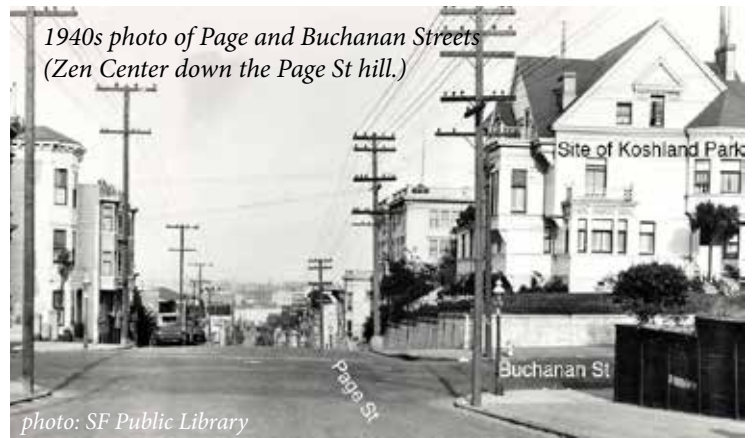


Zen Center Comes to the Lower Haight/ Hayes Valley Neighborhood—1969



This booklet was made specifically for friends and acquaintances from my early days in the 70s at the San Francisco Zen Center (SFZC). I would like to honor all the work SFZC did to transform the 300 Page Street neighborhood, and tell you about *CommunityGrows*, which has continued this transformation. Specifically, this booklet highlights only one of many transformations SFZC made to the neighborhood, the development of Koshland Park. That project was a true catalyst in bringing the community together during tough times throughout San Francisco. It spurred neighborhood involvement that continues to this day. -Barbara Wenger

1973-The Beginning of Koshland Park



Excerpt from SFZC's Windbell, Summer 1975:

In the predawn hours of a morning in March 1973, a terrible arson fire swept through a fifty-unit, four-story apartment building at 343 Page Street. The apartment building was destroyed, four people died, and scores of tenants had to find new homes. As the burned out shell stood waiting for demolition, many



1974 Meeting to Design Koshland Park-UC Extension (now 55 Laguna)

Here are some folks that were present:

Issan Dorsey
 Reb Anderson
 Rusa Chu
 Louise Welch
 Amy Richmond
 the Hudspeths
 Daniel Koshland Jr.
 Meg Porter
 Blanche Hartman
 Barbara Lubanski
 Della Goertz
 Mrs. Hare (represented 340 Page)
 Joan Hall
 Robert Lytle
 Ann Overton
 Peggy Cramer
 Emi Azeka
 Iva Jones

Margery Farrar
 Charles Hoy
 Joe Cohen
 Ed Brown
 Linda Hess
 Peter Overton
 Barrie Mason
 Antoinette Howell
 Mary Willams
 Melody Heller
 Eric Arnow
 Paul Rosenberg
 Dan Welch
 Tom Cabarga
 Beverly Horowitz
 Carol Atherton
 Bob Anderson
 Michael Wenger

Pam Chernoff
 Jay Simoneaux
 Miriam Bobkoff
 Dan Kaplan
 Nancy Sheldon
 Jane Hirshfield
 Michael Jamvold
 Dennis Marshall

Can you find anyone else???



photo: Royston, Hanamoto, Beck & Abey

neighborhood residents had the idea of combining the building's lot with the adjacent vacant lot on the corner to make a park.

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) offered its help. TPL knew that one of San Francisco's outstanding philanthropic families, the Koshland family, was interested in creating a new park for San Francisco to honor their father. They decided to locate the park in our neighborhood after TPL obtained options on the land parcels.

Mayor Joseph Alioto, the Koshland Family, and community residents dedicated the Daniel E. Koshland Community Park on October 11, 1973. The architectural firm of Royston, Hanamoto, Beck & Abey was hired to build the award-winning park. The park was finished in 1997 under the mayorship of George Moscone.

