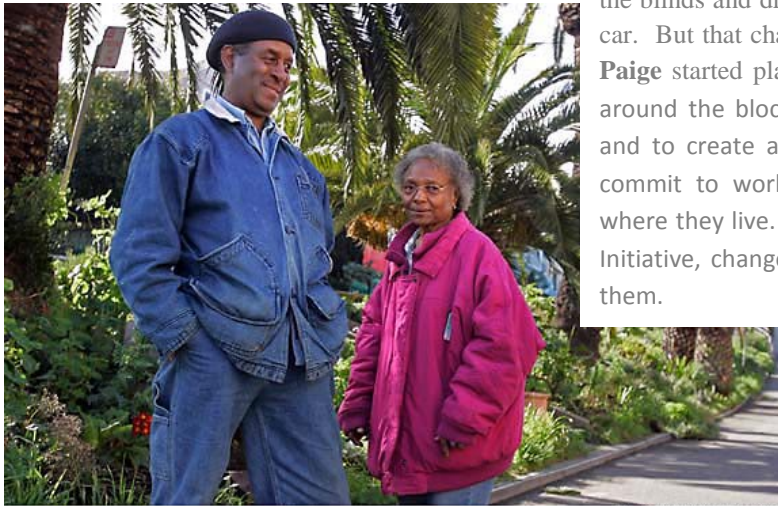




Quesada Gardens is what community looks like

What do you do when the block you live on has been so choked with drugs, addicts, and violent crime that no one seems to remember better days? If you lived on Quesada Avenue in Bayview Hunters Point a few years back, you would pull down the blinds and dread the inevitable dash to the bus stop or your car. But that changed in 2002 when **Annette Smith and Karl Paige** started planting flowers and vegetables here and there around the block. Other residents jumped in to help them, and to create art, share history, organize block events, and commit to working together to strengthen the community where they live. Together, they formed the Quesada Gardens Initiative, changed their world, and inspired all those around them.



Chronicle / Kurt Rogers

**For more, visit
www.QuesadaGardens.org**

People just like **Annette Smith** and **Karl Paige** are stepping forward all the time to make a difference, *today*, where they live.

Narrow strategies for social, environmental and even economic change are making way for comprehensive approaches that start at the grassroots, acknowledge the interconnectedness and complexity of all things, leverage the effectiveness of community workers and small groups, and prioritize local communities.

Sustainable local systems and community-supportive public policy

Whatever our primary personal or professional goals may be, we can all contribute to building community and local systems by supporting emerging policy trends.

- ✓ Support all kinds of local-first efforts (e.g., shop local campaigns).
- ✓ Reinvent civic and public engagement strategies that turn sparsely attended and politicized “town hall meetings” at a central place into honest conversations with people where they already gather. (e.g., focus groups in church basements, branch libraries, and diverse community group meeting rooms).
- ✓ Incorporate community-building components into non-local projects (e.g., community art at transit hubs).

- ✓ Establish a universal metric of social cohesion so we know both where there is work to do and when we succeed.
- ✓ Invest in the emerging class of community workers (e.g., hire from within the community for all aspects of a program that targets that community, or center your career in your own community).
- ✓ Resist uniformity, and search for opportunities to express the cultural, social and environmental uniqueness of a place and its people (e.g., follow principles of environmental design and draw wisdom from the immediate community so that infrastructure, buildings, businesses, programs and more end up serving the people for whom they are intended).