



San Francisco Parks Trust
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*** Press Release ***

San Francisco Parks Trust's GearUp Fund Gives \$130,000 to Fill Recreation Centers SFPT and Park Partners Harness Community Support for Parks

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SAN FRANCISCO- On May 6th, San Francisco Parks Trust (SFPT) will present a \$100,000 gift to the Recreation & Parks Department (RPD) during the Parks Commission meeting at City Hall. This presentation follows a \$30,000 gift in March, both of which are part of SFPT's GearUp Fund initiative to provide funds to fill five newly renovated recreation centers with equipment, furniture, and supplies needed for programming.

Launched in October 2009, the GearUp Fund was designed to augment funds allocated for the renovation of five selected recreation facilities by the 2000 Park Bond: Hamilton, Harvey Milk, and Midtown Terrace recreation centers, and the Sunnyside Conservatory and Clubhouse. Since bond funds could only be used for capital improvements, and since annual RPD budget cuts eroded funding to fill these centers, SFPT launched an intensive campaign only months before they were scheduled to open. Individuals, businesses, and foundations heard the urgent call and provided funds for furniture, sports and safety equipment, supplies, and specialized equipment enabling some unique recreation offerings. For instance, Harvey Milk Recreational Arts Center will now be able to purchase specialized technology and recording equipment to outfit its new music studio, enabling some truly singular program offerings for residents of all ages.

"We are thrilled to be able to outfit these new facilities with the equipment they need to deliver programming to the community," said SFPT Executive Director Karen Kidwell. "and grateful to the foundations, businesses, and individuals that realized the impact these centers have on residents and their neighborhoods."

The GearUp Fund is an example of RPD's call to create new partnerships and initiatives able to address impacts from funding shortfalls. With a mandate from City Hall to reduce the park system's dependence on the general fund, RPD is looking to new revenue strategies as well as philanthropic giving to help fill the gaps. Events and facility rentals are also part of the strategy, such as the performance of *Peter Pan* on May 12th which will benefit San Francisco parks. *Information and links for tickets may be found at www.anightinneverland.com.*

"The GearUp Fund and other targeted, grassroots support efforts for parks will become increasingly important in the short term," says RPD General Manager Phil Ginsburg, "and help long term to inspire the kind of stewards that will champion our parks."

In the current fiscal climate, large-scale capital campaigns that were traditionally undertaken by SFPT are challenging. However, SFPT also fiscally sponsors more than 60 small-scale neighborhood organizations wanting to improve their parks. SFPT expertise, advice and administrative support to these groups multiplies and amplifies their effectiveness, and taken together, these organizations can have significant impact. This past March, SFPT Park Partner Friends of Presidio Heights Playground broke ground on a renovation and safety upgrade of the park. After learning in 2006 that the playground was 254th on the list of parks slated for improvement and there was no possibility of City funding, six motivated women came together and raised nearly \$900,000 over three years. Alta Plaza Park was also recently renovated by an SFPT Park Partner, and new Park Partner Friends of Lafayette Park has just launched a projected \$1,000,000 campaign. Equally important are Park Partners that improve programming or maintain existing facilities and parks, such as Park Partners at Visitacion Valley Greenway and Noe Valley Recreation Center, or the newly formed Friends of Harvey Milk- a community group inspired by the new arts center.

The GearUp Fund was created to outfit five selected centers, but will continue into the future to help meet recreation facilities' ongoing needs, especially those renovated by the 2008 parks bond. SFPT will also continue to expand its roster of Park Partners and foster localized stewardship of the parks. With continued cuts to the park budget on the horizon, it has never been more vital to nurture community support of those urban oases that contribute so much to our quality of life.

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