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**\*\*\*\*\* FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE \*\*\*\*\*\*\***

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**San Francisco's First Asian**

**Community Garden Breaks Ground**

*- Model community partnership with CalTrain in Bayview showcases green thumb and environmental interests of Asian families -*

**San Francisco, CA (April 17, 2014) -**AsianWeek Foundation, along with community leaders and elected officials broke ground today on the city's first ever Asian Community Garden located at the cul-de-sac at Williams Ave. and Diana St. in the Bayview District.

The green space, approximately one acre in size, will help new immigrants lead healthy lifestyles, grow and share fresh produce, and showcase Asian plants and features to be enjoyed by people of all backgrounds. There will also be space for exercise activities such as Tai Chi. Landscaping will showcase an intersection of native and traditional Asian plants.

The garden will be called the Florence Fang Asian Community Garden, named after long time community leader Florence Fang. Other major supporters and sponsors include: The Aetna Foundation, SF Department of the Environment, DoormanSF, Discount Builders, Recology, USF School of Architecture and Community Design, and Quesada Gardens Initiative.

“Florence Fang is one of the great pioneering women in San Francisco and the Asian American community—and a fitting namesake for this remarkable garden,” said House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi. “The ceremonial bamboo planted today represents many of the things we are most proud of in the garden: strong roots for a strong community; an embrace of the cultural diversity of this neighborhood; and an ever growing commitment to the health and quality of our environment.  Thank you to the Fang Family, the AsianWeek Foundation, Caltrain and all whose leadership made this special place possible.”

"This project is the first Asian-themed public and open space on the Southeast side of the City,” said Supervisor Malia Cohen, who played an instrumental role in shaping this project. "It reflects the growing diversity we have in the Southeast and provides a place for local residents to invest in healthy lifestyles and sustainable practices, including growing fresh produce.” Supervisor Cohen represents District 10, which includes Bayview; she also sits on the CalTrain Board of Directors.

The Bayview/Hunters Point is one of San Francisco’s fastest demographically changing neighborhoods, with Asian/Pacific Islanders now the largest population group. Organizers found that 42 percent of households immediately surrounding the site are owned by Asian/Pacific Islanders. The site sits above an operational CalTrain tunnel and was home to the Diana Street Farm, San Francisco’s last farm.

“Studies indicate that Asians overwhelmingly consider themselves to be environmentalists. This project brings together and develops the community by tapping into that huge potential. We hope their working together around this garden will also improve the well-being and safety of the neighborhood,” said Ted Fang, Director of the AsianWeek Foundation which launched the Green Initiative for Asian Families in 2012.

San Francisco’s Bayview has been called a “food swamp” where food is available but not necessarily healthy, affordable or culturally appropriate. Asian immigrants are particularly challenged with new studies showing they have twice the risk of diabetes and some of the fastest-growing rates of obesity among all ethnic groups.

Organizers have been conducting on-going community and neighborhood meetings as well as door-to-door outreach since last year to solicit community input and involvement to help determine the final look and feel of the garden space. Different areas of the community garden will be rolled out in phases.

“We look forward to working with AsianWeek Foundation and all of the community partners and residents to create a safe space where Asians can come to garden and do other healthy activities while sharing our culture with everyone,” said David Chan, Executive Director of Asian Pacific American Community Center.

Volunteer days will be held every 2nd and 4th Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., with activities including general cleanup of garden grounds, removal of non-native invasive plant species, litter pickup, watering, and mulching. Volunteers are needed over the course of the year and can sign up online at [www.tinyurl.com/AWFvolunteer.](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?e=0011aFmuPXeSfZ5_Aa3rE9Y2V6W2p5MHS10bX4Ayb1gpssxyHqcWUydY8VWtUIl-gIR4rIEm_PTZx4jexLEkQVPUEBGB-hfYapMR86SrG5D1qDOAGqsys5UKlPChsxLXj6-" \t "_blank)

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The Green Initiative for Asian Families (GIAF) is a project of the [AsianWeek Foundation](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?e=0011aFmuPXeSfZ5_Aa3rE9Y2V6W2p5MHS10bX4Ayb1gpssxyHqcWUydY8VWtUIl-gIR4rIEm_PTZx4pazpCWA-EDsI0jTGxvXxZ94nyKyJAJsjePxkiD_t2Ag==" \t "_blank). GIAF is a network of Asian and Pacific Islander community-based organizations and service providers committed to developing a culturally proficient and inclusive approach to increasing sustainable practices.

AsianWeek Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)3 that encourages the sharing of differences and appreciation of diversity across culture, language, generation and ethnicity, and works to strengthen relations among Asian Pacific Islander communities and between Asians and non-Asians.

Advisory Partners: Asian Pacific American Community Center, Community Youth Center, San Francisco Community Empowerment Center, and Visitacion Valley Asian Alliance.

Community Partner: Quesada Gardens Initiative.