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## Presidio Profiles

### I Do, I Do, I Do

When Maria Giordano and Jason Kane stood at the altar of the Presidio’s Chapel of Our Lady on January 6, they weren’t simply exchanging vows – they were taking part in a cherished family tradition.

Since 1864, the Main Post site has hosted countless weddings, funerals and military services. But even for a place of such long tradition, this ceremony was unusual. The happy couple became the third consecutive generation of their family to say “I Do” within the walls of the rustic church. In the first few rows sat the bride’s parents and grandparents, who had walked down the very same aisle years before.

In 1945, Ruth Walker and William Brown were young Naval officers stationed in San Francisco. The Presidio was the most logical place to tie the knot when they fell in love.

Thirty years later, their daughter Barbara moved to San Francisco, drawn in part by the romantic aura of her parents’ love story. When she and a fellow U.C. Berkeley student, Marco Giordano, fell in love, she

couldn’t imagine having the ceremony anywhere but the Chapel. In 1977 the facility was being expanded, which meant the lovely stained glass windows were covered. Barbara remembers someone in Army fatigues walking around the sanctuary during the ceremony.



**Parents Barbara and Marco Giordano, newlyweds Maria and Jason Kane, and grandfather William Brown have all tied the knot at the Presidio’s Chapel of Our Lady.**

“A day like that, what could spoil it?” Barbara Giordano recalls now with a laugh.

Like her parents, Maria and Jason were also fulltime students when they decided to get married. But this generation had fulltime jobs as well – and not a clue where to do the deed. When the mother-of-the-bride suggested the obvious site, Maria jumped at it.

“We hope that some people who missed the first two ceremonies can come to this one,” Barbara said.

The groom’s father, a Methodist minister, did the honors. But in a break from tradition, the reception was held at a Mexican restaurant.

When the weather improves, the new bride and groom will take a trip to Vancouver and Victoria, Canada, – not surprisingly the same place her parents honeymooned.



## UPDATING THE PRESIDIO PLAN

### Thank You For Your Participation

On January 16, 2001, the scoping period for the Presidio Trust Implementation Plan (PTIP) officially came to an end. The close capped a six month period highlighted by four community workshops.

The Trust has received nearly 600 public comments which will be used to shape a draft plan and Environmental Impact Statement, expected to be made available for review and comment this spring.

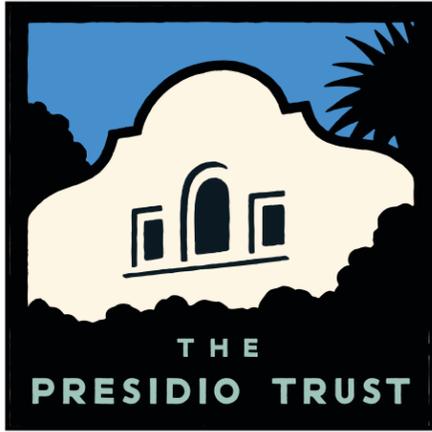
We extend our sincere thanks to all who attended workshops or shared ideas and suggestions in person and by mail and email.

Updates on the PTIP planning process – including additional opportunities for public participation – will be available through the *Presidio Post* and [www.presidiotrust.gov](http://www.presidiotrust.gov).

# Presidio

A Monthly Publication of the Presidio Trust

Volume 4 Issue 2 February 2001



*Preserving the Presidio  
as a Sustainable  
National Park*

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### Letterman Project Update

