

March 2013



RICHMOND MAIN STREET INITIATIVE, INC.

# 2012 Annual Report

## Letter From the Executive Director

The Richmond Main Street Initiative (RMSI) had a monumental 2012. Our programs, projects, and events soared to new heights. We are extremely proud to have the first and only business improvement district in the City of Richmond. We are thankful to our property/business owners, residents, and city council and staff who supported this effort to make it a reality.

The Downtown Richmond Property Business Improvement District (DRPBID) will build on the investments already made in Downtown such as the new, beautiful streetscape on Macdonald and Nevin Avenues implemented by the former Redevelopment Agency, and the renovated East Bay Center for the Performing Arts, which has brought a state-of-the-art performing arts institution to Downtown. The DRPBID will also ensure that the community events and programs implemented by RMSI, which have made significant improvements to the district, continue. Ultimately, the DRPBID will create lasting results, making Downtown more economically viable, attractive, and safe.

In 2013 we are reaching out to our constituents to invite them to share their ideas about important projects that will help build the DRPBID. We will continue to offer our signature Music on the Main, Spirit & Soul Festival, and Downtown Holiday Festival events that have drawn increasingly larger crowds each year, as well as welcome back the weekly certified Farmers' Market and Zumba fitness classes that bring health and wellness resources to the community.

In addition, we are making a concerted effort to offer more business assistance to existing Downtown merchants and develop incentives to bring sustainable new businesses to Downtown. Our first ever Small Business Bootcamp & Mixer was a resounding success. We were honored to have support from Wells Fargo, Mechanics Bank, and Chevron to bring this event to 46 current and aspiring small business owners who gained valuable information and networking connections. We look forward to building this program in the years to come. The hard work and investments in the community are paying off with several new businesses openings in Downtown. However, RMSI is keenly aware of the many difficulties our merchants face and the challenges that potential businesses have in acquiring guidance and capital. RMSI is working on a business incubation program to provide the support that established merchants and up-and-coming businesses need.

Richmond Main Street is spreading its wings and soaring to new heights in 2013 as a newly formed PBID. We invite you to join our efforts in Downtown's new chapter by participating in stakeholder meetings, volunteering at an event, and supporting our merchants. Stay tuned for more good news to come!

Warm regards,

**Amanda Elliott**



*Amanda Elliott welcomes participants to RMSI's first Small Business Bootcamp. (Photo credit Johnasies McGraw)*



*Performers light up the stage at the annual Downtown Holiday Festival (Photo credit: Ellen Gailing)*

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### RMSI wants to thank all of our sponsors and community partners in 2012.

City of Richmond, Chevron Corporation, LISC, Wells Fargo, Mechanics Bank, Dean & Margaret Leshner Foundation, Rubicon Programs, Inc., Ralphs Fund, Kaiser Permanente, Oakland Private Industry Council, Wal-Mart Foundation, John and Valarie Burgess, Zell & Associates, Patricia Durham, SF Bay Area Rapid Transit, EBMUD, DP Security LLC, Sims Metal, Anewamerica Community Corporation, Bionovo, Inc., Christine Sorensen, Margaret Mary McQuaid, Rocio and Carl Smith, Kathleen Hanau-Gaines, Kenneth H Thomson, Barry Krisberg, Congreso Familiar, Laura Johnson, Nour and Mai Tweimeh, Anne Grodin, Karen Middleton, Planned Parenthood Shasta Pacific, Raymond Rodriguez, Andres Alegria, Angie Garling, Barbara Penny-James, Blanca Nunez, Christie Battermann-Jordan, Cora Ward, Dr. Joseph Ovick, Hilda Mariscal, James and Robin Burton, Janet Abelson, Jerald and Melody Weintraub, Jeremy Apple, Wilhelmina Wilson, John and Barbara Ellis, Judith and Burton Calder, Latanya Fisher, Leticia Moore, Madeliene Corbin, Marilyn Farley, Duane Kromm, Marilyn Bracelin, Patricia Ann Player, Peggy Thomsen, Robin Phipps, Rose Darrah, Sophie Hahn, Thomas Fields, Virginia Behm, Virginia Summerer, Viveca Jones, BJ'S Eye Specs Optical Svc, Joann Steck-Bayat, William Casey, Linda Newton

# 2012 Program Highlights



*Small Business Bootcamp: Pictured from left: Johnasies McGraw, Amanda Elliott, Janet Johnson, and Vaneese Johnson. (Photo Credit: Johnasies McGraw)*

## RMSI Delivers on Its Goal of Providing Resources to Local Businesses

In 2012 RMSI continued its commitment to link local small businesses, emerging entrepreneurs, and start-ups to pertinent and timely resources—a major part of its strategy to boost economic development in Downtown by strengthening existing merchants and spur new business starts in the district.

