

San Francisco

The
POWER
ISSUE

WHO RUNS S.F.?

THE FIXERS, FIGHTERS, AND
THINKERS SHAPING THE CITY

INCLUDING:

Greg Suhr, Cuddly Cop

**The 63-Person
Cultural Mafia**

Denise Hale's BFF

Aaron %*@\$! Peskin

League of Charitable Women

Ron Conway's Rontourage

The Benevolent Starchitect

AND:

**Rose Pak,
Chinatown Don**



The Cultural Mafia

With maybe one exception (OK, New York, you win), no city offers quite the mix of world-class, cutting-edge, and passionately gonzo culture that San Francisco does. We have superstars, inventors of new art forms, indie theater champs, and, naturally, the country's first transgender dance company. But who, exactly, are the leaders of this tight-knit, crazy-quilt scene? We canvassed dozens of film capos, theater consiglieri, and foot soldiers of literature, dance, art, and music to come up with this list of the **63 most influential impresarios, mentors, fundraisers, and visionaries.** BY GRETCHEN SCHRAFFT

GRASSROOTS ROYALS

Jane Ganahl and Jack Boulware

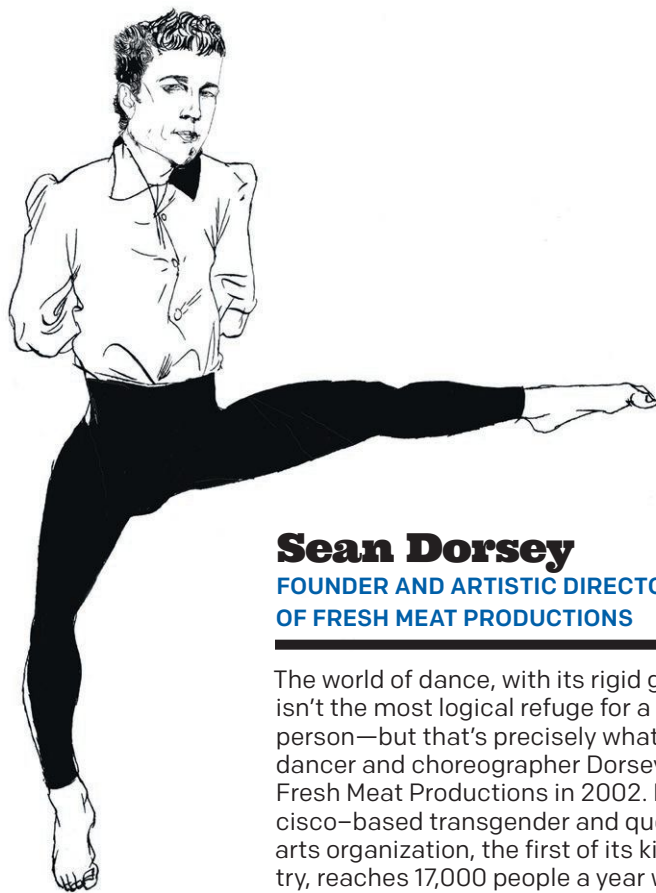
COFOUNDERS OF LITQUAKE

Hatched by Ganahl and Boulware over drinks at the Edinburgh Castle back in 1999, the raucous San Francisco-based lit festival, now in its 13th year, has gone on to take the country by storm. This year marked a flurry of grassroots expansion, with Lit Cast (Litquake's new podcast program), Epicenter (a monthly salon in North Beach), and two new Lit Crawls in Brooklyn and Seattle. Lit Camp, the group's first juried writers' conference, is planned for the spring of 2013.

Douglas McGray, Derek Fagerstrom, and Lauren Smith

COFOUNDERS OF POP-UP MAGAZINE

About twice a year, in the most tech-centric city in the United States, an audience of 2,500 gives itself over to the old-fashioned power of live storytelling, thanks to this trio of journalistic talents. Those lucky enough to score tickets to the 90-minute *Pop-Up Magazine* (most events sell out within 45 minutes of being announced) are treated to one-time-only presentations of stories by acclaimed radio producers, journalists, photographers, and filmmakers.