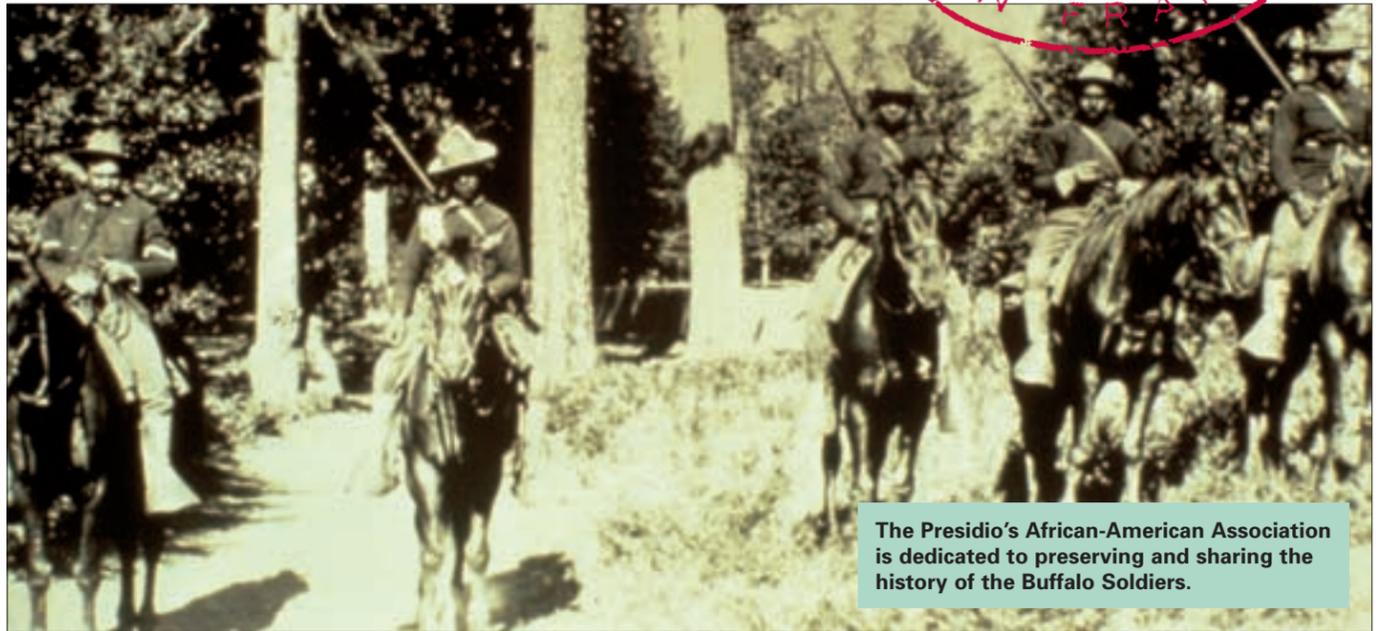
As we first shared at our August 23, 2000, community meeting, select trees on a 23-acre site within the Letterman Complex are slated for removal to prepare for the planned deconstruction of the former Letterman Army Medical Center and Letterman Army Institute of Research.

We share your commitment to the preservation of the Presidio's natural resources and are making every effort to carry out this work in a responsible and thoughtful manner.

The Trust's Chief Forester has individually evaluated each of the site's nearly 350 trees to determine its long-term health and potential for an extended life. We are pleased to report that more than half the trees at the site – nearly 180 – will either be preserved in place, "salvaged" for eventual replanting at the Letterman Complex or immediately relocated to other suitable sites within the Presidio.

This work is scheduled to begin in February to take advantage of the trees' seasonal dormancy, a critical factor in ensuring their survival during the transplanting process.

As work at the Letterman site gets underway, look for updates in the Presidio Post and at [www.presidiotrust.gov](http://www.presidiotrust.gov). If you have questions or comments, please call 415.561.5418.



The Presidio's African-American Association is dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of the Buffalo Soldiers.

## REMEMBERING THE BUFFALO SOLDIERS

A BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION

For a quarter century, February – Black History Month – has been set aside to celebrate the achievements of African-Americans throughout history. At the Presidio, we remember the contributions of a legendary group of African-American soldiers who made a permanent mark on the history of this park and the West – the Buffalo Soldiers.

Our celebration is led by the Presidio's African-American Association, an all volunteer, non-profit group representing employees of the National Park Service and the Presidio Trust. Founded in 1992, the Association is dedicated to preserving and sharing the Buffalo Soldiers' unique story.

The Association will host its 8th annual Black History Month event on

Wednesday, February 21, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Presidio's Golden Gate Club. With the theme "The Renaissance: Remembering the Buffalo Soldiers in the New Millennium," the all-day symposium will include interactive workshops on healthcare and careers in education and information technology, a luncheon, presentations and distinguished guest speakers. San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown will deliver the keynote address. Organizations scheduled to participate include U.C. San Francisco, U.C. Berkeley, City College of San Francisco, San Francisco State University, Blue Shield, Kaiser Permanente, the Haight-Ashbury Free Clinic and the International AIDS Society.

