particularly happy with services at the Housing and Urban Health Clinic. Only one block away, the clinic offers medical care by appointment, a refreshing change for persons who have previously received most of their medical care through crowded emergency rooms. "They're treated with respect and dignity at the clinic," said Hamilton. "They can then start to respect themselves as well. My clients tell me that while homeless they found themselves walking with their heads down, feeling like no one would look at them, and now they feel good about themselves."

Hamilton expected that residents would take time to settle in before taking steps towards employment or other significant life changes. "I was surprised by the determination and eagerness of people," he said. "Although some feel isolated or overwhelmed, it seems like many of them got a home and now they're already on to the next step, whether it's education or workfare or transitioning to another form of aid such as SSI."

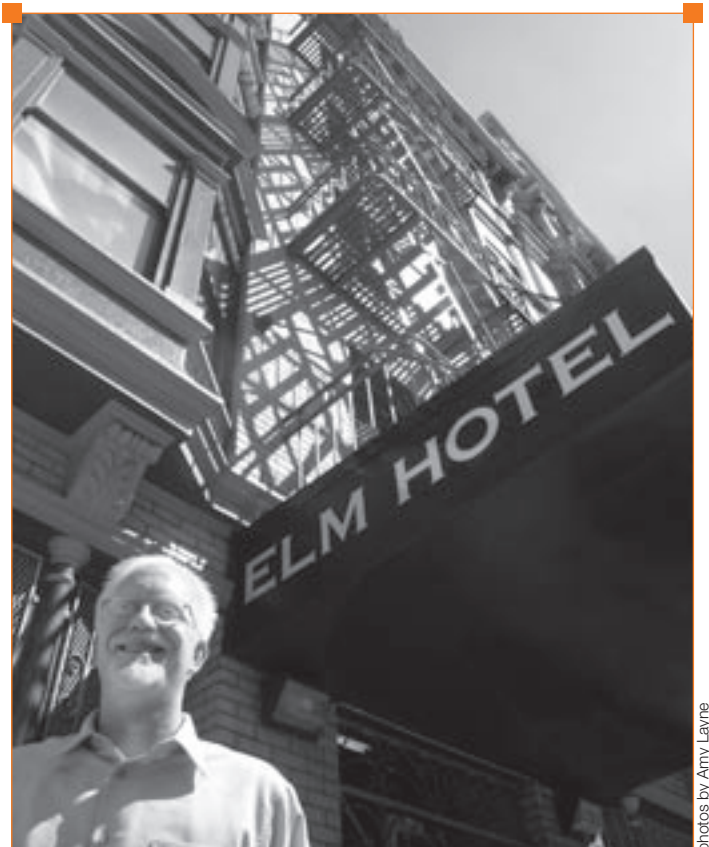
The staff of the Elm is already considering offering another support group. "We're talking about having a group for people to talk about their transition to housing," said Hamilton. "The transitional issues are very poignant. One man told me he was so happy about getting housing after three years of being homeless that on the first day he had a room he walked down the street crying. It was such an emotional experience for him. He definitely wanted that experience for other people who are still on the street. I think some of the people who are being housed are having survivor's guilt that others don't have homes yet. And a lot of those people are going to become resources themselves for helping get their friends housed."



The Mentone  
387 Ellis Street  
71 units

Everyone's been so grateful and appreciative of this program.

Scott Ecker



Scott Ecker, Supportive Services Manager at the Elm Hotel.

photos by Amy Layne

# Case Management on the Move

## Riding with the Homeless Outreach Team

“Finding a client who lives on the streets is kind of a Zen thing,” says Ben Amyes, Senior Social Worker with the San Francisco Homeless Outreach Team. “It always seems like just when you give up and stop looking, there they are.”

Case management, already a challenge, is even more daunting when it involves working with a client base that’s usually on the move, has no address or phone number, and whose personal problems may make them unreliable. The members of the team, which is a collaborative effort between the Department of Human Services, Department of Public Health and non-profit Community Awareness Treatment Services (CATS), serve homeless clients in the 60-block Tenderloin district.

