



common ground relief

Events

**The Howling
Wolf
Benefit
Built to Spill
Plus the Meat
Puppets
March 4 10pm**

**FoolsFury
Theatre
Presents:
Monster in the
Dark
San Francisco
Bay Area
March 14**

**Treehouse
Records Benefit
Minneapolis
Friday April 4**

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Common

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Lower 9th Ward Says Farewell to Pink Project

*Sara Aboulafia, Common Ground Nola
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On Sunday, January 6th, residents and visitors of The Lower Ninth Ward gathered on 1900 Deslonde to bid goodbye to the Pink Project and the flamboyant installation that arrived the first week of December.

The Make It Right

Foundation plans to take

down the bright pink cubes that are scattered throughout the ward over the next few days. These temporary constructions, originally conceived by the Jolie/Pitt Foundation and the Global Green Initiative, represent the homes which were devastated by Katrina and serve as a symbol for the construction of new "green" eco-friendly homes which will go up in March.



The Preservation Hall Jazz Band, playing from a flamingo pink stage, brought a note of energy and hope to the closing ceremony. Audience members swayed to the classic New Orleans jazz, clapping with the band along to songs that expressed a love for the musicians' hometown. Attendees also visited the exhibition across from the stage which displayed models for potential houses, explanations of the history of Make it Right and descriptions of local advocates who have collaborated with the project. Representatives of MIR were pleased with the response to the project and the support from the community, one which is distinguished by the fact that more residents in the area owned their homes than in any other part of the city.



Stefan Beese, executive associate of architectural firm GRAFT and producer of the Pink Project, counted the project as a success. The project "raised a lot of awareness" and "refreshed the minds of individuals," he said.

Ground Community Adoption Program

Because of systematic political and economic neglect, New Orleans' working class and poor communities are in need of immediate support in their rebuilding efforts.

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Common Ground Health Clinic



Help the Rebuild, Donate a Small Pickup

Common Ground Relief's rebuilding projects are in need of a reliable, small pickup. The truck would be used to move tools, building materials and food to volunteers at construction sites around New Orleans. Contact [the volunteer coordinator](#) for more info.

Efficient Microorganisms: Instead of Bleach

The amount of donations received - enough to fund the building of 65 houses as of the 6th - proves that such projects are possible, he said. Beese also praised the efforts of Common Ground and its volunteers; without their support, he said, the Pink Project wouldn't have been possible.

With donations still coming into Make It Right, the foundation isn't planning to slow down anytime soon. Beese believes that MIR's success in the Lower Ninth will make it possible to extend the project into the larger hurricane-stricken region. "This place is empty...what better place to start than here?" he remarked. Of course, the Lower Ninth Ward still boasts active residents dedicated explicitly to the neighborhood, as attendee Ward "Mack" McLendan proves. McLendan, himself an active volunteer as director of the recently opened Lower Ninth Ward Village community center, remarked that the Pink Project installation and its closing ceremony "gives the people a chance to see what's been done and can be done." While McLendan admitted that he is unsure how the project will ultimately turn out, he commended Pitt for his dedication. "It has to start somewhere," he said, "I give it a positive."

Tom Darden, chairman of Make It Right NOLA, handed it to residents like McLendan: "...the whole project is about residents...they're the only reason we're here," he said. Darden



showed appreciation for Common Ground's volunteer effort to contact former lower 9th ward residents who then applied to be a part of the project. Though he expressed a wish that the pink houses could be left intact, Darden was happy with the direction the materials for the houses will take. The scaffolding for the structures will be shipped off to be used for Mardi Gras, and the recyclable pink tarpaulin material will be made into handbags that will be sold to continue fundraising for the ward. The conscientious fundraising efforts of Make It Right, combined with the efforts of residents, activists, and artists, make the outcome of the project look promising. As The Preservation Hall Band sang, they seemed to speak for all those who have made a contribution and hope for the best: "We gonna tell a story of how we overcome, and we'll understand it better by and by."