All are welcome. For reservations or directions, please call 415.561.4259.



**"My father, grandfather and brother all served at the Presidio," said Tim Barrows, Presidio Trust building inspector and member of the Association. "When I found out there was a significant African-American history at the Presidio, I was intrigued. I wanted to contribute to the rich cultural heritage that exists among all people."**

### "REMEMBERING THE BUFFALO SOLDIERS"

Wednesday, February 21, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Presidio's Golden Gate Club  
Information: 415.561.4259

## THE LEGACY OF THE BUFFALO SOLDIERS

**B**ack when the West was wild and the Cavalry still came charging over the hill, the Buffalo Soldiers made their mark on history.

Congress established six all-Black regiments in 1866, and charged them with bringing order to the remote western frontier. These regiments were the 9th and 10th Cavalry, and the 38th, 39th, 40th and 41st Infantry. Though the pay was low, many African-Americans joined these units seeking steady income, a higher level of respect in society and the adventure of military service.

Adventure was in no short supply. The Buffalo Soldiers played an important role in civilizing the lawless West by protecting settlers, building forts and roads, and mapping uncharted wilderness areas.



They fought off robbers and bandits and saw to it that the stage coach made it safely through.

The Buffalo Soldiers were called to action during the Spanish-American War in 1898. The 9th and 10th Cavalry was deployed to Cuba, serving with President Roosevelt's "Rough Riders" in the charge up San Juan Hill. Companies from all four regiments fought Filipino nationals who began a

three-year battle for independence from the U.S. later the same year. In all these actions, the Buffalo Soldiers were noted for their bravery and valor. Many received the Medal of Honor or Certificates of Merit.

From 1902 to 1904, four units of the Buffalo Soldiers were posted to garrison duty at the Presidio. Embarking from the Presidio, they formed the first mounted patrols of national parks at Yosemite, Sequoia, and King's Canyon. Their work extending roads into the Forest of the Giants allowed public access to the area for the first time.

Four hundred fifty Buffalo Soldiers are buried at the Presidio's National Cemetery, forging a lasting link between the park, a valiant band of African-American soldiers and the days of the Wild West.

## Sustainability Spotlight

# Weeding Out Pests

Anyone who has spent a Saturday afternoon gardening in the yard understands the destructive impact of weeds, plant diseases and "landscape pests."

In most places, pesticides are the conventional first line of defense. But to prevent pollution and protect the human, plant and animal inhabitants of this national park site, the Presidio Trust, the National Park Service and park tenants use a more sustainable approach – Integrated Pest Management (IPM) – to keep the Presidio's abundant open spaces and recreational resources healthy.

IPM combines many different control methods and works with the environment's natural checks and balances. The strategy also incorporates ecological information into pest management and minimizes economic, health and environmental risks.



**Corn gluten meal is used at the Golf Course to protect the greens from disease naturally.**

Techniques are varied. Biological control uses a pest's natural enemies to keep problems in check, such as using natural parasites that feed on damaging insects. Cultural controls might include using plants that are resistant to common pests, such as last year's replanting of the golf course greens to a turf variety resistant to nematodes. Physical controls include using barriers, such as wire mesh around irrigation lines that prevent gopher damage. Chemical controls include low-risk pesticides such as soaps and plant-based materials.

Several IPM projects are underway at Presidio Golf Course. Active monitoring allows pests to be identified early so that physical or environmental changes can be made to discourage their further spread and reduce the need for pesticides. The Course has also incorporated corn gluten meal (a food-grade material) into its weed management program and is currently experimenting with "compost tea" to increase soil health and suppress turf diseases.

On another front, the Presidio Trust is using IPM to slow the spread of pitch canker, a tree disease that is threatening pines throughout the Bay Area.

Look to the *Presidio Post* in coming months for additional details about these programs.