The team makes extensive use of CATS’ Mobile Assistance Patrol vans—the ubiquitous white vans with MAP in big blue letters on the side that San Franciscans see every day in the downtown area. Amyes and colleague Dorothy James started their shift as usual this morning at 5 a.m. by driving through the Tenderloin in a MAP van. “We always have to think about safety of the staff first,” says Amyes. “It’s not so safe walking through the Tenderloin at that hour, so we take the van.”

After their initial ride of the day, James drops Amyes off at his office at 1235 Mission Street and continues alone to meet with clients while Amyes works on paperwork and makes calls. They meet again at the CATS office at 39 Fell Street at 10 a.m. to search for three clients whom they’re trying to get into a methadone program. After hearing the two confer, it’s clear that although finding clients may involve a Zen-like state of accep-

tance, it doesn’t hurt to have a bit of very specific information as a back-up. James knows exactly which side of a certain block is the preferred hangout of the clients, down to the exact landmark they camp near and the color of one’s bright coat. The van turns the corner, and there the clients are, as predicted.

Of course, tracking down a client isn’t always this easy, and it’s only the first step. In this case, Amyes agrees to meet the pair in another half hour and drive them to a medical appointment, only to find that they have vacated the block by the time he returns. “We give people the opportunity,” he says philosophically. “If they show some initiative and follow through, we can open doors and lower barriers for them. But they have to be willing to work with us and accept those services.”

Although the team was formed only a few months ago, Amyes has worked on the streets of the Tenderloin for DHS for the last three years, so his familiar face helps him find his clients as well. He can’t walk far without seeing someone he knows, whether clients, former clients or colleagues. On his way to get a cup of coffee and meet with James for another ride through the neighborhood, he’s stopped by Greg and Joseph, and his case management duties immediately resume.

As they stand on the sidewalk, Amyes addresses each in turn. Greg has just been in the hospital for chest pains. “They told me I’m lucky to be alive,” he says. Amyes pulls a cell phone off his belt and makes some calls to check on the status of Greg’s GA case. Ten minutes later, with Greg’s immediate concerns answered, he turns to Joseph, who is wearing soft padded protective gear under a traditional motorcycle helmet.

Joseph is in his late twenties. This spring he was assaulted with a baseball bat, resulting in so much trauma to his skull that a large portion of it had to be removed. Joseph carries around a much-folded printout from his doctor’s office that shows just how much skull is missing: it appears that most of the right side of his head is now protected by only scalp. A large circular red scar winds through his hair, and when he gingerly takes off his helmet it’s easy to see that his head is oddly sloped on one side.

Joseph has been homeless since arriving in San Francisco six years ago, and has had only intermittent housing since being assaulted. Recently he lost his Medi-Cal coverage for reasons he doesn’t understand; without it, he cannot undergo a final surgery to replace his missing skull with a plastic plate. Amyes is worried not only about the state of Joseph’s health and Medi-Cal but about his housing. He has already ascertained from Joseph’s medical provider that he will be released just three days after his surgery. “Are you still outside?” he asks. “What’s your discharge



photos by Eva Gurainik

Dorothy James behind the wheel of the MAP van.

plan for after you leave the hospital?” A little investigation determines that Joseph, who is on GA, will shortly be housed in an SRO room through the CAAP Benefits Package. “They’re taking it out of my check,” says Joseph. “They can have the whole check for all I care. I don’t need to be outside in this condition.” Amyes makes a date to take Joseph in the MAP van to his next medical appointment later in the week.

As Amyes continues down the street, still in search of that cup of coffee, he says “Greg and Joseph are really working very hard to get better—they’re very focused. The team comes up with a plan to help a client out of their situation. It might include getting them detox or mental health treatment, getting them primary medical care. If they’re not on CAAP, I work to get them onto CAAP and then into housing. I collaborate with everyone I can within the city’s system to get whatever my clients might need, down to finding out if a slot is available in a treatment or housing program and taking them right to it.”

