the valencia gardens oral history project

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INTRODUCTION:

In the spring of 1996, the San Francisco Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIASF) and the San Francisco Housing Authority (SFHA) created a partnership to work toward the rehabilitation of Valencia Gardens. The original plan was to create a resident participation plan, do a design competition and continue to work together for the implementation of the plan. This partnership was soon expanded to include the Valencia Gardens Resident Council and the work began.

A unique resident participation effort was devised in the form of an ORAL HISTORY PROJECT with the goal of involving as many of the residents of Valencia Gardens as possible. To test the concept of the ORAL HISTORY PROJECT as a vehicle to convey information about residents to the people who would be working on the rehabilitation of Valencia Gardens a pilot project was completed using 12 Valencia Gardens residents, and a 7 minute tape was made of the interviews with the residents. This tape was first shared with the residents of Valencia Gardens at a monthly resident association meeting and was enthusiastically approved. The tape was then shared with Housing Authority officials and with the Convention Committee at AIASF, both groups were also enthusiastic about the results and agreed to fund a full scale ORAL HISTORY PROJECT.

After a year of work the results of the oral history project are on display here at Valencia Gardens. In the community room and several adjoining spaces 70 banners now hang with quotes from and pictures of the Valencia Gardens residents who participated in the project.

The work done by the Valencia Gardens residents in this project was key in convincing the SFHA to apply for the Hope VI Grant, and the clear picture of the residents that was given in the application as the result of this project was a significant element in obtaining the grant for $23.2 million for the rehabilitation of Valencia Gardens.

But the most important use of the ORAL HISTORY PROJECT is for the residents of Valencia Gardens to be honored for their courage, imagination and ability to persevere and, despite great odds, to work toward the betterment of themselves and their families.
Quotations and Pictures
from
the Valencia Gardens Oral History Project
1. Tot Nuygent and friends playing a game during Tet.
2. Tot Nuygent and husband
3. Francesca Soto's daughter
1. We got to know each other in Vietnam waiting to come to America, now we are best friends here ... when we move in there was a different manager, the manager before Bruce, it was really, really difficult to live with her, when my son leaves his car here they steal the tires, they break the windows, and when we complain the manager did not help until Bruce came over to become manager, then every time we have a problem we come in and Bruce helps right away, we don’t know why Bruce left because Bruce helped a lot at Valencia Gardens, he did such a good job, he was the one who helped people, he always took care of the problem right away and we didn’t have to wait too long. Tot Nguent: Phat Dang

2. When Valencia Gardens switched over from military to civilian control my grandmother was the first person to move in ... I have lived in Valencia Gardens on and off for most of my life ... when I was a kid it wasn’t too bad to say you lived here ... people don’t understand the statues, people who live here don’t realize the value of these of their history ... the only other place I have seen that is in front of the UC Hospital ... children throughout the years have grown pretty fond of this one (the mouse) because as children grow up in the housing development, you’re a real kid when you can climb on this thing, that’s what separates the little kids from the older ones, when you are old enough or get enough agility to climb up on this, once you have made it when you are a kid you go -- Yeah, I made it, I’m not a toddler, I’m not a baby anymore -- that usually happens around six. Francesca Soto Esteves

3. This has always been a nice complex, it never really did look like a project, but if you got a bunch of people who don’t care about where they live it will look just like a project, you gotta care where you are staying ... before I had neighbors stayed up here and I had one stay around the corner, we used to take turns washing down the stairs, you don’t hardly ever see a neighbor washing down the stairs anymore, I have to wash mine because they come up here and pee and it is right in front of the door, but other than that to me this is not a bad place to live, we used to have a lot of drive-bys and stuff like that but through the years they stopped coming, stopped dying ... they don’t have drug traffic like they used to have here and that’s been gone for five years, heavy drug traffic, it has nothing to do with the little security police they have here, had been quiet for years. Verrall Guthrie
4. I came to America in 1991 from Vietnam, my family escaped from Vietnam to look for freedom, I finished high school in Vietnam where I learned French and some English ... when I came to America I learned nail care, I attend English classes at City College where I met my husband, he is Chinese but also from Vietnam and works in a grocery store in the neighborhood, I am expecting a baby in five months and we have picked out names, if it is a girl, Vivian, if it is a boy, Anthony ... I dream of my child getting a good education and my husband and I getting good jobs. Duong Thy Tran

5. My son came to the United States in 1982 and he sponsored me to come, but I had to wait a long time, I came to the United States in 1993 and moved into Valencia Gardens in 1994. when I first moved to Valencia Gardens I was very scared and worried but now I feel relaxed, comfortable and safe here, especially I feel safe with the security guards here, there is less noise at night, in Vietnam I sold food in the market and lived outside Saigon in a city near the ocean, I had eight children and five of my children are still in Vietnam, that causes me sadness, now I take care of my granddaughter and feel lucky, my children respect me and help take care of me. Kien Ly

6. I want all my kids to respect me so I have to do the good thing and the right thing ... I try with all my best to set up everything straight ahead ... I got no money, so I apply for housing, I say only one way I can take care of my family. First my son he disagree, he says "No mom, you can't go over there there are drug dealers and the people kill each other, I don't know why we have to come and live here". I say -- their business is their business, as long as you don't stick your nose in their business ... you go to school and come home, don't get involved with them, then we don't have any problem, let the police find them it is not our job ... Mom cannot afford to pay for rent and you have to go to school ... its really difficult ... Susie Barrara

7. I came to live here seven years ago, it was very difficult when I moved in because of the cultures, the lack of understanding we had, it was very difficult, the atmosphere here was too heavy, too much drugs, we have a mixture of cultures, Chinese, Samoan, but Samoan we don't have too much, Latinos, African American, Vietnamese, and now it's much better because we have the security, its better for the children now than it used to
be because now they can get out and play, it's not so violent and scary for the children outside, it's a much better atmosphere for them. Amelia Campos

8. When I moved in I painted my apartment ... after a couple of people saw it they said -- we ought to put you to work for housing -- which I wouldn't mind doing, but I can't because of physical problems ... (I learned to paint from) my mother's boyfriend who was an interior/exterior painter and he taught me to paint ... but I had carpal tunnel syndrome and I can't paint ... I was a die polisher at the mint, and I prepared the die for the mold. I prepared the mold for the coin and too much wrist action messed my wrist up, it started bothering me and I didn't pay any attention to it ... I was painting one day and my fingers wouldn't open ... I went to pick up a frying pan and I couldn't hold it. Verna Braza