### Board Members

Donald Fisher	Mary Murphy
Jennifer L. Hernandez	William Reilly
Ira Michael Heyman	Toby Rosenblatt
Amy Meyer	

By Jim Meadows  
Presidio Trust Executive Director

# Did You Know...?

THE PRESIDIO ADDRESSES CALIFORNIA'S ENERGY CRISIS

*Like all Californians, those of us who live and work at the Presidio are responding to our State's ongoing energy crisis. I'd like to share with you some of the short- and long-term strategies the Presidio Trust is implementing to use our limited resources more sustainably.*

- To relieve pressure on the State's energy grid, the Trust regularly reduces consumption at peak hours during 2nd and 3rd stage energy alerts. The conservation program limits the number of illuminated streetlights and decreases light use in Trust-occupied buildings. Similar efforts in 1999 resulted in savings of more than 165,000 kWh.
- As part of the California Public Utilities Commission's "Summer Initiative," PG&E will fund the Trust's Energy Efficiency Measures Program. Designed to produce measurable reductions in energy usage, the program will enable lights to be retrofitted and equipment to be upgraded throughout the Presidio. The Trust will replace up to 7,000 lights in residential buildings
- The Trust now conducts all its building rehabilitations according to "smart building" principles, which include stringent energy efficiency requirements. In Fiscal Year 2000, these requirements saved 115,700 kWh of electricity and 38,000 therms of gas, resulting in cost reduction of \$36,000 per year.
- The Trust is developing a Micro Co-generation Plant, potentially operated with highly efficient fuel cell technology, to improve energy conservation in the long-term. In addition to making the park's electric supply more reliable, these plants naturally create heat – a byproduct that could be reused to heat Presidio buildings. Furthermore, these plants could help the Trust avoid the

*and install efficient motors, lights, lighting controls and energy management systems in non-residential buildings. Overall, the projects could save up to 290 kWh during the summertime's peak demand and 1,780,000 kWh per year.*

*inefficiencies involved in importing energy to the park. A Micro Co-generation Feasibility Study has been completed. The project now awaits an environmental assessment.*

- Working with the Department of Energy and the Presidio Alliance, the Trust is participating in the outreach-oriented "Rebuild America" program. Sponsoring conservation-minded community events and conferences, the program has helped educate the Presidio's tenants on how to maximize their buildings' energy efficiency. The Trust, Alliance and Thoreau Center have also prepared a brochure advising park community members of practical, easy, and effective strategies for reducing consumption at home and in the workplace.

*By doing our share now and planning for the future, we believe the Presidio can become a true leader in sound energy-use practices.*



## PRESIDIO ORGANIZATION SPOTLIGHT

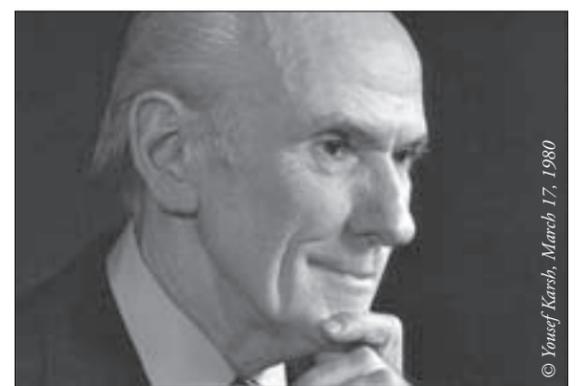


Presidio-based Global Security Institute (GSI) works for a peaceful world by advocating the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The organization was founded in November 1999 by Alan Cranston, who served California in the United States Senate from 1969 to 1993. Cranston, who was universally respected as a committed crusader for peace, was President of GSI until his December death at the age of 86.

"Alan Cranston did not want honor for himself, but honored life itself by serving the cause of peace," says Jonathon Granoff, GSI's Chief Executive Officer. "We now reaffirm our commitment to completing the work that he began."

GSI believes that the only long-term solution to the nuclear threat is the worldwide abolition of nuclear weapons. The organization's chief goal is to persuade citizens and policymakers at home and



**Alan Cranston used a quote by Chinese philosopher Lao-Tzu as his guide for leadership: "A leader is best when people barely know that he exists...when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will all say, 'We did this ourselves.'"**

abroad to support a universal, verifiable and enforceable Nuclear Weapon Elimination Convention.

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### February

Friday, February 16, 1 to 4 p.m.