Many of Amyes’ clients have accepted services and turned their lives around. He describes one man who had been a schoolteacher until his alcoholism cost him his job and home. This year that teacher is returning to work. “I bump into people all the time that were clients who are doing well now,” he says. “I have sincere hope that people can stabilize and go forward once they get clean and sober or get other issues taken care of. I have to—you can’t do this job without hope.”



Ben Amyes confers with a client on the streets of the Tenderloin.

## San Francisco Homeless Outreach Team Hits the Streets

The San Francisco Homeless Outreach Team was launched on May 11th and has since been providing services 20 hours per day, seven days per week. “We’re really trying to make a significant impact with the homeless,” said David Nakanishi, Director of the team. “People have asked me how this differs from outreach efforts done in the past, and I think the main difference is that it’s one of the best interdepartmental collaborations I’ve seen.”

Nakanishi is one of the team members from the Department of Public Health. Others are drawn from the Department of Human Services or from nonprofit Community Awareness Treatment Services (CATS). “All of these agencies are at the table to ensure that needed services are available, and that access is made as easy as possible for the homeless,” he said. “It’s pretty exciting.”

The team is composed of a psychiatrist and various psychiatric and general social

workers. Staff with street experience are paired with those who previously worked mainly with entitlements paperwork; everyone has learned a lot along the way.

Rann Parker, Assistant Director of the team, is a CATS employee. “Our goal is to reduce chronic homelessness in the Tenderloin using intensive outreach,” she said. “We have access to the resources of all the agencies involved. We engage people on the street, find out what it is that’s keeping them from being housed, getting drug or alcohol treatment, getting on SSI, whatever their stumbling block is, and work on that. Many folks are willing but need their hands held. Those who are severely ill may need help just to take baby steps.” The 13 team members have driven clients to their appointments, helped obtain clothing and eyeglasses, gotten vaccinations for pets—whatever is needed to help them transition off the streets. Clients have included a pregnant woman in need of prenatal care,

an actively psychotic man, and clients in need of methadone treatment.

Parker emphasized that it takes time to build successful relationships. “We might have a conversation with a person every day for a week and give them a snack bar each time,” she said. “On the second week they may tell us their name, on the third week their date of birth, and then they might let us know about a medical condition. They gradually come to trust us. When we say we’ll do something like make an appointment with a GA worker and we follow through, we build credibility.”

Parker is determined that the program will make a difference. “I don’t want it to be okay any more to have someone drink themselves to death at the corner of Turk and Mason and have people just walk by,” she said. “So far, this program’s going wonderfully: people are beginning to approach us, and we’re getting them housed.”

# The Best for San Francisco's Children

## Quality Care Project

### Child care is crucial

for the thousands of San Francisco families who depend on out-of-home care for their children while their parents work. While historically care for children from birth to age 5 may have been seen as “baby-sitting,” today it is recognized as the key to preparing children for lifelong success in school and relationships.

San Francisco has already devoted extensive resources to building up its supply of affordable child care through the Child Care Facilities Fund (see *State of the Art Child Care*, Spring 2004 issue of *InService*). Now that the city is nearing its goal for capacity, the focus has shifted to assessing and improving the quality of that care through the Quality Care Project. “It’s a nice progression,” said Renu Nanda, Program Manager of the Child Care Facilities Fund. “Now that the facilities have been built, we can work on devising a comprehensive strategy for improving quality in programs—not just those we built, but all child care programs in San Francisco. The major commitment that the city has made to this project really puts us at the forefront nationally.”