9. I had a restaurant in El Salvador, I used to work everyday, and if you work everyday you can afford what you want for lunch ... but, I left everything behind when I came here ... I came when Carter was president ... when I was visiting my son Carter was giving one month for people from El Salvador to become residents ... I feel like I won the lottery, because I was able to stay ... in my restaurant I would sell pupusas, sodas, food, all kinds of dishes, and I would give people that needed a plate of food I would give it to them, or go to a shelter and give them the leftovers ... I even let some people sleep in the restaurant because I couldn't stand people being in the streets. Maria Ruano

10. I left Vietnam because with the Communists in the government, they say I have children in the United States that are rich people, so everytime they come I have to pay double money or pay more than anybody else, but I cannot afford it and I was in contact with my children to sponsor us to the United States, we were too old for labor work, but without pay they sent us out into the fields to work, if you have someone living in the United States if you do not work in the fields you have to pay money, we cannot afford first the energy and second the money so we ask our children to sponsor us to come to the United States so we can live in freedom. Ung Gon Thi
9. Typical dish from Maria Ruano's restaurant.
12. Ha Nhut
14. Lynette Wallace and her daughter
11. Maybe we could have a community day where everybody in the whole place brings a dish, sit out in the garden and get to know each other, talk to each other; to see that everybody is not bad, that there are some good people here ... that's what I'd like to see ... but first, we need to make this a better place to live by tearing the inside out, by tearing the inside out of these projects and giving these people what they really need, a decent place to live in, places roach free, rat free ... if we could get some of the people downtown and get them to realize how we are really living, how some of these places in here are really intolerable, there are places where there are rats and mice ... rats in the houses ... I even have black widow spiders in my house ... I have put them in a bottle and brought them to the office, just so they can see I'm not deranged or anything. Ethel Williams

12. I moved to Valencia Gardens in 1990, I live here with my daughter, I moved in because I was on welfare and didn't have enough money to support myself and my daughter, now I am working as a seamstress in a factory and my daughter is going to San Francisco State ... it used to be so noisy at night that I had trouble sleeping, but it is much better since the security guards are here ... I would like some ESL classes in Valencia Gardens to improve my English, but they would have to be in the evening after work. Ha Nhat

13. I went through a lot of things in my life and maybe in the past three years I've gone through so much and he (Bruce the former project manager) has been there for me and my mom ... he listened to us, heard a lot of our problems, gave us advice, good advice, so he is a very special person in our life ... my mom has been there for me through all the bad times, and the good times too, but mainly the bad ones, a lot of things happen in my life that she was there for... Ana Ortiz

14. I want to be a child psychologist ... (I picked) child psychology to deal with my daughter, she is a little awful sometimes, and I like being with kids go I think I can help them out ... I actually learned to control my temper, because I used to have a quick temper with her ... my friend has a daughter, and her daughter got taken away from her because her temper is so quick and fast, and I didn't want that to happen to me, so I had to learn how to deal with it, so I thought that was a good thing to learn about temper and child behavior ... I gave myself five years to be
here and five years to be on welfare so I have two more years to complete everything I want to do... **Lynette Wallace**

15. He works (my husband) with Bank of America and with United too, at Bank of America he is customer service, he has two jobs, he is working hard because he wants to move out of here, and doesn’t want children to grow up here. He starts at 10 at night and gets off at 6am at B of A, then he starts at 10am and gets off at 2pm from United Airlines, and then he just comes to sleep for the whole day, so I go to my mom’s house or my sister’s, so he can sleep, because with all the children here he can’t sleep . . . .

I’m pending on Worker’s Camp because I had an injury, I had surgery on my hand and that’s why I’m pending right now because they are not paying me and it’s really frustrating because I’ve never been dependent on anyone else, just myself and my work. I was working with B of A, I was a sorter operator in sorting checks and the machine fell on my hand and dislocated my bone and a ligament tore so I had to have surgery ... the thumb is stiff now ... they are trying to relocate me somewhere else in the bank ... I’ve applied for five jobs and I’m waiting for interviews. **Laura Ortiz**

16. There are programs for kids I’d like to see, like extra money for kids to go on field trips or with the art program, the zoo for the young kids, something for the teen-agers like Great America ... Housing Authority doesn’t have the money, but if we have a couple of fund raisers and have a couple of parents to supervise ... ways to raise money, cupcake sales, international food day and sell it for a dollar, rummage sales ... there are lots of ideas ... a marathon for teen-agers to run around the block ... something that kids can do to raise money ... there are a lot of things you can do to raise money but everyone has to get together to do it ... kids in Valencia Gardens are not bad, they just need a push in the right area. **Lena Ingram**

17. I live here but you would never know it cause you never see me here, I’m going in the morning and I’m back at night ... before moving here I was in Hunter’s Point and I was raised on that side of town ... before the weapons there were parties, you were allowed to go to Sunnydale, to Portero Hill, it was not problem because everyone was
coming up and wanted to party but now you go on each others turf and they want to shoot you up ... (I want my daughter to know how to defend herself) until this world is a better place that we can walk and not have fear of our child being kidnapped or raped, that's my greatest fear of her having to go through that trauma ... because, you know, you never heal ... .

What's most important to me is getting out of here ... trying to land a job that's gonna provide benefits for me and my children and start saving for their college fund and letting them know this isn't the only life that they have to live ... I like being me but sometimes I'm like hidden and I don't know who I am, but I was thinking if I write a book, I don't think everybody would want to know all the gossip, but it would be pretty thick, you would get chills, and you would probably say -- shame on me, or shame on my family, or just shame itself.

Tressa Knox

18. Ever since I had my place I ain’t never let it go, I ain’t never been behind in my rent and I ain’t never let nobody stay with me ... it’s cool, it’s really cool ... I can come home and relax and say it’s mine, I can do what I want to do, take off my shoes whenever I want to, take a bath or whatever ... that’s the cool part about having your own place, I had to do that because I knew my kids mother was dying of AIDS but I didn’t know she was gonna die that soon, so I had to make sure my kids had a roof over their head cause I don’t want nobody to take my kids away from me, I love them too much, I will fight for them to my end, if I had to die so they could live I’d do it, cause I’ve had my time up here and I love them so much. Charles Stanberry

19. (When my daughter moved out, I couldn’t afford regular rent) ... Now, I thank God I have this little apartment ... I was so against moving in, but thank God I have it despite some of the things going on outside, I’m very grateful that I have it, I don’t have to worry about electricity, garbage ... I don’t feel safe 100% , there have been four robbery attempts on the door ... .

