

Local hero reflects on education, literacy work

By Leslie Katz

A good cause: "Heart in Bloom" by Sara Morris is available at the Heroes & Hearts benefit.



Midge Wilson, executive director of the Bay Area Women's and Children's Center, is an honoree at this year's Heroes & Hearts Award Luncheon. The event, a fundraiser sponsored by the San Francisco General Hospital Foundation, recognizes people who make extraordinary contributions to The City. The luncheon also showcases hearts created by local artists; the hearts will be sold to benefit S.F. General.

You've been working in the Tenderloin — to create the Tenderloin Community School and oversee school and family resource center programs, among other things — for decades now. How does it feel?

I love it as much as I ever did. And it's easier now; I have all these years of experience. We keep listening to people in the neighborhood and creating programs that are needed.

Can you mention a program of which you're particularly proud?

In the last couple of years, we've really expanded the literacy work at the school, helping bring kids up to reading levels.

Anything else you want to talk about?

The Tenderloin youth sports ice skating program is phenomenal. We have these kids who are living in single rooms who are going on to win major competitions.

How do you like being recognized as a hero?

I was surprised and honored when I learned about the nomination. I've seen the hearts over the years, and I have a huge appreciation for San Francisco General — what people talk about, when they're dealing with health issues, is S.F. General.

How would you describe your work-life philosophy?

When you're staring in the face of a huge, seemingly impossible effort, just take one day at a time, and be determined to never let the naysayers win!