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food for thought



Rania Batayneh, MPH

Nutritionist & Wellness Coach

"Food for thought" is the mantra of Rania Batayneh, Nutritionist and Wellness Expert. As a San Francisco Bay Area television and radio personality for NBC 11 News and KFOG Radio, a consulting nutritionist for Sports Club LA San Francisco and Founder of Essential Nutrition, Recipient of a Master's Degree in Public Health Nutrition from the University of Michigan and a Certified Wellness Coach through the American College of Sports Medicine, Batayneh views food as pleasure as well as fuel for your body. Featured in the LA Times, San Francisco Examiner and 7x7 Magazine, her expertise lies in nutrition, wellness and personal meal catering.

Batayneh takes into account lifestyle, food preferences, and activity levels as well as metabolic testing in order to create a unique plan for each client. She designs a strategy to provide improved energy levels and provide the appropriate ratio of protein, carbohydrates, and fats. "Remember, this is not a diet, but rather a lifestyle," she explains. "It's about finding balance. You can still enjoy the chocolate you crave or your glass of wine at the end of the day."

Batayneh's Mediterranean upbringing brought her to a career in nutrition very naturally. "I always liked to cook at home and there was good food around all the time -- never anything frozen. My mom says that she cooked for 30 years and nobody ever paid her," she laughs. "When I started consulting, I found that people often knew what to do but were just too busy. One client asked me to cook for her and deliver the food and that became part of my practice. People would call and ask for a caterer, so I became their personal chef."

Batayneh offers a 15-minute complimentary phone consultation in order to see how she and a client can work together to optimize nutrition and change lifestyles for lasting results.

"People can neglect themselves for a long time," she says, "but once they get the information they need, then making these changes will only make their lives better. When clients understand their needs, become educated and experience the results, that's the best part of it for me."

For info call (248) 895-3288, rania@essentialnutritionforyou.com or go online at www.essentialnutritionforyou.com.

service sector

Mental Health Association of San Francisco Ringing in 60 Years of Service

Now entering its sixth decade of service, the Mental Health Association of San Francisco (MHA-SF) is dedicated to improving the mental health of residents in the diverse communities of San Francisco through education, advocacy, research, and service. In all its programs, MHA-SF works together with people and families challenged by mental illness and with the agencies that serve them to promote prevention, access to services, leadership, and independence.

Central to MHA-SF's mission throughout its history, is the belief that meaningful change can only be achieved with active participation by those challenged by mental illness and that mental health consumers must be empowered to pursue their own goals.

Recognizing that tens of thousands of San Franciscans live near or below the poverty level, mental illness disproportionately affects people of lower income, especially those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. MHA-SF programs address the needs of the underserved and those who seek mental health services only to be barred from access.

"Much in our field has changed since 1947," says MHA-SF Executive Director Belinda Lyons. "Today institutionalization is no longer the primary treatment option for mental illness. Decades of research and experience have shown that people can recover from mental illness, especially by developing skills that lead to their own recovery and with the support of their community."

Over the last 60 years, MHA-SF has continued to adapt and to serve. The organization focuses on high-impact systems change and leadership development, influencing the availability and disbursement of millions of government dollars which touch the lives of thousands.

Symbol of the National Mental Health Association (NMHA) is the Mental Health Bell. Cast from iron chains and shackles that once restrained people in asylums, the Bell is both a powerful reminder of the harrowing care individuals endured and a sign of hope for continued progress in understanding and treatment.

In the early 1950s, NMHA issued a call to asylums across the country for their discarded chains and shackles. In April of 1953 NMHA melted down these inhumane bindings at the McShane Bell Foundry in Baltimore, Maryland and forged the 300-pound Mental Health Bell.

Today the Mental Health Bell tolls to end misunderstanding and discrimination and rings out hope in the fight for victory over mental illness. The Mental Health Association of San Francisco is an affiliate of the Mental Health Association of California and the National Mental Health Association. Visit us at www.mha-sf.org or call 415.421.2926 for information.

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Consulate of Honduras

The Central American nation of Honduras is just about the size of Virginia in both population (7 million) and square miles (43,000). Yet its great natural and cultural diversity earns it the description "One Small Country, Three Wide Worlds." Those worlds are Honduras' tropical cloud forests of the central highlands, the outstanding Mayan sculptures in the west, and the exotic Caribbean coast in the north.

