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Holiday whirlwind of good will, and a goodbye

By Catherine Bigelow

The holiday parties that define December unfurled in a span of two frantic weeks. Typically, they're mercifully unencumbered by earnest intent or lengthy live auctions.

Yet a hushed sense of exhaustion seemed to hover over even the sparkliest of soirees as guests looked back on a year that started with political protests and Russian River flooding. Then this annus horribilis proceeded to pound most everyone with lackluster baseball, proliferating homeless encampments, devastating North Bay wildfires, and finally, the sad, untimely death of Mayor **Ed Lee**.

Holiday good tidings were swiftly replaced by the refrain: "I can't wait to turn the page on 2017."

Down on the waterfront, **Amy Wender Hoch** hosted her eighth Holiday Heroes fundraiser. This kid-friendly fete at AT&T Park features sports stars, including former Giants slugger **Barry Bonds**, who received the event's 2017 Inspiration Award. And 500 kids, including underserved youth of the Wender Weis Foundation for Children and North Bay fire victims, joyfully raced around the ballpark, stuffing teddy bears or singing along with **Michael Franti**.



Sara Franti (left) with Barry Bonds, Amy Wender-Hoch and Michael Franti at Holiday Heroes Dec. 5, 2017.