Sean Dorsey

FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF FRESH MEAT PRODUCTIONS

The world of dance, with its rigid gender roles, isn't the most logical refuge for a transgender person—but that's precisely what inspired dancer and choreographer Dorsey to found Fresh Meat Productions in 2002. His San Francisco-based transgender and queer performing arts organization, the first of its kind in the country, reaches 17,000 people a year with local and national touring productions.

Stephen Elliott and Isaac Fitzgerald

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF AND MANAGING EDITOR OF THE RUMPUS

Three years ago, Elliott and Fitzgerald hunkered down in Elliott's office at the San Francisco Writers' Grotto to beget a fledgling literary publication called *The Rumpus*. Their little lit blog that could, stocked with the likes of Cheryl Strayed's sage advice, Steve Almond's acerbic political commentary, and Antonia Crane's vivid insights into sex work, now gets 26,000 views a day from folks around the world.

John Trippe

FOUNDER OF FECALFACE.COM

Back when most art aficionados were still scratching their heads over the whole concept of the Internet, a skateboard fanatic named John Trippe moved to San Francisco and taught himself to code. Fecal Face, Trippe's 12-year-old website, is now an internationally renowned art forum that gets about 13,000 visitors a day.

Sydney Goldstein

FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CITY ARTS & LECTURES

This diminutive dynamo runs the 32-year-old onstage interview series on little more than smarts and sheer charisma. With a staff of three, Goldstein annually brings more than 55 of the greatest living artists and thinkers to speak in San Francisco, broadcasting the events to over 170 public radio stations across the country.

EMPIRE BUILDERS

Randall Kline

FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF SFJAZZ

Kline wasn't content with merely revitalizing San Francisco's languishing jazz scene—he had to go all the way. When the SFJAZZ Center opens its doors this January, the 35,000-square-foot performance, education, and community center will become the only such undertaking to rival Jazz at Lincoln Center in Manhattan.



Gregg Perloff

FOUNDER OF ANOTHER PLANET ENTERTAINMENT

Since inaugurating his new company with a 2003 Springsteen concert that rocked Pac Bell Park, Bill Graham disciple Perloff has become the impresario of the Bay Area concert market. His personal touch has netted Another Planet either exclusive contracts with or outright ownership of four major local concert venues (the Fox, the Independent, the Greek, and the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium), as well as the lion's share of the area's two biggest festivals (Outside Lands and Treasure Island).

Brenda Way

FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF ODC

With the completion of the ODC Dance Commons in 2005 and the ODC Theater in 2010, there's virtually nothing dance-related that Way's teeming campus doesn't provide—from multiple venues for world-class performances to scores of exciting classes for the general public to a free health clinic for dancers.

Andy Pilara

FOUNDER OF PIER 24 PHOTOGRAPHY

It's simple: If you want to see some of the best 20th- and 21st-century photography, in the biggest space ever devoted to the art form—for free—all you have to do is visit the website at pier24.org and make an appointment. Investment adviser Pilara began collecting the work of artists like Diane Arbus, Lee Friedlander, and Garry Winogrand back in 2003, and he now exhibits approximately 3,000 photographs at his 28,000-square-foot warehouse on the Embarcadero.

Dave Eggers

FOUNDER OF McSWEENEY'S, 826 NATIONAL, AND SCHOLARMATCH

Nationwide tutoring centers. A program that helps Bay Area teens get to college. A stellar lineup of publications and imprints that seems to be expanding even as print media sputter. Plus, 19 or so books he either wrote or coauthored. Hell, what *isn't* the man doing for anyone who cares about culture and kids?

Mabel Teng

DIRECTOR OF THE CHINESE CULTURE CENTER

Teng has had a lot of firsts in her day, from officiating the very first same-sex marriage ceremony in 2003 (she was the city assessor) to turning a tiny organization tucked away on the third floor of the Hilton into a showstopping center for Asian art. Even the Asian Art Museum pays attention when one of Teng's shows opens, and it has been known to commission pieces from some of her artists for its own collection.