The official representative of Honduras here in San Francisco is Consul General Francisco Venegas, who arrived just four months ago after an extensive career in business as well as several years as the Consul General in Atlanta. His jurisdiction covers a vast region of the United States, from Northern California to Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Wyoming, Alaska and Hawaii. Prior to his appointment he had never visited San Francisco, but has already grown fond of his new home. "This is a beautiful city," he smiles. "It feels like a European city, a great city for walking. And with wonderful weather!"

As Consul General, his main concern is to keep in contact with local Hondurans who come here primarily to work and need help with documentation. "Many Hondurans stay for a few years, earn as much money as they can, so that they are able to go back home and make a better life for themselves and their families," Consul General Venegas explains. "They work hard while they're here. The money that Hondurans working in the United States send home represents 35% of the total income in Honduras."

Mr. Venegas puts education at the top of his list of important issues for Hondurans both at home and here. "Poverty and difficult living conditions will only improve as our education level increases. Even if one person in a family gets a good education, it makes a big difference," he states. He encourages Honduran people to learn English while they're here, giving them better employment options in the United States and in Honduras.

Americans who visit the Consulate looking for tourism information have come to the right place. Mr. Venegas is proud of his home country and a very effective booster of the many unique attractions of Honduras. "It's a fabulous place to vacation," he says enthusiastically. "The Bay Islands' five-star resorts are great for scuba diving and snorkeling and are part of the second largest reef in the world. Outside of Australia, this is the only place in the world to see whale sharks -- they look scary but are harmless to humans," he promises. "And the greatest Mayan ruins in the world are in Honduras, around Copan, which is sometimes called the 'Athens of the New World.'"

If Mr. Venegas has his way, we will all soon be planning our Honduran adventures.

For more information, visit the Consulate of Honduras in Suite 875 or call (415) 392-0076.

new tenant spotlight

TurboSonic™
Vibration Therapy

Shake your way to Health

The newest "tenant" Suite 1248 of the Flood Building is not human -- it's a machine offering a 10-minute "whole-body vibration" workout to improve muscle strength, flexibility, circulation and overall well being. Meet TurboSonic™ -- a workout that requires nothing more than simply standing on the machine while soothing music is played. "The TurboSonic is ideal for anyone who doesn't have time for a traditional exercise program," says Janna Waldinger, licensed Bay Area dealer. "In 10 minutes you can have the equivalent of a 90-minute workout. Wearing your everyday work clothes, without breaking a sweat, you get the benefits of oxygenating and circulating your blood and cleaning your lymphatic system, all this during your coffee break."

The idea is simple: the trillions of cells in a human body, when subjected to vertical vibrations that mimic the effect of gravity when exercising, become stimulated and regenerate. Benefits are similar to those of traditional exercise programs for fitness, strength, weight loss, rehabilitation from injuries, and overall revitalization. The TurboSonic is registered with the FDA and is approved for use by licensed health professionals such as physical therapists.

The idea of using whole-body vibration as therapy was conceived in the Soviet Union decades ago as a way for cosmonauts to maintain bone and muscle mass while weightless in space. It was then developed further in Germany, where vibration therapy has been used for a variety of medical conditions. Recently Korean scientists have transformed this technology by replacing the old mechanical motors with a sonic coil. This allows greater control over the intensity of vibration, resulting in a workout that can reach all areas of the body. These advances have been incorporated into the TurboSonic.

When Waldinger bought a machine last spring she wasn't thinking about starting a new business. But after she saw the results experienced by people with a wide variety of conditions, she decided to become the Napa dealer. Then she teamed up with an old friend, long-time Flood Building tenant Mark Rennie, to bring the TurboSonic to San Francisco.

Waldinger and Rennie are selling the TurboSonic to individuals, chiropractors, spas, and gyms, but are also committed to making it available to the general public. "The creators of this machine have teamed up with a Korean Qi Gong master, Dr. Kim, who created a choreography of energy, consciously choosing where the TurboSonic vibration starts in your body and with what intensity, complete with a one-minute crescendo to finish the session," explains Waldinger. "People have different goals: general balancing, fat loss, training to build bone and muscle, and even a meditative experience. The TurboSonic addresses all of these."

Flood Building tenants are offered three 10-minute sessions at no charge. For more info call (415) 244-6834 or visit www.sonichealthsystems.com



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WE SHIP

The Sonoma Wine & Cheese Market

Conventions are Us!

