

Bay Area Women's & Children's Center

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Program Report – 2017

We are happy to share this short update to let you know what's been happening with a few of our BAWCC programs lately. The school year is about ready to start again, and we are looking forward to providing programs and services to the children and families there as well as at our Center in the heart of the Tenderloin.

Our BAWCC programs at the school went well this past year, but in many ways, it was a tough year for a lot of our students and families. Because we have such a diverse student population, with our largest populations now being Latino and Arabic, our families were very fearful after the election. Those two populations make up just under half of our 300+ students now, and the rest are families from many, many cultures-Asian, Southeast Asian, Pacific Islanders, Russian, African American, mixed... The families' anxiety seemed to ease up a bit for a while, but appears to now be back in full force.

I've done a lot of reflecting this year on how our student population has changed over the years since the school opened 19 years ago, not just in terms of the racial/ethnic diversity, but in terms of behavior. There really are many more children with challenging behaviors in classrooms throughout the whole school now than when we first opened, and from what I hear from my friends who are working in other schools throughout the City, this is the case in schools all across San Francisco. Working with our incredible school principal, Anastasia Shattner, and a great instructional leadership team at the school, we developed an approach to begin to address this.

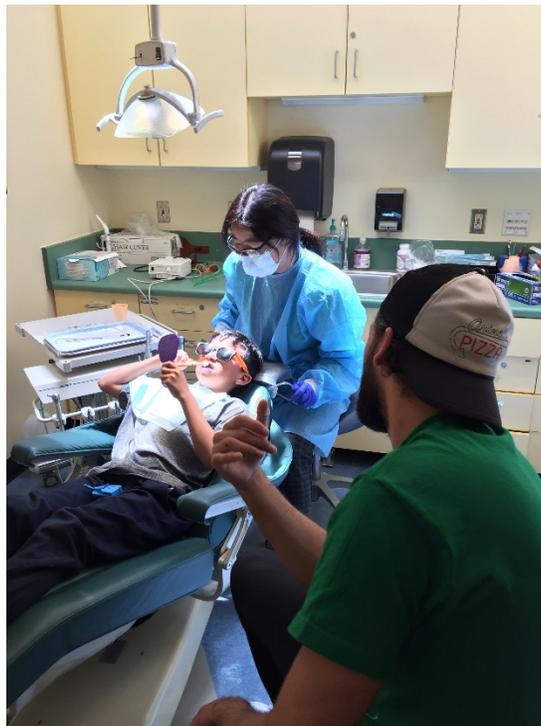
I'm happy to report that Dr. Kara Wright joined our staff again to launch our new **Family Support Program**. She is the pediatrician who was BAWCC's first on-site doctor when we had the Medical Clinic in the early years at the school. Then, she went off to join the faculty at UCSF and was in a pediatric practice for twelve years. Kara and I always stayed in touch though, and last year the timing was perfect because when we wanted to hire someone to do expanded family & student support at the school, Kara was ready to leave her clinical practice to pursue her other love, public health. (She also has a Master of Public Health from Berkeley, which is where we first met her.) This ended up being a great match for us and for her. Kara, or "Dr. K" as the kids and families call her, has been extremely helpful in working with our students and their families this school year.

The **Dental Clinic** is a program that every school with low-income students should have. Our lead dentist, Dr. Ling Zhan, is a marvel. In addition to being a faculty member at UCSF and a researcher, she could not be a harder worker or a better advocate for our Dental Clinic and our students. UCSF, like so many big institutions, goes through its political ups and downs, but Pam Den Besten, the chair of pediatric dentistry who started our Clinic at Tenderloin school, and Ling, are steadfast in their support for our Dental Clinic. Sometimes, they are our firewall with the school's administration. Bless them. They know how critically important these services are to our kids.

In the last school year, our Dental Clinic completed 1,548 procedures on students, from cleaning to x-rays to root canals (ugh), and that was in just one school year! As always, BAWCC pays UCSF for their staffing of the Clinic, but it is 100% free for the families. We are about ready to tally the numbers for the school year that just ended. It will be interesting to see what the breakdown is for this year, but my bet is that we will match or exceed the work accomplished in past years.

I'm including a picture I took last Monday on our last day of the Clinic during this school year. The little guy in the chair is in our "ED" special education class, and he can be quite a challenge in his classroom. That's why there is a paraprofessional with him in the picture of his visit to the Dental Clinic.

Like so many of our students though, once he had visited the Clinic and met the dentists who are incredible with children, he calmed down and in this case with much encouragement, he ended up being a good patient (which was such a good thing since he really needed work done on the last of many teeth that were decayed and needed to be treated!)



Our **Technology Program** had the strongest tech coordinator I've ever hired for the school, & that's saying something, because we have had some excellent computer center coordinators in the past. Actually, I've known Lizzy Harvey since she was in high school. She interned with me during three summers. Then as soon as she came back from college, I snapped her up. Of the hundreds of people I've supervised over the past 35 years, Lizzy stands out. By the 5th week of school, Lizzy had connected with all 12 classroom teachers who teach kindergarten through 3rd grades, and she was already teaching tech lessons to our youngest students, starting with "digital citizenship" lessons, or how to stay safe at any age if you are on your computers, tablets... That was a real feat. Usually it takes months to connect with those twelve teachers to set up the tech lessons. She updated and took care of all of the school's iPads, hundreds of them, and jumped in to teach several after-school clubs every single week. Unfortunately, I am not the only person who recognized how unique and special Lizzy is. The folks from Fulbright got in touch with her (she had been a finalist, and someone dropped out mid-year), and she ended up going to Argentina in March. I was disappointed, but understood how hard it was to turn down that opportunity, and she could not have worked harder to leave our program in the best shape possible for our next tech coordinator who will start in the beginning of the new school year.

We wrapped up all of our BAWCC **After-School Clubs**, and again this year, I am so happy that we can offer these for free to the students. This year, we had our 2nd year of partnering with SF Ballet DISC/Dance in Schools & Communities Program for a Dances from Around the World Club where the students learned dances from different cultures represented at the school. Their year-end performance was a real crowd-pleaser! We have Homework Help Clubs every day except Friday (who wants to do homework on Friday!?) and they have been such a help to students who are not able to finish their homework at home because of challenging living situations. We have several sports clubs, from rugby, to team sports, to cheerleading. Last year, we bought cheerleading uniforms for our students (thanks, Joan!), and they cheer at the monthly assemblies at the school. It is SO fun to cheer along with them in our monthly Lion Assemblies! BAWCC sponsors lots more fun clubs, including our two new ones this year, a Board Games Club for our littlest ones (K-2), and a World Explorers Club. And—last but not least, the much-loved and most popular of our clubs, Cooking Club. Every once in a while when I peek in on them, I get to sample their weekly treats. Yum! ☺



Finally -- the rooftop garden is a gorgeous, colorful oasis at the school that just draws you in. I'm also including these pictures of **Phyllis' Garden**, but they don't do it justice—the colors are brilliant and just--happy. You cannot help but smile when you are walking by the garden on the third floor of the school. I'm so glad that the students and staff get to have this cheerful haven that is a part of their every day lives.



Hopefully, this gives you an idea of some of what BAWCC has been up to lately. Of course, our work at the Center on Leavenworth Street continues as always. We are a steady, welcoming, homey presence for the many women and families who come to us needing help connecting with resources or who just need someone they trust that they can talk to. We are so happy that we can be there for them.

Warmest regards,

Midge Wilson
Executive Director, BAWCC