## Small Business One-Day Bootcamp & Mixer

Due to the unprecedented demand for more small business assistance and training in 2012, RMSI extended the training opportunities to host a Small Business Bootcamp on Tuesday, January 15, where 46 current and aspiring small business owners gathered together for RMSI's inaugural Small Business Bootcamp and Mixer in Downtown Richmond. The all-day event, held in a vacant Downtown property that is available for lease, featured four interactive panel discussions with over a dozen small business experts, technical assistance providers, bank representatives, and successful local entrepreneurs who shared knowledge, best practices, and current statistics relevant for small businesses operating in Richmond. Bootcamp participants enjoyed a walk along historic Main Street and joined Downtown merchants for a networking mixer at a nearby available commercial space. Support from Wells Fargo, Mechanics Bank, and Chevron made the event possible.

## Start and Grow Smart Classes

Richmond Main Street Initiative (RMSI) provided another series of the successful Start and Grow Smart classes last fall. The second installment of Start and Grow Smart—an innovative educational program made possible through a partnership between RMSI and Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center—provided free business classes and consulting sessions to 31 startups and home-based businesses in Richmond last fall. Through the program's classroom sessions participants received valuable information on how to develop, evaluate, and refine their own business plans, as well as a clear roadmap for moving forward with their ideas. To further help participants maintain momentum in executing their business plans, the program entitles them to individualized one-on-one sessions with a small business consultant. To date, three participants from the 2012 Start & Grow Smart

program are moving forward with realizing their businesses thanks to their newly attained knowledge and skills, and support from career coach Vaneese Johnson.

## Summer Youth Entrepreneur Program (SYEP)

The office was abuzz with activity on July 13, 2012, as 11 Richmond youth put the final touches on their business plan presentations. After two weeks of work readiness training with an emphasis on entrepreneurialism development, the Summer Youth Entrepreneur Program (SYEP), Class of 2012 was ready to show off their visions for potential downtown businesses. From an animal exploratorium to a college-prep center, these youth demonstrated a demand for innovative and socially responsible businesses. All participants completed 80 hours of paid positions at local business and three accepted positions at their worksites following the completion of the program.

## Art In Windows

We proudly collaborated with downtown property owners the City of Richmond and Nasser Real Estate, local artists, and the Richmond Arts and Culture Commission to bring two Art In Windows exhibitions to Downtown. These multidisciplinary public art projects highlighted the works of local



*Downtown residents view one of the BART stations murals while attending the closing ceremony of the 2012 Art In Windows season. (Photo credit: RMSI Staff)*

artists Tracy Ricks, Stephen Bruce, and Frederick Franklin, whose art transformed vacant storefronts into 24-hour galleries and attracted hundreds of visitors to Downtown through receptions and art walks.

## NEW BUSINESSES DOWNTOWN

7 businesses opened their doors in 2012 creating 24 new jobs Downtown. They include:

**Joy Café** -- 1400 Macdonald Avenue  
**Sanctuary Yoga & Meditation Center** -- 322 Harbour Way, #24 (Market Square Mall)  
**BART Mart & Deli** -- 1551 Nevin Plaza  
**Building Blocks For Kids Collaborative** -- 312 9th Street  
**Teach for America** -- 322 Harbour Way, #16 (Market Square Mall)  
**Archiscape Designs** -- 322 Harbour Way, #26 (Market Square Mall)  
**Planned Parenthood** -- 340 Marina Way

## Downtown Richmond Property Business Improvement District (DRPBID)

In July 2012, Richmond's first business improvement district, the DRPBID, was passed with wide support from community stakeholders made up of property owners, business owners and residents. The DRPBID received 74.3% of the weighted vote from local property owners and was approved by the City of Richmond City Council. RMSI began exploring the creation of a PBID in Downtown Richmond as a way to ensure that the investments already made in the neighborhood continue for years to come. In early August 2011, RMSI began working with a consultant team from Civitas that helped lead the feasibility study, stakeholder outreach, and implementation of a PBID for Downtown. Since the passage of the DRPBID in July, RMSI has been working to implement the services as outlined in the management district plan, which focus on: Cleaning, Maintenance, and Safety; Marketing and Promotions; and Business Attraction.