Danny Oplinger, a casualty of the Internet bust of 2001, remembers wondering what to do next. He and his friend Wan Suwandi had been laid off from different companies within weeks of each other, and there were not many interesting jobs available in San Francisco. "We'd always talked about starting some sort of business in the future back when we both had good jobs," Oplinger says. "I had worked for an Internet company and Wan was doing management consulting, so we came from different backgrounds. One of our friends who worked for the Convention Bureau told us that they had a hard time finding adequate trained staff for conventions. So we thought this could be a good business opportunity. We decided to do it."

Oplinger hires periodically, depending on convention schedules. He finds good employees with diverse backgrounds who like the temporary, part-time nature of convention staffing work. "We don't require event experience," he notes. "Our job is to staff information booths, register attendees, and assist speakers and exhibitors. I look for people with good customer service skills, who are flexible and punctual. Some computer experience is helpful. Flight attendants, hotel employees, high-end banking staff, people with advanced degrees, retired people who enjoy being involved... we hire a good cross-representation of San Francisco. There is a great pool of talented, interesting employees here."

Action Figures Convention Staffing, whose offices are in Suite 917, handles around 75% of the large conventions in the city. A recent technology show had over 30,000 attendees and required a staff of several hundred. They opened a second office in San Diego and plan to begin serving Chicago by the spring of 2007. "In some ways we've been lucky," Oplinger, says. "But we worked very hard and are very dedicated to our vision of customer service. I think of our business in terms of stakeholders: our employees serve the attendees, exhibitors and speakers at a conference, who then give good feedback to our clients, who make the decision to hire us, making our business successful. And our clients are our greatest sales team – client references are so important."

Oplinger's enthusiasm about his work has not been diminished by five years of hard work. "The best thing about this job is that every day is different," he says. "Different types of clients, different priorities, working with employees who have different skills." And five years from now? He envisions expanding further into the East Coast and eventually creating more of a national presence without losing the "boutique" feeling that makes Action Figures special.

There were many reasons why we choose the Flood Building, says Oplinger. "First, it's great to be able to walk to the Moscone Center in five minutes. We interview and hire many people, and since everyone knows the Flood Building, it's easy for people to find. And we sell San Francisco as a city, so being in a beautifully maintained landmark building is important to us."

You can reach Action Figures Convention Staffing at (415) 421-6800.

Computers that care

If you visit Suite 556 of the Flood Building you'll see software developers busy at their desks, writing code using the latest hardware and software products like computer professionals in offices everywhere. But their hard work does not result in a new computer game or office productivity tool. Teleresults software is for hospital transplant departments and is used by doctors, nurses, social workers and other hospital staff, as well as by the patients themselves.

Teleresults began in 1995 as a hobby for co-founder Ghassan Khabbaz, who had recently retired from his security-business company. A friend at UCSF asked him to develop software that would allow patients to access their own lab results and appointment records. Gradually extra features were added, allowing patients to fax their lab results to doctors and generating automatic appointment reminders. They eventually developed a complete software application for doctors and hospitals. "Since 2000, Teleresults has focused only on medical transplants, which are sometimes quite separate operating departments in a hospital," according to Operations Manager David Olivier. "We work with people from various transplant departments -- thoracic, heart, kidney – and thoroughly customize each application. It can take six months to a year to get through the development process, because each client has a different database system that we have to integrate into our application."

Most Teleresults customers are university hospitals involved with research: the National Institutes of Health, Johns Hopkins University, University of Maryland and UCSF all use Teleresults to manage their transplant-related data. "There is a central network for donor/recipient information, UNOS, which stands for United Network for Organ Sharing," Olivier explains. "They do the organ matching. But hospitals need more data. They need to write papers in order to get grants and to do their own research. They have to control how they collect data. This is where we come in. Recently we added data for web-based clinical pharmaceutical trials to our applications, expanding our market."

Business growth is good, but it is not the only motivation for Teleresults staff. "We don't necessarily want to be a huge corporation," Olivier says. "Many ideas for features originally came from users – doctors, social workers, nurses, even financial people, so it fits their needs. We love designing applications that we know will help the medical professionals do their jobs."

