



## Quesada Gardens is what community looks like

What do you do when the block you live on has been so choked with drugs, substance abuse 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. But that changed in 2002 when **Annette Smith and Karl Paige** started planting flowers and vegetables here and there around the 1700 block of Quesada. 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.



Visit [www.QuesadaGardens.org](http://www.QuesadaGardens.org)

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## Build community! Champion community-supportive policies.

We can all contribute to building community strength by supporting emerging policy trends.

- ✓ Support **local living** efforts from sustainable streets and traffic planning to shop local campaigns, local hiring policies, and local buying incentives that kick in when public benefit dollars are spent.
- ✓ 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 community group meeting rooms).
- ✓ **Incorporate community building** components into non-local projects (e.g., community-generated 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 community sector** of professional and quasiprofessional workers who work in and for their neighborhood (e.g., hire from within the community for all aspects of a program that targets that community, purchase what you need from businesses likely to keep your dollars in the neighborhood, champion businesses and community groups that bring people together when they do what they do, or center your career in your own community).
- ✓ **Resist uniformity and embrace diversity.** Search for opportunities to express the cultural, social and environmental uniqueness of place and 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).

People just like **Annette Smith and Karl Paige** are making a difference, *today*, where they live. Narrow strategies for social, environmental and even economic change are morphing into 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.