TODAY'S TOP STORY » CITY PARKS

Renovated field in the Mission to open

Nonprofit partners with city in program to improve grounds

By Melanie Carroll Staff Writer

The Mission is getting a new soccer field as part of a pilot program designed to give The City's children more places to play team sports.

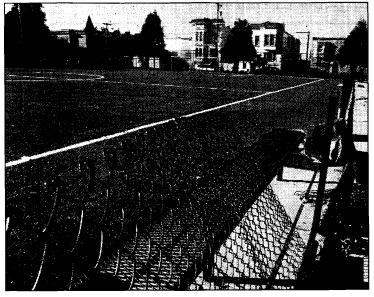
The artificial turf field at Harrison and 26th streets is the work of the City Fields Foundation, a nonprofit that aims to provide more sports fields in all of the city's neighborhoods.

The foundation aims to improve kids' everyday lives, spokesman Patrick Hannan said.

The foundation has kicked in \$4.5 million to fund the projects for the public-private partnership with The City.

The City Fields Foundation was founded last year in an effort to address the chronic shortage of playing fields in San Francisco.

"Together we can create the best



A plaque near the new field reads "Dedicated to the youth in the Mission, so you always have a place to play." — Jason Steinberg/Special to The Examiner

urban park system in the world," Mayor Gavin Newsom said in a prepared statement.

The mayor has said he wants to keep families in San Francisco.

The Mission location was cho-

sen out of dozens of possible spots because of its poor condition, community value and existing programming.

Garfield Square was a dusty, bare and sometimes muddy field, before

renovations began.

Still, children used it despite its pockmarks and lack of goals. Mission kids playing there sometimes in Spanish called it "the park where you break your foot," according to City Fields.

The new field will be striped for U-10 soccer play, which is typical of smaller neighborhood fields used for pick-up games. A reservation system for teams is in the works for the popular spot.

Artificial turf was chosen because it doesn't require mowing, can be used year-round and doesn't get muddy.

When the new Garfield Square field opens Wednesday, there will be a clinic offered by the San Francisco Nighthawks, a local women's team and the Women's National Team of Ghana, known as the Black Queens.

A second soccer field is scheduled to open in mid-November in Hunters Point at Thornton Avenue and Bayshore Boulevard, Hannan said. The Silver Terrace Playgrour d was known as a rough, weedy field prior to its renovation.

mcarroll@examiner.com