The late Graham Leggat

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE SAN FRANCISCO FILM SOCIETY

On September 1, Ted Hope took over as executive director of the San Francisco Film Society, vowing to continue in the footsteps of Leggat, who died in August 2011. (Bingham Ray succeeded Leggat as ED, but died five months later.) Leggat is credited with hugely expanding the society's local footprint. In addition to stewarding the San Francisco International Film Festival, he introduced new year-round programming and a host of support services for independent film projects. He was also known for creating a strong sense of community among local filmmakers.

RAINMAKERS

Kary Schulman

DIRECTOR OF GRANTS FOR THE ARTS

The grande dame of arts funding, Schulman has controlled the purse strings of San Francisco's arts stash for more than 30 years, fostering the birth and growth of major institutions like SFJAZZ and ODC. She's also grown the fund to nearly six times the size it was when she first signed on—to \$8.8 million last year.

Dede Wilsey

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR THE FINE ARTS MUSEUMS OF SAN FRANCISCO

This is a woman who claims that single-handedly raising the \$250 million necessary to build a new de Young was the most fun she's ever had. Now, she has filled the museums' calendars through 2014 with high-caliber exhibits that only she could have landed—including an October 2013 David Hockney show created specifically for the de Young.

John and Cynthia Gunn

CHAIRMAN OF THE SAN FRANCISCO OPERA BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND HIS WIFE

In June of 2011, in the midst of a down economy, the S.F. Opera won kudos around the world for a titanic undertaking: its presentation of Wagner's famed four-part *Ring* cycle. And it wouldn't have happened



Robert Mailer Anderson and Nicola Miner

COCHAIR OF SFJAZZ CAPITAL CAMPAIGN AND ORACLE HEIRESS

Eight years ago, the SFJAZZ Center's first gala fundraiser brought in \$210,000. Then Anderson stepped in—and, with his two cochairs, started making money for the Center hand over fist—to the tune of \$64 million by now. Together with his wife, Miner, Anderson contributes major funding to everything from the San Francisco International Poetry Festival to Litquake.

without longtime opera supporters John and Cynthia Gunn, who provided the single largest sum ever given by individual donors.

John E. McGuirk

PROGRAM DIRECTOR FOR PERFORMING ARTS AT THE WILLIAM AND FLORA HEWLETT FOUNDATION

Hewlett-Packard magnate William Hewlett's philosophy of never stifling a generous impulse is responsible for the foundation's \$14 million in arts awards each year—but it is grant maker McGuirk who has ensured a steady stream of worthy recipients. This cycle's diverse portfolio encompasses everything from the S.F. Opera to the Queer Women of Color Media Arts Project.

A-LISTERS

David Gockley

GENERAL DIRECTOR OF THE SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Gockley has done much to guard the San Francisco Opera's place as one of the top three companies in the country. He's a particularly avid champion of new works, including the wildly successful *Moby-Dick* by local composer Jake Heggie. Under his guidance, the company was the first to have its own in-house media suite, making it possible to screen performances in cinemas across the country, on PBS, and, of course, at AT&T Park.

Neal Benezra

DIRECTOR OF SFMOMA

At one point, the city was on the verge of losing the Fisher Collection—the treasure trove of contemporary art that Gap founders Don and Doris Fisher spent more than 40 years collecting. But then Benezra stepped in. SFMOMA's \$555 million expansion project will not only double the museum's square footage, but will also make it one of the most significant contemporary art museums in the U.S. after New York City's MoMA.

Alonzo King

FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF LINES BALLET

Despite having recently received a San Francisco Living Treasure Award from the S.F. Museum and Historical Society, King isn't exactly a household name—at least among non-dance people. But he should be. He's been dancing and choreographing his unique form of modern ballet here for 30 years and exporting his wondrous art to dancers and companies around the world. (Europe loves him.)

Jay Xu

DIRECTOR OF THE ASIAN ART MUSEUM

The first Chinese-American director of any major U.S. museum, Xu has deep ties to China that enable the Asian Art Museum to display works that otherwise might not make it to the Bay Area. "China's Terracotta Warriors: The First Emperor's Legacy," an extraordinary collection of artifacts more than 2,000 years old, is coming to the Asian this February because of him.