Bruce (the manager) put a metal sleeve on the door, two of them as a matter of fact, and that helped and he put something on the gate with an automatic door shatter that is on a long stick and that will close the door behind you when people would carelessly go out and leave it open, that has reduced to almost zero the amount of non-visiters,
our stairs were their bathroom, our stairs where they had sex where would find things on the floor, our stairs also were to do their drugs, but once that little automatic shutter was put in with me writing a lot of letters, that’s what I have to do, write a lot of letters to have this put in... Merna Escobar

20. I was an official of the government of South Vietnam, when the communists took over the south of Vietnam, all officers go to jail, after I get out of jail I think cannot be with the communists with hunger and poverty, and I have no freedom, no democracy, no human rights, so I choose to go to the United States... I was in jail seven years in the forest, in the deep forest, not in the town in the forest, we have to cut wood, to make homes, we were always hungry... now I am going to City College with my son to study computer science and learn English... but sometimes I am homesick because I left two children behind in Vietnam... at first I did not feel safe here but it is better with the security guards. Hai Nguyen

21. It’s not what people think, they stereotype people from the projects... people think everybody that lives here is on welfare, is on drugs or is an alcoholic... they stereotype people from the projects and you find after you’ve lived here for a while it isn’t true, there are a lot of people who work that live here and a lot of people who don’t work but that aren’t on drugs or alcohol but one just trying to make it the best they can, it’s really hard to go through years of embarrassment... my oldest, she was embarrassed, she didn’t want to bring friends home that weren’t from here...

My son goes to International Studies Academy, it’s a public school... they study language all four years they get to take trips to different countries... he has been in gifted classes since he was very small, he is a straight A student... he doesn’t agree with the lifestyle of the teen-agers here, he goes to school, he comes home, he plays guitar and he a friend from school are trying to start a band... when I was young we could go bowling, we could go ice skating, you could run down and have fun at playground at the beach, there was a lot of things that aren’t available to our kids... there’s a lot of kids who grew up here that don’t realize that there is a world out there, it’s truly sad because their whole life revolves around these four blocks... they have been beyond these four blocks but in their mind this is it and they don’t see that there is a world out there. Kim James
19. Merna Escobar
23. Bernadette Scarbrough and her half-sister
26. Willie Eldridge
22. I moved to Valencia Gardens in 1992, but I came from Mexico to help relatives in this country who were sick. In Mexico I used to work in a shoe store, here I help a friend sell Avon and I have volunteered at La Raza. When I moved into Valencia Gardens I was very happy because I didn’t have a home and this was the best I could have gotten. An apartment for me and my daughter. At the beginning there were times when I felt a little scared and I was worried for my daughter but eventually I got used to it, but now everyone knows me and I’m starting to know people and I am comfortable. I don’t bother anyone and no one bothers me. Celia Lambrans

23. (we need) After school programs for the kids; tutoring, there are computers here why not put them to use, computers are the thing now, kids in school are doing that, I would love to allow my son to come down here and work on the computer ... get some people down here to help start a little after school computer class ... and, have balls and jump ropes and games ... (in the past) when we had programs we had jump ropes, basketballs, so we could come and get them, we had checkers, monopoly ... I taught a little boy to play checkers, he didn’t know how to play checkers and he was so happy, I let him beat me and everything ...

(The children) need that because sometimes their parent is at work and doesn’t have the time, it’s something the kids really need, cause the kids are just out there and some of the mothers don’t care ... (for the computer classes) you need a couple of people from the outside that are really professional, then get a couple of residents and I think that would get them to come out ... I know a little bit about computers and I’d be willing to help on my days off ... I’m learning more and I would love to teach ... to play with the kids and let them know that people do care, the don’t have to go out and be bad out there, they just need that little bit of attention to know that someone cares.

Bernadette Scarbrough

24. It needs another senior citizen place for the old folks to go there for a couple of hours when they want to no be in their house all day long, they definitely need that ... we don’t have one it’s closed ... so I had to look somewhere else to keep from staying in the house all day by myself ... we could play bingo, we could do some art, a bunch of
women could get together and make beautiful quilts ... there's so much you can do to pass the time and talk to one another, but nobody here does it. Nellie Mae Holmes

25. Where would these people go if they didn't have housing here ... there is not one city in the bay area that could accommodate all these people if they were homeless ... I was almost homeless, I was desperate and I went to the housing authority out of desperation, I was just like -- where am I going to go -- this is a real blessing from God ... I was lucky to get a unit that had been renovated after a fire ... the tenants that come here and look say "Wow, if our place looked like this I'd really be happy ... but, I would like to buy a house, we want to move out, but not because we are miserable but because we have goals, and I'm always in a hurry to accomplish mine ... .

My aunt used to live in Sunnydale 35 or 40 years ago and they had rules and regulations that were very stringent. They had to keep up their lawn, they had to have a certain look on the outside of their unit, and the individual tenants were responsible for their units and to keep up the hallways and the outside doors and windows, they had to be very accountable for those things ... but I'd like to see that type of thing here ... where there are some type of standards, so it is not rules and regulations -- it's standards ... I know I signed a 15 page lease, there must be something in there about standards ... standards, standards, normal things, it doesn't have the be the kind of thing that requires great effort ... keeping your windows clean, sweeping your area, not allowing people to urinate in your hallways, Normal Things ... Charla Molina

26. If you want to walk you gotta have some shoes on ... I think they ought to have some computer classes and some kind of educational things for the tenants and do some things to try and get them interested, sometimes if you have it people will finally decide -- well, let me go see -- now I know Porter Hill has a community center ... it's better than we got and they have a person on staff, hired to run that resource center ... they have one at Alice Griffith, why not at Valencia Garden ... I would like to see some computers in there and someone to work with them, someone who is able to teach people some kind of skill ... for the most part we have a lot of people here and we have a lot of adolescents who could benefit from it, even an old fellow like me could ... if you got it, somebody will use it. Willie Eldridge
27. Sometime, nighttime you hear boom, boom, boom, boom, you don’t know where these people come from ... it’s not like before anymore. I never go outside at nighttime, I don’t feel safe like many, many years ago ... (we used to) sit outside with my neighbor and my kids talking, like family you know, nobody bother you, nobody say anything, the kids playing in the grass and we sit down in the little corner and we watch the kids, the kids was playing and we was talking, just like family, now that’s not happen, now you don’t know the people that are outside . . . .

I live almost my life here, hard days, good days, happy days, I don’t work anymore ... I used to work in a hotel, that’s the reason I told my son to finish school, because that’s the reason when you have a diploma, and you can go someplace a lot of doors open, but when you do hard drugs there are not too many doors open, it’s hard to find a job, and I don’t want him to work hard like I work all my life. Valencia Gardens Resident

28. I just moved to Valencia Gardens two months ago, so I don’t know much about it, my family came to the United States from Vietnam in 1995, we were sponsored by my sister-in-law. I am afraid here at night, but I feel better when the security guards are around, I have a heart problem and cannot work, my husband works in a candy factory and does not earn much money so we came to Valencia Gardens because of the low rent, we hope to stay and become part of the community. Lieu Nguyen

29. About three years ago when my son came home from school he got harassed in Valencia Gardens, they took his money, tied up his neck so they had to take him to emergency at General Hospital, steal the money ... he was 17 at the time ... my son wanted to take Ta Kwan Do but I would not let him ... all of my children are in college now ... my son is interested in dancing and acting, in America children do whatever they want sometimes you cannot stop them . . . .