#### Presidio Planting Day

Join the Presidio Park Stewardship staff and the Presidio Trust in planting 40 Coast Live Oaks at Infantry Terrace. The trees are included in a pilot project designed to test reforestation strategies for the Presidio. Dress in layers. Meet at the Main Post Chapel (130 Fisher Loop). Please RSVP to Beatrice Amman at 415.561.5413.

Tuesday, February 20, 8 p.m.

#### Presidio Community Concerts: Yankee Doodle Birthday

Come to this musical birthday party for Washington, Lincoln and Chopin. Yankee Doodle, Battle Pieces and patriotic Polish works by Chopin will be performed by Seth Montfort. The event will take place at the Main Post Chapel (130 Fisher Loop). Admission is \$10. Call 415.362.6080 for directions.

Wednesday, February 21, 9 a.m. to Noon

#### Presidio Trust Board of Directors Meeting

Please join the Presidio Trust Board of Directors for this first public meeting of 2001. The event will be held at the historic Log Cabin (1299 Storey Avenue). Shuttle service will be available from the Lombard Gate. Please call 415.561.5418 for details or directions.

# FROM RUSSIA, WITH LOVE

UPCOMING RUSSIAN IMPERIAL TREASURES EXHIBIT SPOTLIGHTS THE PRESIDIO'S "TSAR CROSSED LOVERS"

## COMING SOON!

We are just weeks away from the debut of "Unseen Treasures: Imperial Russia and the New World." The exhibit – open to the public in March – showcases 18th and 19th century jewels, art and artifacts from the Russian State Historical Museum. This tour marks the first time that these gems have been seen in America. The "Treasures" will return permanently to Moscow in July. Don't miss them! To purchase tickets for this premiere program at the newly reopened Officers' Club, visit [www.atthepresidio.org](http://www.atthepresidio.org).

**VALENTINE'S DAY IS APPROACHING AND ROMANCE IS IN THE AIR. WHILE WE'RE ALL FAMILIAR WITH HISTORY'S MOST CELEBRATED REAL AND FICTIONAL LOVERS – ROMEO AND JULIET, ANTHONY AND CLEOPATRA, JOHN AND JACKIE – MANY MAY NOT BE AWARE THAT CALIFORNIA'S MOST TOUCHING, MYSTERIOUS AND TRAGIC AMOROUS TALE UNFOLDED HERE AT THE PRESIDIO.**

**NEXT MONTH, PRESIDIO VISITORS WILL BE INTRODUCED TO REZANOV AND CONCEPCION, A RUSSIAN NOBLEMAN AND A SPANISH SENORITA WHOSE BRIEF AND TRAGIC ROMANCE REFLECTED THE INTERSECTION OF TWO POWERFUL EMPIRES ON NORTHERN CALIFORNIA'S WILD FRONTIER AT THE DAWN OF THE 19TH CENTURY. THEIR STORY AND MANY OTHERS WILL BE EXPLORED IN "UNSEEN TREASURES: IMPERIAL RUSSIA AND THE NEW WORLD" – THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF PRESIDIO TRUST-SPONSORED EXHIBITS DEBUTING IN MARCH AT THE HISTORIC OFFICERS' CLUB.**

Nikolai Petrovitch Rezanov was a charming and adventurous 42-year-old Russian Chamberlain and widower sent by Tsar Alexander to examine his country's fledgling North American colony. After a cold, hard winter in what is today known as Sitka, Alaska, Rezanov volunteered to sail south to a Spanish fort – El Presidio de San Francisco – in a life-and-death search for food.

On April 8, 1806, his ship ignored a challenge by the Castillo de San Joaquin, located on the Golden Gate, and hurried into San Francisco Bay under full sail, where he dropped anchor. Even when his identity was established and the hostilities ceased, Rezanov's mission stalled because Spanish law forbade trade. However, he was treated hospitably by Commandante Don Jose Dario Arguello and was allowed time to explore the grounds of the Presidio – not to mention the fort's inhabitants. In the course of numerous social functions, the handsome visitor came to know Concepcion de Arguello, the Commandante's 15-year-old daughter, believed by many to be the most desirable woman in all of New Spain.

Whether motivated by true love or a desire to extend Russia's North American holdings – or perhaps a combination of both – within weeks Rezanov proposed marriage to Concepcion. She readily accepted. The Arguello family's shock was not due to the difference in age but in religion – Rezanov was a Russian Orthodox, a non-Catholic. In time the family warmed to the idea, on the condition that the union be approved by the Pope.

