

First-ever celebration of all abilities joins Sunday Streets at the Civic Center Plaza

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Sunday, Sept. 8, the day of the first annual Getting There Together: a Celebration of All Ages & Abilities dawned bright and beautiful. By the opening hour, 11 a.m., the resource tables were greeting the first fairgoers, the morning exercise leaders had warmed up, and the earliest audience members had taken seats in front of the main stage on the Larkin Avenue steps of the Public Library.



Dignity Dog (of the Dignity Fund Coalition) and others start the day with some stretches. Photo by Judy Goddess.

The speaker program was kept short, befitting a day dedicated to celebrating the talent of local seniors and people with disabilities. State Senator Scott Weiner addressed the need for housing and food. San Francisco District 7 supervisor Norman Yee spoke of the importance for safe streets and the need to provide more services for seniors and people with disabilities.

The main stage featured performances by both professional and non-professional groups, including the Samahang Pinoy group from the Curry Senior Center, the Sunny Line Dancers from the OMI Senior Center, the San Francisco Dance Group, dancers from the Richmond Senior Center, andLos Rumberos from the Mission Neighborhood Center.



The Curry Senior Center booth. Photo by Judith Sandoval.

Just before noon, Marc Brew, the artistic director of the AXIS Dance Company, took the stage. AXIS is one of the countryâ??s leading dance troupes integrating disabled and non-disabled performers. Brew performed two pieces: a solo, â??Remember When,â?• and a duet with Yuko Monden Juma, â??In Defense of Regret. â??



Marc Brew and Yuko Monden Juma of the AXIS Dance Company. Photo by Judy Goddess.

â??Physically integrated dance challenges peopleâ??s perceptions of dance and disability,â?• said Brew. â??We commission choreographers with and without disabilities to work on our company. â??

AXIS also sponsor an annual choreo-lab supporting the next generation of disabled choreographers.



AXIS will be performing at Z Space in San Francisco from October 25-27. Tickets can be purchased online at zspace.org.

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â??I dance with AXIS because they bring dance to a lot of communities, which I want to do. I believe dance can help people to express who they are, no matter if they are disabled or non-disabled,â?• said Juma, one of the troupeâ??s non-disabled members. â??Dance can help people to communicate without language and allows people to be themselves.â?•

At 1 p.m., after the Sunny Line Dancers cleared the stage, over 300 members of the Community Music Centerâ??s Older Adult Chorusâ?? belted out show tunes, music from Latin America and songs from the Philippines.



Members of the Community Music Centerâ??s Adult Choirs perform. Photo by Young Chau.

The adult choirs started some five years ago as part of a research project, said CMC Program Director Sylvia Sherman. â??The research is over but weâ??re adding new choirs. Now there are 14, and another is starting up soon,â?• she said.

The crowd grew quiet when a young man who goes by the name Zachary K, took the stage to recite an original poem (see below). A wheelchair user, Zachary is an advocate for himself and other people with disabilities, frequently speaking at City Hall to improve services and access. He said he tries to channel his chronic pain into positive energy by singing blues songs and writing poetry.



Zachary K reads his poem on living with a disability. Photo by Judith Sandoval.

Dignity Dog, the greatly loved mascot for Prop I, the proposition that secured funding for services and people with disabilities, even made an appearance, shambling around, stretching her paws with the Always Active exercisers and posing for pictures with young and old alike.


Dignity Dog

The author with Dignity Dog, aka Marie Jobling, executive director of the San Francisco Community Living Campaign. Photo by Judith Sandoval.

Getting There Together was sponsored by the Coalition of Agencies Serving the Elderly in partnership with Livable City/Sunday Streets, the Department of Aging and Adult Services, Age and Disability Friendly San Francisco, and the Dignity Fund Coalition.

An access booth, assistive hearing devices, adaptive technology, golf carts to increase mobility, and ample water conveyed the organizersâ?? message: â??this day is for everyone. We want to see everybody involved. This day reflects our city as we want it to be.â?•



Photo by Judith Sandoval.

â??Wow, what an incredible event!â?• exclaimed Greg Moore, CASE co-chair, who, when not planning street fairs, holds the title of Manager, Safe Passage at the Tenderloin Community Benefit District.

â??I Have Value:â?? a poem by Zachary K

I-have-value-poem

Category

1. All Posts

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