Before marriage I was a nurse in a hospital, then I had children and sewed clothes to sell, when my husband died the whole family worked and did custom design, pants, shirts, tee shirts and took them to the market to sell ... in Vietnam we could do it out of our house and make enough money to live ... but it was hard work, I only slept three
hours a night and slept at my sewing machine ... and by myself to take care of seven children was very heavy work.

Hea Nguyen

30. I moved into Valencia Gardens when I was eight, my mother and I came from Peru, she died last spring. I am sixteen and recently married, my husband is from the middle east and works in a deli as a cashier, I just found out that I am pregnant, if the baby is a boy we will call him Ahdieb after his father, if it is a girl we will call it Lourdes Ester after my mother ... Valencia Gardens is better with the gates, it's cleaner now. I hope they will have child care here, I don't have family and will need help with my baby so I can finish school. Lourdes Coello

31. I'm on disability ... I spend most of my time around the house, I just finished painting ... I painted my bathroom mellow yellow with green trim, the hallway kind of green and beige, the kitchen is red cabinet doors with yellow background and white trim, it looks very nice, but you would have to see it to appreciate it, then in the bedroom I did a lavender ceiling and grey walls and a white trim, it's OK but it gets kind of dark in there sometimes, so that leaves me the living room to do yet, I think powder blue and a white ... I'd been at it for two months ... when I'm painting it's a serious thing.

(on making miniature sailing ships) I use wood and carve them out ... this is what I build, find a piece of wood here, find a piece of driftwood, wormholes and everything in it, you know, it's kind of hard to carve, but after I started it's not so hard after all it took me about four months, maybe longer, I didn't keep track, I would do a little bit when I felt like it, and one day it was just finished ... I put it where the kids can't play with it, they (the ships) are not to be played with ... when I see a piece of wood if there is a ship trapped in there I try to bring it out. Rosa Desane

32. I was very scared when I first came here, before I go outside or my children go outside I have to look and see if people are gathered, then we must quickly go from our apartment, it is better with the security guards ... everybody studies at our house, I am going to City College where I study to be a mechanic, I made sewing machines in Vietnam, one daughter is at City College and my other daughters are in school ... my family would be interested in ESL classes here in Valencia Gardens ...
31. Ron Dunn
32. Dennis Pham's wife
33. Denise Dunbar and son
The situation in Vietnam is very bad, the living conditions are very low, even if you work very hard you cannot support yourself. I work there eleven years, you work then you get paid and it is enough for three weeks (not a whole month) after you get off from work you have to find another job and every member of the family has to work to get enough income to support the family, the living standard is very low, my sister came in 1980 (to the United States) so she sponsor my family ... I waited almost ten years ... I don't think I come here because I wait so long ... but it happens and I am very surprised. Dennis Phat

33. People just want to believe within themselves that you don't want to do anything with your life, you are lazy you don't want to do anything with your life ... I don't know, in some instances that might be true, but I'm sure in a lot of cases people do want to do something, they don't know how, or they don't have the self-esteem to be able to go and do it ... like myself, I have a lack of faith in myself, with everything I do I have to decide ... will I be able to accomplish that ... yes I will, no I won't, ... I go through battles everyday, I go to school now, everyday I go to school ... will I be able to learn that day, I know I can't fall behind on my work, I'm trying to train myself to have more faith in myself which is a really hard thing to do.

Denise Dunbar

34. (her children) One in the eighth grade will be going to high school, but he hasn't picked what high school he wants to go to yet, he wants to go into blueprints and drafting, he was thinking if going to O'Connell, but I told him it depends on your grades, if you get good grades they will accept you in the high school, cause my daughter, the one who just graduated a couple of years ago, she went to O'Connell and she was into theater and art and stuff, now she is going to Mills College, studying psychology, this is going into her second year, she got the ambition to do it, then I got two other daughters, one is working at 24 Hour Nautalis, the oldest one is working for United Airlines, she's been there three years, no problem with the girls ... my daughter was only six when we first moved in then we had my youngest daughter, she was just a newborn, they grew up here ...

(how did she raise her girls with no problems) It was hard but you have to do it, well I just take care of them and raise them, and they all look at me as father and mother cause their father is not with them, he moved out of the
state so I was the only person to take care of them, then my two boys; their father passed away so they don't have a father figure, it's all on me ... I always tell them -- make sure you do your homework, make sure you do your school work, and study for your tests -- I drill them (the girls) once but from then they are on their own, but with the boys you got to do that every night ... (I tell the boys) if it (the homework) isn't done I will find out from your teacher cause they will call home cause I tell the teacher -- if my son don't keep up with the school activity her is supposed to do in class, call me -- I don't let nothing get by me. Betty Barb

35. My name is Patricia Morales, I came to live in Valencia Gardens eight years ago, when I moved in I had only one child, now I have two boys and one girl and we are in a one bedroom unit, we need a larger unit, the children have asthma and the walls get too much mildew because we are so crowded, there are too many in one bedroom, so I would desire to have a larger unit, I would prefer they keep cleaner because the stairways where I live, they urinate a lot and do bowel movements and you'll find cigarettes and all this, I keep my entrance clean, but I would prefer that the stairs be clean and not so smelly because my area is hardly ever cleaned . . . .

