Greenbuild Legacy Projects Focus on Urban Gardening in San Francisco

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Tenderloin Community Garden, one of the Greenbuild 2012 Legacy Projects

San Francisco is a city of folks who love to grow and eat food. How do you do that in an urban setting with few open land spaces for gardens? Greenbuild's Legacy Projects demonstrate two variations of urban gardens working with the little space they have available to show exactly how this can be accomplished and meet the goal of providing produce to local area families with no access to fresh fruits and vegetables. These areas are known as "food deserts."

Over 17 project applications were submitted for review this year. Fortunately, enough money was raised to provide monies to two different legacy projects.

The Texas Street Farm is an integral part of the Rebuild Potrero Healthy Living Initiative, which is a long-term, holistic approach to improving the lives of residents living in Potrero Terrace and Annex (PT&A) public housing.

"Local youth will co-manage the farm program researching appropriate seed varieties, learning the art of seed growing and saving, and providing seeds to family barrel gardens in the PT&A at each doorstep," says Steve Pulliam, project co-manager.

The seed program will eventually package and sell seeds bringing money back into the program. Construction has begun on the raised beds in the larger community garden and a small residential garden.

The Tenderloin Vertical Garden, located at the corner of Larkin and McAllister Streets at the site of the Civic Center Powerhouse, consists of a vertical wall of plants and a ground garden in front of the wall. This whole area is in redevelopment and part of the Civic Center Historic District requiring and receiving a Certificate of Appropriateness for the garden in this historic area. The Tenderloin Vertical Garden will serve a neighborhood with a large low-income and homeless population, is backed by an established community organization as well as several city agencies, and has viability, visibility and longevity. The project is another example of a well-located urban garden that will supply fresh fruits and vegetables to local families.

Both of these projects fall in line with new legislation in San Francisco promoting urban farming discussed in John Upton's article. Also, check out the "before" pictures of each project.

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