

SOMCAN

South of Market Community Action Network



Spring 2003

The mission of SOMCAN is to build and support a strong, organized community that takes collective action to achieve equity for the low-income, people of color, immigrant and working class communities in the South of Market through organizing, leadership development and community planning.

SOMCAN Program Updates

SoMa Community Organizing & Leadership Program

In February, SOMCAN held two workshops on Safety Issues and Parent Rights and Education. The workshops were the last in a series of Issue Based workshops we provided to residents as part of our Organizing and Leadership Program.

Over 28 parents attended our Parent Rights Workshop where they gained information presented by Coleman Advocates for Youth on what their rights are as parents of children at Bessie Carmichael/Filipino Education Center Elementary School. Through generous volunteer support, we were able to provide Spanish and Tagalog translation and free childcare for up to 25 children!! Special thanks to the San Francisco Foundation for providing free translation equipment and the SoMa Childcare Center for providing free childcare!!

To follow up the first series of issue based workshops, SOMCAN is offering three Organizing Skills trainings for SoMa residents. Training topics include: Different Approaches to Social Change/What Is Community Organizing, Campaign and Strategy Development, and Power Analysis/SF City Structure.

Participants of the Organizing Skills Trainings will be eligible to apply for a stipend paid organizing internship with a community organization working on SoMa neighborhood campaign. The internship is slated to begin in June and applications will be available in May.

For more information on SOMCAN's Resident Leadership and Organizing Program, please contact Joel Merchan at: 415/348-1945.

SoMa Youth Organizing Program (SYOP)

Starting in June, SOMCAN will be launching our SoMa Youth Organizing Program (SYOP). SYOP is a 12-week paid youth internship program for up to six SoMa Youth Leaders/Organizers ages 14-19.

The Program is designed to develop youth leadership in SoMa through community awareness and involvement, political education, leadership skills, and art and culture. Through the Program, interns will also help establish an independent, youth-led SoMa Youth Leadership Organization (YLO) to serve as the youth arm for broader community campaigns in the future.

The first round of internships will begin in early June and end in late August. Applications will be available by April 15th. Please contact Ivy Climacosa at sepia@email.com or 415.348.1945 to request an application.

Staff Additions

Chris Durazo, Community Planning Director

SOMCAN is pleased to introduce Chris Durazo as our new full-time Community Planning Director. Chris was born in Fresno, CA, grew up in Salinas, CA and has spent the last 10 years living in San Francisco's Mission District. She is biracial (Japanese and Mexican) with deep family roots in farming along the Central Valley. Chris has worked as a farm worker, security guard, affordable housing developer, artist, organizer and community planner. She has spent the past four years helping to develop the Japantown Community Plan, preserving one of the last three remaining Japantowns in the nation. Before that, she also worked on Minna Street Family Apartments and developed Tutubi Children's Park here in SoMa. Chris is dedicated to empowering others as a means to build community, increase collective trust and fight for social justice.

SOMCAN Hosts Land Use and Zoning Training For Tenants in the South of Market

On March 17, SOMCAN organized a Land Use and Zoning Training for SoMa residents as part of our larger organizing strategy to build resident capacity around community planning issues in the neighborhood.

Land Use Attorney, Sue Hestor, conducted the training during which she explained current Land Use and Zoning in the South of Market and illustrated what types of development have occurred in the neighborhood. Of particular interest to participants was the number of luxury live/work lofts built as compared to affordable housing units built in SoMa.

The South of Market neighborhood is currently undergoing a community planning process that will determine the future of land use in SoMa. The training was part of an effort to bring technical information to residents through an accessible interactive workshop, laying the groundwork for organizing around planning issues in the upcoming months.

Participants volunteered to form a Work Group to continue their involvement in community planning and follow-up plans are underway! To join the Work Group or get more information, contact Chris Durazo at (415) 348-1945.



SOMCAN Coordinating Committee

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Ly Nguyen, OASIS
Christina Olague, 6th St
Jill Weinberg Pfeiffer, OASIS
Lisa Russ, Movement Strategy Center
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SOMCAN Staff

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Chris Durazo, Community Planning Director
Joel Merchan, Community Organizer
Ivy Climacosa, SYOP Coordinator
Kuusela Hilo, Organizing Intern

SOMCAN Advisory Board

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