I came from Mexico City in 1988, I came looking for something better, sometimes we came with a plan that we are going to find something better here then we have in our land but it doesn't work out that way because it is harder, I am hoping that I can find something for me and my kids I would like child care, having child care would be easier for me because in order to get a job I have to learn English, so if I can get a class learning English I would be able to get a better job and do better for my children and myself. Patricia Morales

36. (about having a child at 15) I wanted that, I planned that, I told my mom when I was 12 years old, she says -- oh no you don't -- I said I was, I ran away just to have a baby ... I had the most fun with my kids, they grew up with me instead of me being old and can't do too much, I like being able to run around and do whatever they like, play ball and all that stuff ... I can't tell my daughter what she can't do (about having a baby), I can tell her but that's gonna make it worse, make her want to do it even more, so my mom always told me -- no, you can't do it, -- that's what made me have it, but I talk to my daughter anyway, I told her -- if that happened I won't be mad because that happened to me, try not to go that way, try to get a job -- but she real bright and she says -- mama, I want to go, I
want to get a job before I have a baby — and she see how hard it is, she tries to help me take care of the baby, she see how hard it is . . . .
(on training) I am currently training for a nurse assistant, started last week, it's nice, I was tired of sitting at home so, I always do that though, I got a certificate in word processing and small business, I always want another trade, when I get bored, I don't like to be bored, and I am not ready for a job yet, but I want enough training with everything so I can do anything I want to do, so I'm taking up another skill . . . I have a computer, I can do 35 words a minute, but I just took that class because I was bored. Phyllis Moreland

37. If the Latinos would call me to put a switch on I would put it on the light or fix whatever is was out of my pocket, I never reported it to the housing because I did it out of my love . . . right now where I live I keep the basement clean, if there is a light bulb out I'll change it, and then when the garbage falls, if the dumpster is full I'll move the trash can and put another one in for the garbage. I keep my area very clean and I am not opposed to helping anyone, but my main concern is the lights, because you never know what can happen at night in the dark. Alfredo and Claudia Perez

38. I want us to get together and see how we can get some of our neighbors to make a crime watch, because we have it in our neighboring alley, I don't know the name but it's right across the alley from us . . . they have a crime watch, so if we can do the same we can make Valencia Gardens a better safer place, and the whole neighborhood a better cleaner neighborhood because everybody is entitled to it . . . I talked to Charles (of the police task force) and he said all you got to do is bring it in the meeting and he will try to bring the neighbors and see what we can work out . . .

If you want a plate of food come and get it, if I have it I'll share it, if I don't I'll tell you I'm sorry, I'll give you a toasted or something, but I'll give you what I have, and it's not much I know that . . . I've got a little list of locations where to send people for help like Glide, Catholic Charities, places for shelter, I got it when I was homeless, that list, places change but I try to keep it up for when someone knocks on my door . . . if you have some help you can
40. Jeri Maxwell
41. Gail Barnes's son Bobby
change and get what you need, all it takes is a little will power, I've done it, and if I've done it anyone can do it.

Anita Ortiz

39. I had a friend that saw me living in a little hallway with my child and the other people I was living with would pick on my son and I couldn't take it any longer, it was a horrible situation, and I talked to my friend and my friend said I'm going to get you a better life position and she took me to 440 Turk ... I had all my papers and they gave me a unit right away ... I have learned the hardiness of life, I thought it would be easy to come to America, work and pay baby-sitting, but it doesn't work that easy, I've had to struggle a lot ... I hurt my knee working as a janitor ... I fell down and broke my knee and they wanted to operate, I got so scared I went back to El Salvador, and there I got better and when I came back I didn't need surgery ... I was so frightened when I got hurt that I just left, I didn't ask permission to leave my job and when I came back the position was filled ... I have been applying for jobs ever since, but I haven't found a job. Maria Cortez

40. I had a grandmother -- God rest her soul -- she was a fantastic woman, she lived alone until she was 92 years old with cataracts and everything..... Grandma never stopped doing, and Grandma's door was always open.... my grandmother raised myself, my brother, and my sister and a couple of other cousins. She was my role model... that's who I tried to model my life after... now I'm working on raising grandchildren. I babysit them when there is no other sitter available. I always have one with me sometimes 8 or 9.... It's hard work but there is not enough affordable day care, so somebody has to do it, and I can't see these kids going just anywhere and being left to run and do whatever.... I think that's one of the problems today, there are not enough grandparents, aunts and uncles that take an interest in the children....

I would like to block off the driveway in the parking lot and allow anybody who does arts and crafts to set up a table and just have a big block party, you can show your wares, some people will buy... and that makes a little money for the household...

There is so much that could be done here and I just want to see it done.

Jeri Maxwell
41. (How are you raising honor roll students) I don't know I just keep talking to them, I tell them if you see anything going on just go the opposite way, it's not easy but they listen ... it's kind of hard ... Bobby sees a lot of things he don't get involved with ... he will go to the library or to basketball practice or do a boy's club ... He should get the best, he deserves the best, he worked hard for it, Bobby has been making the honor roll since the 4th or 5th grade ... I lost their daddy when Bobby was 10 months old ... God took him away and left me with the babies ... I have to constantly stay on them, tell them to do the right thing, if you want something get out there and work, do the right way not the wrong way ... Bobby says -- I got to get my education -- I guess he don't want to go through what I went through having a rough time in life, cause he want a better life and he want to do the right way ... he wants to go all the way to college, get a good job, Bobby he just knows what to do ... I'm so proud of him I just feel like crying. Gail Barnes

42. I could do no better because I had to get AFDC ... I'm on disability myself, what can you do when the rents went up to the sky, I moved over here with my 17 year old daughter, I raised my other children out on 24th street, in a house, but then the rents go up and everything changes, new landlords ... I had that house for years, I raised all my kids in it, 3 bedrooms, had a little apartment below us and I rented that for the landlord, I took care of the house for him and therefor I got cheap rent ... I was lucky . . . .

My granddaughter has been raised her since she was 3 days old and she is fine, good position, goes to college, works for Women's Needs in Haight Ashbury ... she started working and doing this when she was 14 through school work, she worked with the AIDS Foundation, that was her first position ... a lot of these kids can do it, they say its all those kids in the projects, it's not the project kids only but everything gets blamed on them, these kids aren't bad, they get wild, get noisy with a little attitude, sometimes sassy, but they're not what you would call real bad kids ... nothing to do, I think they should have some kind of programs going a lot more than they do over here for the kids, if they could just get people together, get volunteers and get these kids something to do. Margaret Cronin
43. I came from El Salvador and moved into Valencia Gardens in 1991. It is beautiful in El Salvador and I only left because of the war. I have two children who stayed behind and I am trying to bring one here, but they say I do not make enough money, in El Salvador I sold shoes but here I do housework, I would like to train for other work, but as we say the English "won't get stuck to me", so I do not know what I can do, even though it is difficult I would go to ESL classes if they were here at Valencia Gardens, many times I have to work seven days a week and am too tired to go somewhere else for classes, I have two boys seven and nine and it is too much work to go to work, take care of them and go away to class ..., but I would like something better for myself and my children. 

Maria Orellana

44. I moved to Valencia Gardens in 1990 and I have not been happy here, I only live here because I need the low rent, I have had many problems that management has not tried to take care of, I call maintenance and for months nobody comes, in my apartment I pay for the locks myself, I do not feel my children are safe outside, so my children do not play outside ... I need more English classes because I don't speak English very well, sometime I don't have time to go to school because I have to work for my child because we never receive welfare, we never receive help. 