In 1973, neighbors participated in the design and building of the park. The first planning meeting held at UC Extension, brought well over two hundred residents. After polling over 3,500 people in the neighborhood, four hundred questionnaires were received, with ideas of how to design the park. The main issues were facilities for children, open green



photo: Royston, Hanamoto, Beck & Abey



photo: Royston, Hanamoto, Beck & Abey

space, wood as a building material, closing the half-block of Buchanan Street, limiting dogs, and having neighborhood people work on the construction. It was clear that the process of participation was as important as the result.

1976—A New Park in Hayes Valley: Koshland Park

Thanks to a rare combination of private philanthropy, public-spirited urban conservation, neighborhood participation, and pressing need, this park became the largest new park in San Francisco in forty years. With the completion of Koshland Park in 1976, it represented a rare opportunity, in the midst of racial, economic and political differences, to reverse some of the futility and decline characteristic of much of city life at that time. ¹

¹ Windbell, Summer 1975, the San Francisco Zen Center



photo: Royston, Hanamoto, Beck & Abey



photo: Royston, Hanamoto, Beck & Abey



photo: Royston, Hanamoto, Beck & Abey



Daniel E. Koshland Sr and wife Lucile

photo: Royston, Hanamoto, Beck & Abey

1983-1995—Neighborhood in Transition

Unfortunately, after the demise of The Neighborhood Foundation in 1983, the further deterioration of Hayes Valley South Development, and the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake, prostitution and drug activity became embedded in the park. Residents no longer felt safe there, or in their neighborhood.

It was at this time in Hayes Valley, and within a four-block radius of Koshland Park, that the City experienced the highest crime rate and the largest concentration of low-income, at-risk families. Drug dealers sat on the steps of Koshland Park directing drop-offs with their walkie-talkies. Prostitutes used a secluded play structure and ultimately burned it down. At least one dead body was found in the Park. Neighbors lived in fear, and mistrusted the police. Finally, Recreation and Park gardeners were threatened at gunpoint and refused to clean the park.

In response to a mandate from the State of California to study substance abuse, Neighborhoods in Transition—A Multicultural Partnership (NIT-AMP) began a five-year study in 1990 of nine transitional neighborhoods in San Francisco—one of them Hayes Valley. NIT-AMP brought together over one hundred residents in 1994 to address neighborhood problems head on. Four committees were formed: Youth, Prostitution, Drugs, and Parks. All the

committees worked together and began networking with City agencies and the Police. The parks group, named the Hayes Valley Neighborhood Parks Group (HVNPG—later to become CommunityGrows), brought schools, churches, community-based organizations, merchants and residents on board to hold work-days, plan celebrations, and raise over two million dollars for the renovation of Koshland Park and two other parks in the neighborhood (Rose-Page Mini Park and Hayes Valley Playground and Clubhouse).

It was a wake-up call for the HVNPG, finding their way in the fundraising world, working with politicians, learning the fallbleness of city departments, and winning the trust of neighbors while working with the police. Town hall meetings were held, designs were debated and agreed upon, the Koshland Family again graciously

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Community Meeting



Take Back the Park Event Koshland Park-July 1995



Mayoral Candidates Willie Brown and Robert Achtenberg-1975

1989-2005

Loma Prieta Earthquake, Octavia Blvd and Patricia's Green in Hayes Valley

In 1989 the Loma Prieta earthquake damaged the Central Freeway forcing the demolition of key ramps and setting off a series of political battles over its fate. Half the city wanted the freeway restored, and half wanted it torn down. It was difficult to find a solution.

It took three ballot measures -- in 1997, 1998 and 1999 -- to reach a decision. And then more than a dozen designs were presented to the public for review and debate. The City worked with community members and organizations such as CommunityGrows to design the Octavia Boulevard component.

Gone for good is the double-decker freeway that cut through Hayes Valley neighborhood, a concrete monster that served as a haven for drug dealers and prostitutes and cast unwelcoming shadows over the area. The old ramps, moving traffic on and off Fell, Oak, Franklin and Gough streets, were demolished in stages, with the last leg coming down in 2003.