The project begins with assessments of child care programs which then lead to a menu of services. The assessors themselves provide extensive technical assistance and support—everything from suggesting changes in room design to filling out grant applications. Providers can participate in professional development initiatives that allow them to continue their education and they may receive

Do you know of a child care center or licensed family day care home in San Francisco who would like to participate in the Partners in Quality Child Care Project? Contact David Fleishman at (415) 405-3976 for information.

compensation incentives through a variety of programs. And based on the results of the assessments, the Child Care Facilities Fund provides grants for equipment, materials and even capital improvements such as lighting, structural room divisions, child-size sinks and carpeting.

“It’s a very collaborative process,” said David Fleishman, Project Coordinator. “We want to work with these providers to improve the quality of their care. We share with them the results of the assessment and discuss

Quality child care helps children form trusting relationships, develop critical thinking skills and set the stage for life-long learning.

David Fleishman

with them the kinds of changes they’d like to make, and then we help them get there. We’re not taking ownership away from them, not penalizing them and not telling them what to do. We’re there to help and support them in providing quality child care, which means that children will be in an enriched environment at a time in their lives when their brains are developing most rapidly. Quality child care helps children form trusting relationships, develop critical thinking skills and set the stage for life-long learning.”

Programs are assessed using nationally recognized scales developed by educator Thelma Harms. The Harms scales evaluate space and furnishings, basic care, lan-

guage and reasoning, learning activities, social development and adult needs, rating each on a zero-to-seven scale. Under language and reasoning, for example, an assessor might note that the staff interacts well with children, has created a language-rich environment and encourages communication, but that staff don’t spend



Amy Layne

Milagros Acosta in her own family day care program.

enough time working on children’s critical thinking skills. The assessor then meets with the child care provider to review the results of the assessment and make referrals to appropriate resources.

The funding for the \$2.6 million project comes from a collaboration between the San Francisco Department of Human Services, the Department of Children, Youth and Their Families, and First Five San Francisco Children and Families

Commission. The project is housed at the Marian Wright Edelman Institute at San Francisco State University, where Fleishman is located, and builds on previous work conducted by the Institute under the DHS-funded Partners in Quality Child Care Project. Other partners include City College of San Francisco, which provides professional development, the Child Care Facilities Fund, which administers a grants program for facilities improvements, and Children's Council of San Francisco.

"The funders have come together to leverage increased quality and coordinate a strategic response when there are patterns of problems with child care quality in the city," said Michele Rutherford, DHS Program Manager of Child Care Policy and Planning. "The project partners along with other key child care stakeholders are driving an agenda that puts San Francisco on the forefront of accountability and quality improvement in the state of California."

Staff members use data collected about the programs to develop workshops for providers in English, Spanish and Cantonese as part of the professional development component of the project. Eventually staff will begin reassessing specific programs to measure quality improvement, but those involved in the project can already see the difference it's making.

"Recently I visited a large family child care provider who serves low-income children," said Nanda. "We eventually provided her with a \$5,000 grant to buy things like cozy furniture for her reading areas and manipulative toys for the infants. She told me how burned out she had gotten and how isolated she felt working without colleagues. She had lost her lease and was having an uphill battle finding a new site. But after meeting with one of the assessors she decided to stay in business, just because someone talked to her and offered support. She had the heart—she just needed more resources. You want that kind of person to stay in business and keep providing care to those 12 children."

## Two Assessors Make a Difference

"Child care providers don't get a lot of validation or acknowledgement," said Barbra Blender. "That's why a big part of what I do is to really give them strokes for how hard they work and how committed they are."

Blender is one of a team of eight assessors who visit licensed child care classrooms and family day care homes around San Francisco as part of the Quality Care Project. The title of "assessor" may be a misnomer, however. Blender and her colleagues carefully evaluate the quality of child care programs, but in the process they are also advocates, trainers, cheerleaders and friends

to the providers with whom they work.

"I have a teaching background, so I understand things from the provider's perspective," said Blender, whose background includes not only working as a preschool teacher and director, but a master's degree in early childhood education and time spent working in social services. "I can speak the teacher language and share strategies about dealing

**I can speak the teacher language and share strategies about dealing with issues such as difficult kids. I don't just stand there with my clipboard—I give them resources.**

Barbra Blender

with issues such as difficult kids. I don't just stand there with my clipboard—I give them resources."