Ana Cote

45. My name is Maria Calderon I moved here six years ago ... in my stairway they used to have a lot of sex and drugs and they go to the bathroom, and I was ashamed to go up when the steps were smelly, but today it's much better ... I have seen a change since the first gates were put on the doors of the buildings where to the staircase, there has been a change, they don't use the bathroom there, they don't do sex or drugs in the staircase so it is much better, but it has gotten even better now that we have security guards. I came in June of 1989 from Durango, Mexico looking for a better life, a better situation to have a chance to make a better life so I am hoping that I can progress myself and my child . . . .

You might be wondering why we are living in Valencia Gardens if I came for a better life, well my plans didn't come out the way I was expecting, so I got on the waiting list and got the apartment I needed, I am a single parent raising a child, it doesn't work for everybody the way they hoped or they planned, when they make their plans of
coming to America, but either way I still hope to get a better progress ... I want to see child care started and something to help us develop job experience or learn the English to get the skills for a job, to keep the security guards, then have my neighbors to be united as one, not as different people and different nationalities, but all as one family. Maria Calderon

46. It was a miracle that I got into Valencia Gardens, if there was a way the room could hold all the tears I would have made a swimming pool because I would cry day and night, the day that my daughter was going to be one year old the people I was living with slapped the door open and broke the finger of my daughter, then the miracle came, I said -- God, I cannot keep this, you gotta help me, I don't know what I'm going to do -- and that's how the miracle came by ... I don't know how to thank Him and I keep telling Him and thanking Him for everything without Him I wouldn't know what to do. He has done so much for me that I don't know how to repay him. Sonia Rubio

47. Everybody ain't gonna be the same, you know that, that's for sure, but if they would keep it (Valencia Gardens) clean, there are a lot of dirty people who dirty up the place so much, keep it clean...they used to trim the trees, cause the kids get up in there and pull the limbs down, it would be nice to keep that up, and in the parking lot out there ... then there is the noise (the security guards) they keep some of the noise out ... the noise is terrible, the loud music, the loud talking, especially when you are trying to go to sleep, I think when you go in your house you want to rest ... Carnell Nash

(Joseph Dean, 75 year old friend of Carnell Nash) Each time you get a pain you are not just supposed to give over to it, arthritis is very plentiful now, in the knees, back ... may saying is this -- don't think about it -- as long as you have a portion of your health and strength keep going ... there are so many people less fortunate than you are, don't give over to the pain, you gotta keep going, there is always someone less fortunate than you ... learn to share ... everybody knows a person less fortunate that you ... be honest with me and I'll be honest with you ... words, do what you say, man or woman without their word ain't worth a hill of beans, be a person of your word that's what I've always practiced all my life ...

(Mr. Nash, 71 years) I'd trust him with my life. Carnell Nash and Joseph Dean
45. Maria Calderon
49. Rosie Perez's daughter
52. Ruth Hamilton's Tangerine Tree
48. I am happy to be in America, but I am sick and cannot find the cause, I have headaches and get dizzy, one day when I was out shopping with my daughter I got dizzy and we both fell on the street, my daughter is nine years old, she is very smart and studies hard, she says she wants to grow up and get a good job and take care of me because I am very sick. Ly Luong

49. At the beginning when I moved to Valencia Gardens I didn't feel comfortable, I felt afraid and I didn't trust, I didn't trust it here because a lot of people criticize how people live here, but at the same time I moved because at that time we could not afford (housing), we needed a place, after we moved in I see a lot of people that are wonderful ... it has changed a lot, I remember when I moved in here (six and one-half years ago) there were a lot of people on the corner in the front, a lot of people selling drugs, and people were scared about it, they didn't want to come and visit us, not our relatives, not friends because they were scared of all the people, now it's more clear and friends will visit ....

I feel comfortable in this place because it gives to us a lot of opportunities, we think it gives us opportunities and courage to see the future ahead and then do something for our kids and see the future for them and at the same time to see the future for us. Rosa Perez

50. A lot of people need to open their eyes because the ones that are on AFDC now, they have two years and instead of going to school when they should it's time to go now, a lot of people tell me — well I'll have another baby, they don't carry that anymore, when a baby turns six months it's time for you to go back to work, that's what they are pushing for now ... maybe that's how they grew up or whatever, but you need to work, but a lot of people don't see it that way ... a lot of the young ones that I know are opening their eyes and going to work and keeping a job, or going to school, but a lot of the people over here aren't going to do that. Kiflin Flower

51. Not everyone is doing the negative like people on the outside real world thinks of Valencia Gardens, of course there is going to be negative, there is negative everywhere ... but if you have goals to achieve and you have high expectations and hope rather than just sitting by the window and watching your days go by ... you will find a way to
achieve your goals ... if you have security, I mean not financially, but if you are secure with yourself then you are more likely not to get involved in the negative . . . .

There isn't that much negative because the San Francisco Police have controlled a lot of the gang violence that has gone around here in the past five years ... you don't see people being mugged anymore ... the San Francisco Police have really cleaned up the streets a lot ... it makes it a safe environment for people to walk through and not say "my God don't walk through Valencia Gardens because you are going to get mugged, your car is going to get stolen," people shouldn't have that stereotype of us, because we are not all that way... Omaira Corona

5.2. I worked for housing authority as resident manager, I started out in 1976 being a liason aide ... in 1978 I became a resident assistant, we'll call it a resident manager ... when I became resident manager I was working in the office assisting the manager, I was taking rent, answering the telephone passing out notices, hearing tenant complaint . . . .

I try to do a couple of things to make me feel better, a few years ago I planted a little tangerine tree, each year it bears fruit ... and last year I put a rose bush, it isn't doing so good but it is there, I didn't actually just do it for me, I thought this would help the neighborhood ... everyone watches over the tree ... any kids touch the tree that's a no no ... I worked for housing authority, in 1978 I became a resident assistant and worked in the office until 1986. Ruth Hamilton

5.3. I like to see small bar b que grills in each courtyard, there are a lot of people out here bar b queing but some don't have grills ... it would be nice if we had one out in each courtyard and in the main courtyard where the grass is to have a big one out there ... I like this multi-cultural outfit we got here, a little bit of every nationality ... I like to have a big sprinkler where the kids play in the summer when its hot, cause I've had tenants call me and say "hey Don, its hot and the kids want to play in the water can you get a hose out here" ... so I bring the sprinkler out ... you should see the kids playing here in the summer, they have a lot of fun ... we had a tenant who went down to Toys R
Us and bought one of those fire hydrant toys that sprinkles water all over ... they hooked it up for the kids, all the kids used it, not just the family that went and got it, they got it for the whole courtyard ... Donald Ingram

§4. I'll never forget where I come from, I am very proud of my heritage ... I was born in American Samoa and raised by my mother's mother in Western Samoa, it's part of our culture ... God gave us everything, we depend on our land ... our plantations, the oceans we go and get our fish ... we talk to the earth, communicate with the earth ... you never need a baby-sitter because everybody help each other, for example when I grew up in Samoa, my auntie, my uncle, everybody care for me, it's automatic ... everybody takes care of each other ... . . .