Carey Perloff

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF THE AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

A.C.T. was seriously floundering after the Loma Prieta earthquake—but then Perloff (no relation to Gregg) took over and never looked back. She has revived the conservatory's MFA program, achieved record subscriber numbers, and directed everything from innovative spins on the classics to American premieres of works by Stoppard and Pinter.



Michael Tilson Thomas
MUSIC DIRECTOR OF THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

Since rolling into town in 1995 with his ebullient personality, dashing looks, and leather jacket, MTT has transformed a very good orchestra into a great one. He champions the work of contemporary American composers; he made San Francisco fall in love with Gustav Mahler; and when he conducted the YouTube Symphony Orchestra in 2011 for a virtual audience of 33 million, he created the most-streamed live event ever.

Helgi Tomasson and Glenn McCoy

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BALLET

In his 27 years with the company, Tomasson has elevated the San Francisco Ballet to the international stage. And as executive director since 2002, McCoy has helped keep it there—and has brought it into people's homes. Thanks to him, the American premiere of John Neumeier's *The Little Mermaid* and Tomasson's critically acclaimed adaptation of *Nutcracker* both aired on PBS.

Carole Shorenstein Hays

PRESIDENT OF SHN

She's one-half of the partnership (Shorenstein Hays Nederlander) that brings Broadway to San Francisco at the Curran, Orpheum, and Golden Gate theaters. And she's the force behind the huge hit that went to Broadway from San Francisco (and is now on its way back): *Wicked*.

CAREER LAUNCHERS

Elaine Petrocelli

OWNER OF BOOK PASSAGE

When Petrocelli said that she didn't think much of the jacket color of local author Janis Cooke Newman's new book, *Mary*, publisher MacAdam/Cage had it reprinted, even though it meant taking a loss. The publisher did well to listen: Petrocelli has been the driving force behind more than a few literary success stories. Her picks for Book Passage's First Editions Club, which can put an unknown author on the Bay Area bestseller list inside a week, have included Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* and Abraham Verghese's *Cutting for Stone*.

Michelle Tea

FOUNDER OF RADAR PRODUCTIONS

The launch of queer-lit legend Tea's new Sister Spit imprint with City Lights Books this fall is the most recent in a long list of wins for Tea's nine-year-old literary nonprofit, Radar Productions. Radar's

annual Sister Spit tour, hailed by a fellow lesbian author as "the underground railroad for burgeoning queer writers," has gained recognition for the many queer authors who have traveled with it over the years.

Aaron Axelsen

MUSIC DIRECTOR OF LIVE 105

Many major acts owe their first minutes of mainstream radio host, including the Killers, Coldplay, and Phoenix. Popscore, the nightclub that Axelsen sponsors each week, is a must-play for new musicians on tour: It brought the likes of Amy Winehouse and Muse to the Bay Area long before they were popular in the States.

Stephanie Weisman

FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF THE MARSH

Weisman is the unparalleled champion of the solo artist. The many performers she has propelled into the national spotlight since opening the Marsh 23 years ago include Josh Kornbluth (three of whose personal monologues have been made into films), Brian Copeland (whose *Not a Genuine Black Man* became the longest-running show in the history of Bay Area theater), political storyteller Charlie Varon, and Dan Hoyle (whose *Tings Dey Happen* toured Nigeria with the sponsorship of the U.S. State Department).



Jeffrey Fraenkel

CO-OWNER OF FRAENKEL GALLERY

In 1979, when Fraenkel opened Fraenkel Gallery with his partner, Frish Brandt, he had no idea that it would become one of the area's most important places to buy photography. At the time, there was no real West Coast

photography market: Robert Adams was selling his photographs for \$500. Now they go for up to \$60,000 a print and are currently the subject of a major international retrospective.

Jessica Robinson Love

EXECUTIVE AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF COUNTERPULSE

Love is the power behind the city's scrappiest, most innovative performance space. To name just a few of the gifted artists whom she has championed, 2010 residents Violeta Luna and José Navarrete went on to produce their spoken-word and movement-based piece at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and 2007 resident Monique Jenkinson's drag-inspired performance work landed her center stage at the de Young as a 2012 Artist Fellow.