## Festivals Bring Downtown to Life

Saturday, September 29th marked another historic "first" for Downtown Richmond: a street festival on Macdonald Avenue celebrating the rejuvenation of Historic Downtown and the arts in this vibrant community. "We really wanted to highlight the community aspect of the revitalization of Downtown, so it seemed only natural that we hold our signature event on Main Street," says Amanda Elliott, Executive Director of Richmond Main Street.

Over 1,000 community members visited the 4th  
(Continued on next page...)

## Our Mission...

*The Richmond Main Street Initiative is a community-based nonprofit corporation dedicated to revitalizing historic downtown Richmond as a pedestrian-friendly urban village, offering products, services, arts and entertainment that reflect the community's rich and diverse heritage.*

# Highlights *(continued from p. 2)*

annual Spirit & Soul Festival and Fundraiser to enjoy phenomenal musical performances by local favorites Andre Thierry & Zydeco Magic, Tia Carroll, and Clangin' and Bangin', set within an elegant outdoor bazaar atmosphere complete with a range of fine dining showcasing local restaurants and food trucks, a wine and spirits garden, unique artisan shopping, and exclusive silent auction prizes. With help from Mayor Gayle McLaughlin, RMSI honored Jerrold Hatchett, Arnie Kasendorf, Jordan Simmons, and Mary Lavergne as Downtown Champions and recognized the contributions that the Neighborhood Ambassadors have made in keeping the district clean and safe.

The jubilation continued beyond Spirit & Soul on 11th Street with the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts' Richmond Arts in Motion, a special event in celebration of their new interactive window display by acclaimed Bay Area digital artist Scott Snibbe, featuring carnival games, arts and crafts, street performances, a special dedication ceremony, and indoor reception.

## Music on Main Summer Concerts

Our summer Music on the Main concerts had record attendance in 2012. Each event featured a diverse musical line-up including West African Senegalese ensemble Sekkou Senegal, Alma del Barrio and blues legend Jesse James. As a member of the West County HEAL collaborative, RMSI took on the theme of Healthy Eating and Active Living, incorporating Zumba breaks at each event and distributing fresh fruits and vegetables to nearly 1000 individuals.

## Holiday Lights & Festival Bring Joy to Downtown

The air was teeming with excitement as dozens of families filed out of the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts on Wednesday, December 12th into the chilly evening. Following the Center's Son de la Tierra group performing a La Rama procession, the crowd gathered on 11th Street to enjoy traditional holiday music, dance, carols, and remarks by City officials and community representatives, who led a countdown to the grand finale of the annual Downtown Holiday Festival: the magical, simultaneous illumination of dozens of snowflakes and wreath shaped street lights along Macdonald Avenue.

2012 marked a special milestone for this beloved community event: for the first time in several years the Downtown Holiday Festival returned to the historic Main Street district. "The past few festivals were held at the Nevin Community Center due to the limited number of facilities in Downtown capable of hosting large crowds. All of that has changed with the newly renovated East Bay Center facility," explains Outreach Coordinator Alicia Gallo. RMSI proudly partnered with the Center to bring holiday cheer to over 500 hundred Iron Triangle families in the heart of Downtown with an evening filled with memorable activities: visits with Santa, spectacular performances by the Center's youth companies, gift giving, balloon

animals from Buki the Clown, holiday shopping, and delicious holiday goodies. Every child had the opportunity to meet Santa and receive a wrapped present and a gift bag filled with small toys and fresh fruit.



Visitors picking up farm-fresh produce at Healthy Village Farm Stand. (Photo credit: RMSI Staff)

## Bringing Health & Wellness to Families in Downtown

### Farmers' Market

The grand opening of the Richmond Main Street Farmers' Market on Wednesday, June 27, 2012 featured more than 25 vendors offering seasonal fruits and vegetables,

gourmet foods, local honey, fresh cut flowers, baked goods, orchids, live music, and handmade jewelry from Richmond-based business woman Viveca Jones. More than 600 residents, downtown workers, and visitors attended the market and reveled in the bounty that the farmers had to offer. The Richmond Main Street Farmers' Market ended its first season with a special Halloween market on October 31 filled with decorated booths, seasonal produce, and holiday treats. Downtown is pleased to announce the return of this popular market for a full season starting on Wednesday, May 8th, 2013!

