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SAN FRANCISCO PARKS ALLIANCE TAKES ACTION IN COMMUNITIES ACROSS CITY

Eight Organizations Awarded Grants to Promote Volunteerism and Parks Stewardship City-Wide

Today the San Francisco Parks Alliance announced the recipients of its second annual SFPA Action Grants awards, totaling \$29,000. The grants stimulate park beautification and volunteerism in parks and open spaces across San Francisco.

SFPA awarded eight parks organizations with grants in amounts of up to \$3,000. The recipient organizations are:

- **Bloom Justice:** Bloom Justice is a neighborhood flower garden, youth program and floral design business located in the Western Addition. Bloom Justice provides flower arrangements designed by under-served youth to local community organizations. Teens earn money, learn design skills and how to garden; the neighborhood enjoys flowers.
- **Far Out West Community Garden:** The Far Out West Community Garden is an ongoing creative collaboration between friends and neighbors that has turned a formerly neglected space into a rich and vibrant organic community garden in the Outer Sunset.
- **Jerry Day:** In its 12th Year, Jerry Garcia Day continues to be the biggest event in McLaren Park. Celebrating native son and founder of the Grateful Dead, Jerry Garcia, this event has created a huge amount of activity and awareness for McLaren Park since its inception.
- **Kids in Parks:** Kids in Parks has developed the Green Hairstreak Education and Restoration project -- an effort that is educating nearly 1,000 middle-school students each year about how to restore the threatened Green Hairstreak butterfly population, as well as enhancing and beautifying San Francisco's overgrown Hawk Hill public open space.
- **National AIDS Memorial Grove:** The National AIDS Memorial Grove was conceived in 1988 by San Franciscans whose community had been devastated by AIDS. In addition to one City gardener, an additional 4,500 - 5,000 hours of volunteer labor is utilized each year in order to maintain and enhance this 10-acre sanctuary in Golden Gate Park.
- **Palou Community Garden:** Bayview's Palou Community Garden will improve its appearance with a new round of sheet mulching and purchase much-needed

equipment. The group plans expanded outreach to non-English speakers to allow the Garden to grow our volunteer base in our diverse community, and activate the space with plantings, cleanup days and community events.

- **Peace in the Park:** The Peace in the Park festival brings together diverse communities to unplug and explore activities in an inspiring and healthy atmosphere. Run entirely by volunteers, the festival features world music, visual artists, tai chi, hatha yoga, seminars and more. This event promotes peace and happiness in our fast-paced urban environment.
- **Reclaiming the Diamond at Victoria Manolo Draves Park:** Reclaiming the Diamond at VMD is an 8-week program that teaches youth and children park stewardship and baseball diamond maintenance through a baseball skill development program. The program hopes to educate young people about park stewardship while providing programming to activate park space during summer daytime hours.

More information about each of the recipient organizations is available on the SFPA web site: www.sfparksalliance.org.

SFPA also named Craig Dawson as “Volunteer of the Year.” The award comes with a \$5,000 grant to Dawson’s organization, Sutro Stewards. A native San Franciscan, Dawson formed Sutro Stewards in 2006 as a non-profit environmental stewardship organization. He currently serves as the organization’s Executive Director. The Sutro Stewards foster a positive balance between habitat conservation and the recreational needs of a dense urban population, and the program remains the largest organized independent volunteer pool in San Francisco, equipped for habitat conservation and trail restoration stewardship. For more information about Dawson and Sutro Stewards, visit www.sutrostewards.org.

Dawson will be honored along with other awardees at an afternoon awards ceremony on Saturday, June 14, at SFPA’s annual Love Your Parks Day celebration in Golden Gate Park.

“The Parks Alliance is proud to showcase the best the City has to offer through this innovative program,” said SFPA Chief Executive Officer Matthew O’Grady. “These Action Grants not only promote stewardship and volunteerism in our precious parks, but play a key role in educating our communities in the importance of maintaining our parks and integrating them further into the community fabric. “

SFPA Action Grants enable residents to take positive action in and for San Francisco Parks. Any organization involved in programming or capital improvements in an SF Park or recreation facility may apply for an Action Grant. In 2014, the Parks Alliance received grant applications from 30 organizations; a grants committee made up of O’Grady, an SFPA Board member, and representatives from the Recreation and Parks Department, the Department of Public Works and the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Advisory Council selected five of the eight grant recipients. Three organizations were selected by popular vote of Internet users: Jerry Day, Peace in the Park and the National AIDS Memorial Grove.

“The Action Grants will recognize and reward volunteer engagement in our city parks system. As San Francisco grows and evolves, healthy parks that are cared for by the people who benefit most from them will only serve to strengthen our communities and create more livable spaces for generations to come,” O’Grady continued.

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