"We also strive for patient safety," he continues. "Our software had a direct role in saving at least one life that we know of. Patients check their lab results constantly – they become very knowledgeable about their conditions and lab results, before and after transplants. One patient called into our system late one night and knew from his lab result that something was very wrong. He checked himself into a hospital immediately and got the medical attention that he needed. It is so gratifying for all of us to know that our work is empowering patients to participate in their own healthcare. We just get pleasure out of helping."

For more information call (415) 392-9670.

it's a party

Tenants are invited to join the Flood Building Family for our annual Holiday Party in the lobby. Delicious food, drink and wine provided by Sophie's Cellars. Come one come all!

Thursday, December 7
5pm 'til 7pm
@ the Lobby

food for Flood

Puccini & Pinetti Restaurant offers lunchtime delivery!

It's already convenient – delicious food and the City's best happy hour just a ½ block away. And now, Puccini & Pinetti has started a new delivery program – just for Flood Building tenants!

With the new lunch time delivery program at Puccini & Pinetti, a long time favorite is now that much easier to enjoy. This new service is offered every weekday, with orders placed via the Puccini & Pinetti website at www.pucciniandpinetti.com. Orders will be accepted any time before 11am and then delivered directly to the office of your choice for lunch at around 12:30pm.

The delivery program has been created for the exclusive use of Flood Building tenants and staff. P&P welcomes orders for one person, large meetings, or groups of any size. While they naturally recommend ordering those large parties in advance, they say they are ready and willing to “serve lunch on a platter.” (Lunches are actually served in an eco friendly recycled paper carton.)

While the full menu will not be available, many of the most popular items will be offered including the Grilled Steak Wrap Panini, the Bibb Baby Arugula Salad, and their famous Chicken Marsala. A special effort has been made to provide healthy lunch options for the busy worker.

“We wanted to make sure that people were not stuck with pizza or burgers just because they were too busy to get out of the office,” said Melissa Garbiras, P&P manager extraordinaire. “We even made sure there were a few vegetarian options, and I’m not talking nuts and twigs.”

Several test runs have been very successful and have received rave reviews. “I said I needed these sandwiches to be beautiful, and 43 beautiful sandwiches was what I got,” raved Flood tenant Shari Sanderson.

New options are always nice to have, so check out the website or go on down to the restaurant at Cyril Magnin & Ellis and meet Melissa and her crew. (415) 392-5500.

staff stars

Jeff Smith - Security Officer

After 20 years working as an industrial electrician, building and maintaining power plants in the Central Valley, Jeff Smith was ready for something new. An old friend in the security business gave him the idea of working as a security guard and thus was he steered to our historic halls.

“I was getting older and started having more aches and pains doing that kind of physically demanding work,” Jeff explains. “I just got an opportunity to do something different and be somewhere different, so I jumped at it.”

Jeff has been at the Flood Building now for eight months. He works the 9am ‘til 3pm shift four days a week, and also the swing shift (4pm ‘til Midnight) on Saturdays and Sundays.

“I had no idea I’d be doing the type of work that I’m doing here,” he says, still sounding surprised by his new life. “I didn’t consider myself a ‘people person,’ but now I’m dealing with all kinds of people. I come from a small town so being here has broadened my outlook on a lot of things. I probably talk with more different people here in a day than I did there in a year.”

Originally from Salinas, Jeff has spent most of his life in the Central Valley town of Chowchilla where his mother, grown children and granddaughter still live.

Jeff enjoys the excitement of downtown San Francisco but is also happy to go home to his quiet place in the Sunset at the end of the day. Away from work, he takes advantage of the City’s cultural attractions. “I especially like visiting museums,” he says, noting how much he enjoyed this summer’s hit Monet exhibit at the Legion of Honor. “I’d seen pictures of Monet’s work in books, but to see it up close was amazing. If anyone had told me a few years ago that I’d be doing such things, I wouldn’t have believed them!”

Before coming to the Flood Building, Jeff did security work at some city construction sites. “But nothing prepared me for downtown San Francisco,” he smiles. “It’s interesting every day, because something new happens every day. This job isn’t an ordinary security job, standing by the door in a uniform. Here we’re providing security through service to tenants and visitors. It’s more like being a concierge. Visitors who have never been here before come in. Sometimes they’re stressed out from traveling, and we help them while they’re here. I’ve enjoyed getting to know many of the tenants, and the management staff is wonderful too. People treat this building with respect.”

He pauses and smiles before adding the best summation yet: “It’s a cool job.”

The Flood Building in a picture taken prior to the Earthquake of 1906