### Healthy Village Farm Stand

2012 marked the 3rd year that RMSI hosted Healthy Village Farm Stand—which took place every first Friday of the summer months—in Downtown through its partnership with the West County Healthy Eating Active Living Collaborative (HEAL). 2012's Healthy Village events began in May and provided access to health and wellness resources to over 600 individuals. "RMSI is working to revitalize Downtown and this is one of the ways that we're doing it: we believe that a healthy community is a thriving community," says Amelia Segi,

*(Continued on next page...)*

## CURRENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Cindy Haden**  
*Chair*

**Xavier Abrams**  
*Vice Chair/Treasurer*

**Charlene Smith**  
*Secretary*

**Arnie Kasendorf**  
*Past Chair*

**Amanda Elliott**  
*Executive Director*

**JoEl Schult**  
**Adonna O'Sullivan**

**Billy Ward**  
**Maria Alegria**  
**Susan Bain**

## ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

**Janet L. Johnson**  
**Jerrold Hatchett**  
**Michael Davenport**  
**James Goins**  
**Joanne King**  
**Mary Lavergne**  
**Virgil Weekes**

## OUR STAFF

**Amanda Elliott**  
*Executive Director*

**Alicia Gallo**  
*Outreach & Neighborhood Ambassador Coordinator*

**Johnasies McGraw**  
*Strategy & Development Consultant*

**Vaneese Johnson**  
*Small Business Consultant*

# Financial Report

Fiscal Year 2012 Income			Fiscal Year 2011 Expenses		
Foundation	17%	\$ 47,667	Program	72%	\$ 220,687
Individual	2%	\$ 3,375	General and Administration	22%	\$ 66,864
Corporate	27%	\$ 75,577	Development	6%	\$ 19,432
Public	54%	\$ 150,454	TOTAL	100%	\$ 306,982
TOTAL	100%	\$277,074			

*"RMSI continues to be at the forefront of the positive transformations in the community and [the staff] are points of light and inspiration for me."*  
-- April Suwalsky, Community Member



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## RMSI 2012 Work Plan

### **Economic Restructuring Committee:**

*Chair - Charlene Smith*

- Raise \$150,000
- Conduct downtown survey and outreach to determine support for implementation of pop-up business(es). Confer with local leaders to gain an understanding of how they envision downtown
- Youth Entrepreneur Program/Support business development

### **Design Committee:**

*Chair - Amanda Elliott*

- Continue Art In Windows campaign to enliven downtown and enhance vacant storefronts
- Work on banner campaign for downtown
- Install Holiday Lights
- Store front design assistance for pop-up businesses and current stores

### **Promotion Committee:**

*Chair - Xavier Abrams*

- Continue to update and upgrade website; Monthly e-newsletters
- Produce commercial for Web and radio/TV broadcast
- Expand online presence: Facebook, Flickr, website, Twitter

- 3 Summer Concert Series - Music on the Main
- Annual Signature Event: Fundraiser (Spirit & Soul)
- Healthy Village Farm Stand
- Holiday Activities: Holiday Festival and Bazaar
- Monthly jazz/poetry mixers—Pop-up event

### **Clean & Safe Committee:**

*Chair - Cindy Haden*

- Community Garden Plantings and Clean Ups
- Neighborhood Ambassador Program
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) visits to downtown businesses to tackle blight and address safety concerns
- Beautification Campaign



*Dancing in the street to Andre Thierry & Zydeco Magic at the Spirit & Soul Festival. (Photo Credit: Ellen Gailing)*

## Highlights *(continued from p. 3)*

administrative coordinator.

### **Free Zumba Classes:**

From March 15-June 28, RMSI offered bi-weekly Zumba Fitness classes in Downtown Richmond,



*Over 75 Downtown residents exercise with free Zumba classes offered by RMSI every week. (Photo credit: RMSI Staff)*

free of charge thanks to funding from West County HEAL. The classes were led by certified Zumba Fitness instructor Willa "Bontle" Willis and took place at the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts and the RMSI office. Word spread quickly and soon the registration lists for the classes filled up days in advance. On average, 50 local residents attended the class each week, with many returning on a regular basis. Thanks to the great turn out, RMSI was able to secure funding for another round of classes from September-December, and expanded the program to include a lunchtime Zumba class on Mondays.