A new park, Patricia's Green, was created on Octavia between Fell and Hayes streets. The park was named after Patricia Walkup, a neighborhood activist who helped lead the battle to tear down the freeway. The new park is a boon to building community, drawing people out of their homes and a neighborhood gathering spot. CommunityGrows partnered with community organizations to make this a reality. Their BEETS teens have spent workdays with the Recreation and Parks Department caring for the site.



1996-1999 Hayes Valley Apartments are Rebuilt

Most families were relocated to Oakland, CA and were able to return with many restrictions, including getting off Section 8, not harboring criminals, and participating in a Campus of Learners. CommunityGrows provided computers for the Youth Center and offered cooking classes for residents and children. We've also held Halloween and Wreath Making events every year since 2003 in the Hayes Valley South Community Room.



Old Hayes Valley South Apartments



New Hayes Valley South Apartments



1996-1997 Hayes Valley Playground and Clubhouse funding secured for renovation

The Hayes Valley Neighborhood Parks Group (HVNPG), later CommunityGrows, petitioned the City and the Recreation and Park Department to set aside \$200k through the Open Space Citizen Advisory Fund for the renovation of the Hayes Valley Playground and Clubhouse, across the street from Hayes Valley North Redevelopment. HVNPG held numerous workdays at the site, as well as Peace Wall trainings.



Hayes Valley Playground Staff and City Officials



1994-1999 Rose-Page Mini Park (near Laguna and Page Streets)

In the 70s creative residents near this park, located next to the present day Zen Hospice, were Stuart Brand, founder of *The Whole Earth Catalog*; poets Philip Whalen, Diane di Prima and Jane Hirshfield; cookbook writer Deborah Madison (*Greens Cookbook* and many more); counterculture revolutionary Paul Krasner; actor Peter Coyote, and director Rob Epstein (1985 Academy Award-winner, *The Times of Harvey Milk*).

Despite its illustrious neighbors, the park deteriorated. The dope smoking and acid trips of the '70s were replaced by crack dealing and prostitution in the '80s.

HVNPG (CommunityGrows), organized neighbors to reclaimed this park, and raised over \$100k to renovate it with funds from the City's Open Space Citizens Advisory Committee, SLUG-San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners, and the Mayor's Office of Community Development (MOCD).

The community celebrated its opening day in April, 1999 and dedicated the park to Lieutenant Keith Sanford of the Northern Police Station who tirelessly worked to support this project.

The Rose-Page Mini Park has garnered two prestigious awards for CommunityGrows: a *Beautification Award* from San Francisco Beautiful, and a *Lackmann-Soulages Park and Open Space Stewardship Award* from the Trust for Public Land.



2000-2007-Western Addition Peace Wall at Koshland Park

The Western Addition Peace Wall, a seven-year project, involved over 25 youth-serving agencies and schools in the Western Addition. With funding from the San Francisco Community Challenge Program, Section 8 residents were trained and joined a team to teach a Peace Empowerment Process. One of the components of the project was a seven-week process with the students of Sacred Heart Elementary School (then on Fell and Fillmore) and John Muir Elementary School. Each week students drew pictures of different emotions—fear, anger, doubt, disappointment, etc. The final weeks they did drawings representing their best selves which culminated in creating tiles of what peace means to them. The project collected over 2000 tiles from the community. Finally the design was enhanced with tiles by Justine Tot Tatarsky, an award-winning tile maker. The Western Addition Peace Wall was dedicated in June 1997 and is a testament to the community that created it. These peaceful tiles encourage people to enter the park and enjoy its many beautiful features. May this Peace Wall always remind us what a diverse and vibrant community can achieve together.



Tile making at SFZC



Chronicle / Danna Fierman



1994-2000 Renovation of Koshland Park and Garden

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offered financial support, the housing development was demolished and rebuilt, and the Park began its journey towards renovation.