BEHIND-THE-SCENE-STERS

Alan Bamberger

FOUNDER OF ARTBUSINESS.COM

Bamberger says it was some combination of obsessive-compulsive disorder and the willingness to take on a major challenge that inspired him, back in 2003, to start cataloging and reviewing almost every art opening in San Francisco. Now, nearly ten years later, visitors to ArtBusiness.com can see what is effectively a decade's worth of the city's visual art history.

Susannah Greason Robbins

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE SAN FRANCISCO FILM COMMISSION

Everyone making movies should thank their lucky stars for Robbins, who took the helm of the San Francisco Film Commission in 2010. "Susan is rebranding San Francisco as a film location," says Sean House of 32ten Productions. The S.F. Film Collective—the low-rent incubator space she established—now harbors 10 local independent filmmaking groups, while her dogged promotion of the Scene in San

Francisco Rebate Program and the Vendor Discount Program helped bring Woody Allen to town to shoot his latest film.

Brad Erickson

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THEATRE BAY AREA

For the past nine years, Erickson has headed Theatre Bay Area, the largest regional-theater service organization in the country. Among its many offerings are funding for local theater groups, a bimonthly magazine, a discount ticket service, and open auditions three times a year for wannabe thespians.

Courtney Fink

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

Fink's baby within Southern Exposure is a program called Alternative Exposure, which offers innovative support of the fringing visual arts. Fink gets foundation money that she then "re-grants" to gallery spaces, artist workshops and residency programs, community arts education programs, and so on. The Andy Warhol Foundation, which funded AE, likes it so much that it exported the model to Houston, Chicago, and Kansas City.

Justin Giarla

OWNER OF THE SHOOTING GALLERY

Giarla opened the Shooting Gallery in the Tenderloin in 2003, when the name was a pretty accurate reflection of both the neighborhood and the lowbrow art he showed there. Today, he's the proprietor of three Tenderloin galleries (and a fourth that will open in February) and the co-curator of Shepard Fairey's first solo retrospective. He is celebrated for showcasing the best in both international and Bay Area urban art.

Cheryl Haines

PRINCIPAL OF HAINES GALLERY AND FOUNDER OF THE FOR-SITE FOUNDATION

Last Memorial Day weekend, 16 artists from across the country and beyond gathered at Fort Point to produce "International Orange," a project commemorating the 75-year life of the Golden Gate Bridge. The undertaking was masterminded by Haines,

whose For-Site Foundation, founded in 2003, is dedicated to fostering place-based art and has brought the city such iconic works as Andy Goldsworthy's *Spire* and the 2009 multi-artist installation *Presidio Habitats*.

Anita Monga and Stacey Wisnia

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE SAN FRANCISCO SILENT FILM FESTIVAL

This duo's ability to draw enthusiastic crowds has made San Francisco's silent film festival the largest in the country. This past spring, they gained nationwide attention for premiering the

restoration of the 1927 film *Napoleon*, complete with an orchestral rendition of the film's original score.

Wayne Hazzard

COFOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF DANCERS' GROUP

One reason that the Bay Area is able to support such a thriving dance scene is that Hazzard cofounded Dancers' Group in 1982. Among the most active dance service organizations in the country, it provides financial sponsorship for around 120 dance groups, free performances around the city, and aid for dancers suffering from life-threatening illnesses.

Sylvia Lindsey

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA BOARD MEMBER

Once a year, this nutritionist turned arts advocate transforms the War Memorial Opera House into the height of southern comfort, cajoling her fellow board members into preparing and serving a barbecue to 300 to 500 guests. The first African American to join the opera's board (back in '87), Lindsey has been tireless in her efforts to bring more diversity to the art form—putting tickets into the hands of those who can't afford them and championing an education program that currently reaches 16,000 students a year.