All bode well for Rezanov as he was then considered a member of the family, and trading began. Six weeks after arriving, he sailed back up the West coast, his ship loaded with food, promising that he would work out wedding issues with the Pope and return within two years.

Rezanov delivered the grain to his colleagues in Alaska and began the long overland trek to St. Petersburg. Riding a relay of horses, Rezanov became ill in the frigid wastelands of Siberia, probably with



**In this mural on the wall of the Presidio's Main Post Chapel, Concepcion holds Rezanov's hand as her father looks on. Father Junipero Serra stands in the foreground. The likeness was painted by Ukrainian artist Victor Mikhail Arnautoff, who also crafted the Coit Tower frescos, in 1934. Said the *San Francisco Examiner* in 1935, "People will be visiting it for many a day."**

pneumonia, but pushed on. In March of 1807, after falling from his horse, he died of a concussion.

Concepcion waited patiently, giving only her friendship, we're told, to her numerous suitors. Not learning of his death, she was puzzled and distraught that her betrothed failed to return. After taking care of her elderly parents, Concepcion entered a Dominican convent and became California's first native-born Catholic nun.

Years later friends from the nunnery said that Concepcion rarely talked about her earlier life, and especially not about the fact that she almost married a Russian. However, she shared with one young nun her memories of a picnic with the handsome officer at El Polin Spring, walks along the beach and even a boat ride to Angel Island. It was there, she remembered, that she fastened a gold chain and locket around his neck. Inside the medallion was an intricate knot that she had woven from their hair. In return, he gave her a gold cross decorated with diamonds and sapphires, and a portrait of himself.

The story of Rezanov and Concepcion

encapsulates the Russian experiment in the New World. With the death of the visionary leader, Russia's hopes for a lasting presence on the North American continent were dashed, ultimately leading to complete withdrawal and the sale of all of Alaska to the United States in 1867.

Whether the tale of Rezanov and Concepcion is one of lovers tragically separated or a failed trade alliance, the truth is lost in time. However, the ambiguity of the facts has not prevented poets and writers from celebrating the irresistible story.

Various paintings, including a fresco at the Presidio's Main Post Chapel, depict the handsome couple. In 1872 Bret Harte wrote a poem about a veiled nun broken-hearted as she receives word of her beloved's death:

"Died while speeding home to Russia/falling from a fractious horse/Left a sweetheart, too, they tell me/Married I suppose, of course!"

Whatever we believe, we are left with a mystery, a love story and one of the greatest "what if's?" of California history.

HT

interim, GSI also advocates threat-reducing such as the removal of nuclear weapons air-trigger alert, the ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the reduction of nuclear arsenals.

Global Security Institute has established projects and programs to support this work. Key partners include the Middle Powers Initiative and the Lawyers Alliance for World Peace. In 2001, GSI will continue its partnership with the Nuclear Reduction/Disarmament Campaign, a program that enlists religious groups as campaigners for abolition. GSI will also be working with Project Abolition, a coalition of grassroots and high-level nuclear abolitionists seeking to build a nationwide body of support for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

For more about GSI, visit [www.gsinstitute.org](http://www.gsinstitute.org) or call 415.561.6686.

## March

Thursday, March 15, 6 to 9 p.m.

### Friends of the Urban Forest 20th Anniversary

Join Presidio-based Friends of the Urban Forest to celebrate two decades of achievement... including the planting of 33,000 trees! Please call Event Coordinator Ron Wong at 415.355.9988 to learn about silent auction and sponsorship opportunities.



## Ongoing

### Presidio Power Yoga

Kia Meaux leads this dynamic, high-energy class, sometimes referred to as "power yoga," at the Presidio Alliance (Building 563 near the Lombard Gate). Classes, held each Monday from 6 to 7:30 p.m., are \$10. Call 415.561.3993.

## Announcements

### Teen Night at the Presidio YMCA

Each Friday, the Presidio YMCA hosts Teen Night! Be a part of the swimming, basketball and rock climbing fun. Call 415.447.9673 to learn how you or your teen can get involved.