Child care providers may learn about quality indicators through classes at City College of San Francisco and through workshops in the community. Quality improvement plans are drafted only after a detailed discussion between the provider and assessor about what was observed in the home or classroom, priorities and reasons for specific changes, and the types of support and resources that can be brought to bear.

"The providers I've worked with have been really appreciative and complimentary about the process," said Blender. "After the assessment, I offer them training and support on how to change their classroom, use materials, speak to children, and discipline. I'm facilitating so they can grow in their development."

As the director of her own program, assessor Milagros Acosta also knows firsthand about the challenges that face child care providers. "Being a child care provider is a great job," she said. "You take care of these wonderful children. But I tell providers that if they want to be in this business, do it professionally so that families can put their trust in you. Even if they work out of their own home, they are still professionals."

Acosta focuses on Spanish-speaking child care providers. "When people open their doors to us, I always start with a pre-assessment visit to give them the guidelines," she said. "The assessment itself takes four or five hours. Then I'll sit down with them, sometimes in a coffee shop, and give them their report. After that I make another visit to give them a quality improvement plan." Acosta continues to be available to providers even after the assessment process has concluded, taking phone calls, making visits and keeping an eye out for useful resources.

"I find most of the providers are really open to the process and want to continue," she said. "Before, once you received your license you were on your own. Now we're trying to improve the quality. Some providers had nothing—no books, no equipment. They tell me this program is really good because now they understand what they have to improve." In one case, a provider received a grant that allowed her to make a down payment on a larger house. "I can see the huge difference that this program makes in quality after they receive technical assistance and grants," she said. "This program is like a miracle."

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## It's All in the Cards

### CalWORKs Cash Assistance now on EBT cards

**DHS debuted its** Electronic Benefit Transfer System for cash assistance to CalWORKs participants on August 2nd. Andrew Goberman was one of several staff members on duty that day in the lobby of 170 Otis Street to help people with questions. As CalWORKs Section Manager, Goberman and coworker Hope Kamimoto have been responsible for guiding the department's transition from a system largely based on mailing cash aid checks to one that exclusively uses EBT cards and direct deposit. The cards look and function very similarly to ATM cards, and provide a secure and easy way for participants to make purchases and receive their benefits.

The system offers convenience and privacy for the approximately 5,000 San Francisco residents who receive CalWORKs cash aid. Those who are already receiving food stamps via an EBT card will use the same card for both.

"It's going to be a really good deal all around," said Goberman. "There won't be any more lost checks, which has been a real problem for participants and a major workload issue for our staff. We're already seeing significantly reduced traffic at Distribution and in the waiting areas at 170 Otis Street—the usual long lines around the first and 15th of the month have virtually disappeared.

And we believe it's also going to save participants money. We know that a lot of participants have been using check-cashing outlets, which can charge \$12-\$15 to cash a check, or even more. With EBT, people can get all of their money at no charge. They can use their card directly to make purchases at the cash register, just as if it was an ATM card, and they can get cash back at no charge. They can also go to certain ATMs and withdraw cash up to four times per month, absolutely free."

Since June, Goberman and Enhanced Screeners Joseph Lau, Samuel Saenz and Elaine Wong have offered a series of training sessions to provide participants with information on the new

system, arranged mailings to participants and inserted information with their checks. Information and trainings have been provided in English, Russian, Vietnamese, Spanish and Cantonese.

CalWORKs staff members have noticed that since EBT has been offered, a large number of participants have switched from receiving their cash benefits by check to direct deposit. "We always offered direct deposit of people's benefits into their bank accounts, but now we're seeing an upsurge," he said. "We assume that many people feel if they're going to have to make a switch now, they might as well make it to direct deposit."



Gretje Reuter, Regional Project Manager, State EBT Team, provides a client with information on EBT's first day.

Amy Layne