Sandra Phillips

SENIOR CURATOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY AT SFMOMA

When the Vatican Library decided to reveal a major collection of photographs never before seen by the outside world, it chose to do it in partnership with SFMOMA—because of Phillips. Her keen curatorial eye has gained SFMOMA a reputation for having the most original photography program in the country, and her exhibitions routinely travel to major museums the world over.

Marc Bamuthi Joseph

DIRECTOR OF PERFORMING ARTS AT YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS

There's a good reason for the tremendous uptick in quality performance work at YBCA, and his name is Marc Bamuthi Joseph. His unique fusion of spoken word and theater has gained him national recognition (his piece *Word Becomes Flesh* is currently making an NEA-sponsored tour of North America), and he was vital to the formation of the Living Word Project, the celebrated resident theater company of Youth Speaks.

Dawn Holliday

GENERAL MANAGER AND CO-OWNER OF SLIM'S AND THE GREAT AMERICAN MUSIC HALL

Jack Knowles made a smart move when he tapped Holliday to be the booker at his new Preservation Hall West at the Chapel. She helps line up acts for Slim's and GAMH and is now in charge of the Hardly Strictly Bluegrass festival. A genuine fan, Holliday is in it for the music, not the celebrity-rubbing fame of it all, and musicians and industry folks alike love her for it.

Alan Brown

SENIOR RESEARCHER AT WOLFBROWN

Some culture folks consider Brown the premier arts consultant in the country. Major foundations hire him to help them decide how to allocate their money, as do arts organizations like the San Francisco Ballet, which employed him to research audience engagement.

MID-MARKET REVIVALISTS

Laurie Lazer and Darryl Smith

COFOUNDERS OF THE LUGGAGE STORE GALLERY

They're pioneers in the mid-Market revival, with projects like the Tenderloin National Forest; the transformation of derelict Cohen Alley into a green space framed by murals and populated with performances; and Trailhead, an espresso bar, jeans-manufacturing workshop, and indoor green space tucked into one corner of the Renoir Hotel.

Joshua Simon and Leiasa Beckham

DIRECTOR OF REAL ESTATE CONSULTING AND REAL ESTATE CONSULTANT AT NORTHERN CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY LOAN FUND

"We love white elephants," says Simon, referring to the unconventional spaces—some of which don't even show up in a traditional real estate search—that he and Beckham have come up with for many mid-Market arts groups, including Trailhead, SF Camerawork, the S.F. Film Collective, and many more.

Ellen Richard

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

Richard is the one who snagged the old Strand Theatre, on Market Street, to fulfill Carey Perloff's dream of a place to showcase the work of A.C.T.'s MFA students. She also started the Costume Shop, which currently plays host to a rotating lineup of performances by small innovative theaters such as Campo Santo, Magic Theatre, and S.F. Recovery Theatre.

Shelley Trott

SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER FOR ARTS AT KENNETH RAININ FOUNDATION

In the foundation's mere four years of existence, Trott has awarded nearly \$700,000 to more than 20 arts-related programs in mid-Market. Currently, she is trying to come up with ways to help arts organizations deal with the area's sharply rising rents.



Deborah Cullinan

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF INTERSECTION FOR THE ARTS

From Intersection's new home inside the *Chronicle* building, Cullinan has forged an alliance with the 5M Project—the development effort dedicated to transforming the four-acre space between Fifth, Mission, and Howard streets—and has already begun rolling out programming.

Amy Cohen and Ellyn Parker

DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBORHOOD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PROJECT MANAGER IN THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

No one in city government has been more instrumental than Cohen in keeping the Central Market Partnership (the official name for the public-private initiative to revitalize the area) on track. And Parker is her right-hand woman where the arts are concerned: She spends most of her time facilitating projects like 24 Days of Central Market Arts and other guerrilla arts activities in and around U.N. Plaza.

Elvin Padilla Jr.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE TENDERLOIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

As powerful a community organizer as you're likely to find, Padilla is an important line of communication between city hall and the people, businesses, and organizations in the area that are otherwise "kind of invisible," he says. His ability to forge partnerships has brought key players like the Kenneth Rainin and San Francisco foundations into the mix.