Look at this kid always with grandpa or father, and that's how we learn, we never have written stuff, in Samoa and throughout the whole South Pacific everything is handed down, it's shared down, we get wisdom and the more you do it (the more you learn), we don't have any writings until the late 1800's but before the grandparents pass it down through sharing ... how to work, how to care, basically it is about sharing, how not to be greedy but to share with your cousin, your family everybody. Sam Riple

§5. I decided not to hang out with the guys on the street after I went to a religious camp. They had a time where you had 40 or 50 minutes where you could think quietly by yourself, just think, quiet, they want everybody to be quiet by themselves ... so you could just think about what was going on in your life, that's when I realized, I was thinking that I needed to get away from here, to go to school and get out of school, get away from here, which I was already a little bit away, but I needed to be away so that I didn't do nothing with it no more, it's like I'm here and they are over there, I want to be apart that much ... so I came back from camp with that in my mind, so that's when I started really moving toward new goals. Edwarso Melendez

§6. When I went into the unit to visit a few years ago it seemed so small but when I lived there it seemed so large and comfortable, it just seems that I was very comfortable and happy there during those years, I had been living with my mom and had to move ... when I looked at different projects Valencia Gardens seemed to be the cleanest and well kept one ... (the unit) was freshly painted, it was sparking brand new, it was the perfect little home for a
mother, when I moved there, there was an older gentleman who was the manager and everyone thought he was very mean, if children were out after dark he would walk them home and tell their parents -- it's time for them to be in now -- so it was so quiet after a certain time, only during daylight savings time were kids allowed to be outside, and my neighbors were really neighbors because we all watched out for one another, so (when I went back to visit) I was really shocked to see bars, because it wasn't like this, if someone came to your window, noisy neighbors, which we should have noisy neighbors, they would say -- so and so was around your window, so we would know who came to your house, my neighbors would tell me -- oh, your insurance man came by -- you would know about it . . . 

When I look at Valencia Gardens now I'm amazed, I say -- is this the same place? -- where the office and the playground there were no gates ... there wasn't any gates, bars ... it was so simple, things were so simple, and I look now and say how did they get like this ... Valencia Gardens was one of the best kept projects and it was because of the manager ... and when the manager changed that's when things began to change, all of a sudden, one day in 1981 I looked and said -- what's all this noise, who are those people -- and I looked out and said -- it's too noisy, what's happening? -- I moved within the next year. Deborah Madaris

§7. (I grew up here and as children) we were comfortable and safe ... any troublemakers were on 15th and Valencia in a small little pockets, it wasn't a big, huge thing, otherwise most of the people here were just families without much money raising their kids ... I had friends in the back courts as well as the front courts ... no one was suspicious of people back then ... there were just families ... small children all the way up to teen-agers, they would watch out for their own brothers and sisters and watch out for the other kids too, because we all played together, it was a lot of fun and I really miss it at times -- but that was a different time . . .

I can't wait until they finally fix these buildings maybe people will actually take care of them, I'm hoping that people will start taking pride in where they live, stop throwing garbage out the window, start using the garbage cans that are there for that purpose, cause we don't need rats as well as roaches ... we don't need the rats and the diseases they carry, hopefully people will just take pride in where they live and think about someone else for once instead of just themselves. Gabrielle Fontanelle
58. (It's a big responsibility to be the oldest.) Yes, it's really hard ... sometimes I feel the pressure and I want to drop out from college, but I say I have to push myself to go and do it because I have four younger brothers and sisters. If it wasn't for my four younger brothers and sisters I would just drop out and forget it, go find a full time job and forget about school and everything but because of them I push myself to go and go to school so that I can be an example and that they can follow, yess, it is hard. LeAnne Cheong

59. I bought the video of *The Lion King* for my youngest child, I like the fact that Simba was talking to his father when he got older, and he was talking to his father after his father had died ... he was talking to his father, looking up in the stars, that's the part I like best when he was talking to his father looking at the stars, that was the best part, cause he didn't think he deserved it (to be king) or (believe) that he could stand up to his uncle, but his blood gave him the strength to do what he had to do, to stand up and take the crown . . . .

My life has been such a mess that I don't know if I have the courage to do anything ... I'm hanging on, some days I see myself hanging on by a string ... sometimes I feel that I'm on a rope and I've got to hang on to the end ... my mother is now deceased and sometimes I get the feeling that I just want to give up, give in and just go with her, give up, just move on to the heavens above, but she keep on telling me in the spirit to hang on, she says -- Carol, no matter what you do try to do something with yourself, it's not your time to go -- ... just like Simba's father is telling him. Carol Watson

60. When I first moved in kids would knock on the door and window and at holiday time, independence day, they throw firecrackers inside the house, for the first year after we moved in, everything is Ok now, they stopped ... we didn't speak English and we didn't know how to speak to them to stop them. we would say please don't, but the more we said it the more they did ... my husband is Chinese, he doesn't speak much Vietnamese or much English ... I was an Amercian baby, half American, half Vietnamese, all Amercian children were given the opportunity to come to the United States so I apply, besides in Vietnam I have no opportunity, no choice because I am half and half and they don't like that in Vietnam, there was discrimination against me, it was really difficult to live in Vietnam ... my
mother sent me to school but the kids they tease me and will not accept me, they say to me -- you are American, why not go back to America. Hoang Kim Nguyen

61. (how he got custody of his son) When they took him ... I just got so attached to him just for the short period of time I had him at the hospital until I was about to go nuts, I just kept calling the baby's attorney like at 9, 10 at night, she was like -- OK, God, let me get this baby for you -- and so finally they called and said -- Mr. Lloyd, please come juvenile court; hall tomorrow and they are going to put your case up, cause I'm calling this lady at 9, 10 at night, I said -- I can't sleep, I need my son, -- so at 9 o'clock in the morning she called and said -- Mr. Lloyd they set you up an appointment, you come to court tomorrow, they wanted next month but I've moved it up til tomorrow -- so I went to court ...

