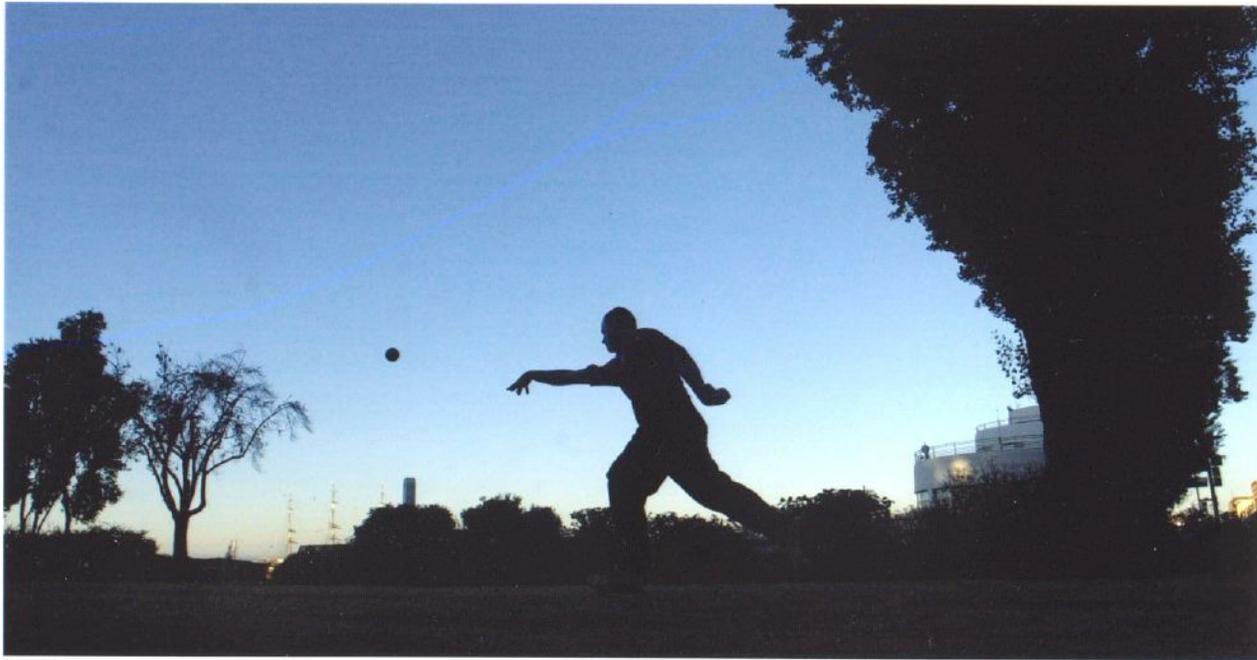


Bocce Ball Anyone?

One pharmacy tech becomes a national icon for an international sport.

photos by **Katy Raddatz**



Pharmacy tech Marco Cuneo says his favorite sport, bocce ball, and working at the pharmacy require the same skills. "Teamwork, accuracy, and speed are necessary in both fields, " he says. "I practice and work hard so I won't lose a game - or a customer."

The first thing Marco Cuneo does when he wakes up in the morning is check the weather. If it's nice, he's all smiles. If it's not, he wonders what to do after work that day. Cuneo, a pharmacy tech at 320 Bay St. in San Francisco, spends all his free time at the bocce ball court, practicing up to six hours every day. The sport, which he says resembles lawn bowling, is in his blood.

"Bocce ball is my passion, " says Cuneo. "My father was the best player in the nation. When he died, I decided to play in his honor. I love the sport and make it central to what I do every day. "

All hours of practice paid off this fall when Cuneo competed in the international bocce ball tournament in France. He returned home with a fifth place trophy and as the No. 1 player in the U.S. He also came home with a desire to share this uncommon sport with others.

"I volunteer at the local Salesian Boys & Girls Club near my house," says Cuneo. "I teach and coach the kids bocce ball so they can see how much fun the sport can be."

Cuneo and his fellow bocce ball teammates also perform demonstrations in San Francisco parks. "People recognize me when they come to our pharmacy," he says. "All the bocce ball players go to Walgreens and many of our neighborhood patients know me from the sport. I think it helps business to get out in the community so customers feel at home when they visit our store."



Marco Cuneo (left), pictured here with one of his teammates, has won nine medals for bocce.

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