After years of community planning and raising City funds over one million dollars, Koshland Park was renovated in 2000. As part of the design plan, and to build stewardship for the Park, CommunityGrows incorporated two projects, the Community Learning Garden, in the lower east end of the park, and the Western Addition Peace Wall along Page and Buchanan Streets of the Park

In addition to these two projects, the park was upgraded to make it wheelchair accessible. There is a multi-use area for basketball, neighborhood events and informal recreation. In the center top area of the park there is a play structure for school age and pre-school play. This area is visible from the street and gives a beautiful image to the park. Surrounding the play structure are benches and picnic tables. Finally, a beautifully ornamental wrought iron fence secures the park.



2000-Koshland Park Community Learning Garden

In 2000 the Community Learning Garden was built. It is a 54-plot, environmental education life laboratory for the students of John Muir Elementary School, YMCA Western Addition Beacon Center, Collective Impact-Mo'Magic, International High School, and neighborhood residents. A full-time CommunityGrows garden educator works with teachers to enhance the Next Generation Science Standards Curriculum—including literacy, mathematics, science, history and the arts. The

educator also recruits parents, neighbors, volunteers, and organizations, to create community events in the park.

The garden offers various garden workshops, workdays, after-school and summer programs, cooking classes, and internships for teens. The garden catalyzes an effort to make the neighborhood safer, more beautiful and nourishing, as well as



demonstrating the many benefits of urban gardening.

In April 2017 CommunityGrows, thanks to a grant from the City, is working with a contractor to provide amenities to the Koshland Garden, including hand-rails, expansion of the memorial planting area, shoring up pathways, and building a new garden shed.



2019 CommunityGrows Today

he mission of CommunityGrows is to cultivate healthy youth by growing gardens in low-income, diverse communities. It was always the goal of CommunityGrows to bring this diverse community together by offer ways to incorporate green spaces, gardens, and youth development principles to create a healthy and safe environment for our kids.

CommunityGrows' three interconnected programs work with low-income young people ages 5-19 in the high-needs San Francisco neighborhoods of the Western Addition, Bayview-Hunters Point, and the Outer Mission/Excelsior. Each year we serve 600-700 unduplicated youth: in our 2017-2018 program year, we had 650 unduplicated youth fill 1,300 participant slots. Most youth we serve are economically underprivileged: 83% qualify for free or reduced price school meals, and 45% live in public housing. 93% are youth of color, including 39% who are African American, 27% Latinx, 16% who are Multi-Ethnic, and 11% of our students are Asian/Pacific Islander. Additionally, 42% of the teenagers we serve in the BEETS program had or have current or historical mental and physical health issues, and 6% are or have been involved with the justice system.



CommunityGrows Programs

Environmental Education

Our Environmental Education programming includes in-school Garden Education classes that increase science knowledge and eco-literacy for 680 low-income elementary school children per year, ages 5-11, using a hands-on science curriculum based on Next Generation Science standards. Youth learn about the journey food takes from seed to plate, and how to make healthy choices for their bodies and communities. Our out-of-school-time (after school and summer) programs teach science, gardening, and nutrition to 430 youth per year, ages 5-14, from almost a dozen community-based organizations. Approximately 81% of participants in these programs qualify for free and reduced-price school meals.



Seed-to-Mouth Cooking

Our Seed to Mouth Cooking and Nutrition Program teaches over 150 youth per year about nutrition and healthy eating through weekly after-school and summer cooking classes held at Hayward Rec Connect, Willie Mays Boys and Girls Club (Bayview), and the Plaza East Apartments (a subsidized public housing development in the Western Addition).



BEETS-Band of Environmentally Educated and Employable Teens

CommunityGrows' BEETS program (Band of Environmentally Educated and Employable Teens) is a paid internship in which 30-35 youth per year, ages 15-19, learn leadership, job skills, and essential life skills as they collaborate with community members and their peers to make an impact in their own communities. BEETS helps young people develop as community leaders and engaged citizens as they prepare for bright, successful futures.



All of our programs are provided to kids without cost. We depend on partners like you to be able to maintain high quality garden and nutrition based programs for the community. Please consider donating today! Thank you for your support!

Checks can be made out to Tides/CommunityGrows and mailed to:

CommunityGrows, 762 Fulton St, San Francisco, CA 94102

www.communitygrows.org/donate

415-235-1756 / info@communitygrows.org