No one said anything about the baby being there and I said -- I don't get no baby today -- and they said -- calm down, calm down -- and I said -- when do I get my baby -- and they said -- we'll set you up another court date, you come back tomorrow, -- and I come back the next day, I didn't get him that day, and then the third day they says -- Mr. Lloyd we are proud to give you your son back, you have bugged the heck out of county, you have bugged the heck out of the poor attorney, you calling the doctors up there, and everybody saying take that baby, and God go with you all -- It was funny but he said -- I've never awarded anybody a kid like this but, as much calling as you are doing I don't think nothing is gonna go wrong with that baby. Donald Lloyd

62. Now I am 81 years old, in Vietnam I live like a monk, so I not enjoy life too much and I always keep praying and praying so I didn't go and enjoy my life outside ... only God helps me and gives me love ... only God loves me ... God stays in my head ... God knows everything I do, and whatever I have done God knows, God is all over the whole world ... I pray with my rosary everyday ... I dream about God in heaven and that He loves me ... I can't go to church because I can't walk well and I'm afraid I will fall down ... people from the church come, they bring flowers and we pray. Thone Nguyen
63. When they say they are going to fix something in the house they don't fix it, like our tile in the bathroom, it was like messed up, so they came because the water was dripping and they had to tear down a wall and then after when they were supposed to come back and fix it they never did, so it's still the same ... it's half-finished ... they were supposed to do the floor tiles in the whole house, because we got cracks, they never did that. Cecelia Gonzales

64. I came to America 33 years ago from El Salvador, in my country I worked as a secretary, but because my English is bad here I've had to clean houses until I got sick. I moved into Valencia Gardens 13 years ago and think it is getting better, I think we should have more friendship in the community, maybe the Latinos could just get together and sit in front of the community center and drink coffee on Saturday mornings. I have worked hard to make my unit comfortable, I replaced the kitchen floor, the big plant is 19 years old and growing all over my living room wall, I have done a lot to make my place like home but it has not been painted in 13 years, I would like to get it painted. Eva Platero

65. My family hopes to move out ... I told my daughter I don't want your children to suffer the kind of depression that I do ... one day my daughter saw a fight in the parking lot and a man with a knife was killing another man and she saw everything, it was hard for her ... I wasn't there (and when I got home) she was waiting for me outside all nervous ... and she was six or seven years old, that was so hard for her ... they only have me, I raised them by myself, if I don't work who would help me . . . .

It's hard you know, but like I told you, thanks God gave me the power to support all this kind of stress because when I think about all my life I have to go through this I feel like I'm going to go crazy, I go, I don't even want to think about it, you know it's five one day by one day, today is the day, I don't worry about tomorrow because it is too much ... there are lots of family in here like me, they are working, they are single mothers with little children and they expect to live in a safe place where people have respect for us -- we are human beings.

Fanny Castellanos
During 1974 the war in Vietnam was over and everybody escapes. I came to the hospital and a lot of people leave kids in the hospital so when I came in the hospital I saw a little girl who is pretty and I would like to adopt her to be my own kid, so they say -- so ahead we don't mind because we want to get rid of a lot of kids here -- so I pick her up and later on she grew up, I didn't know she was part “American” kid, I didn't know because when she was little she was so cute, so pretty, she looked Vietnamese ... but when she was growing up we had a blood test and find out she is half American and half Vietnamese, so after that I apply to take her to the United States. The Van Tran
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND STATISTICS:

The ORAL HISTORY PROJECT was possible because of the involvement of many Valencia Gardens residents. Not only were the residents available to be interviewed, but several people worked tirelessly to identify residents who would be interested in participating, to set up appointments, to translate when the participating residents were not English speaking, and to create the final display.

Special thanks goes to Anita Ortiz and Susie Barrara who were always available and able to solve any problem. Jeri Maxwell, President of the Residents Association smoothed the way and made many contacts possible. Donald Ingram, on site monitor, made space available and helped hang the display. Bruce Smarglassio, former property manager was invaluable in getting the process started. Brian Fong collected the pictures for the memorial display. Finally, thanks goes to all those people who made suggestions, took pictures, asked a friend or neighbor to participate.

In order to give appropriate recognition to participants in the project a banner with pictures and excerpts from their oral history interview was created for each person or family group participating. The 66 banners for the display of the project were made on site. First the cloth base was created then photographs and quotes were Xeroxed and laminated then attached to the cloth, finally the banners were hung in the community room, the computer room and a connecting hallway.

The completion of the project was timed to coincide with the annual Christmas part when more residents visit the community room than any other time of the year.

The oral history Project will be recorded and used in several ways. First the banners will be photographed in slide format and a video with sound track will be created from the slides. Second this booklet contains all the quotes used in the display with nine pages of color pictures (approximately one-third of the pictures
used in the display) and is being created for the Hope VI team. In addition summaries of relevant design and community issues will be made as requested. The first summary concerns requests for community services, also for the charrette and the Hope VI team, and is in this booklet. The original 75 tapes will be archived at the History Room in the San Francisco Main Library.

Seventy-five residents participated in the project with an average recorded time of 40 minutes per participant; the age of the participants ranged from 19 to 86; 15 participants were male and the rest female; 28 participants were Latino, 18 African American, 16 Vietnamese, 11 Caucasian, and 1 Samoan. Two participants were former residents and the rest currently reside in Valencia Gardens.
COMMUNITY PROGRAM REQUESTS:

The following list of requests form participants in the Oral History Project has been prepared for the design workshop and charrette, sponsored by the Legacy Project as the first design exercise of the Hope VI team.

Requests for community services and activities:

More and better play areas
Organize a crime watch
Classes in:
  - How to look for work
  - How to make a resume
  - How to dress for work
Child Care
Classes to learn about computers
Laundry facilities on site
Create greater physical security for residents
Language skills
Literacy training
Better ways to keep the development clean
General education
After school programs
Cooking classes
Events with food:
  Selling food
  Sharing food
Craft fair
ESL classes
Bake sales to raise money for community activities
Career days to show kids what is possible
Summer programs for kids
Tutoring for kids
Play areas that separate toddlers for older kids
Program with staying power (residents tired of programs that come in, get established then leave)
Garden plots
Programs for seniors
Special social time for ethnic groups (from a Latino resident -- Latinos to get together have coffee and chat)
Employment training
Citizenship class
Activities for kids
Community day where everybody brings a dish
Large space for community activities
Coordination center for off site activities for children
On site club for children
Sell food and use profits as an emergency fund for residents
Basketball and other sports leagues with in Valencia Gardens and between Valencia Gardens and other housing developments

In addition to suggesting kinds of activities suggested by residents other related concerns were:
Some professionals plus volunteer and residents to run programs
Residents to work in as many community activities as possible
65. Fanny Castellanos
A. Security guards
B. Roberta Swan and friends
The VALENcia GARDEns ORAL HISTORY Project

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