Weekly publication, daily triumphs mark an extraordinary year

Welcome to Street Roots’ 2014-15 annual report. What an amazing and historic year.

In January, after three years of planning and community support, Street Roots doubled its publication schedule to weekly. By going weekly we have been able to give vendors a more stable income, week in and week out. Newspaper sales have increased 60 percent. That’s amazing. With 15,000 readers around the region, that means giving vendors a real hand up.

Being a weekly publication also allows Street Roots to be timely in the news department, offering different quality journalism and voices from the community that readers have come to expect from the newspaper.

There’s something powerful about being able to support individuals and families who endure the harsh realities of poverty while overcoming their circumstances collectively to improve their quality of life. Readers play a critical role in both the success of Street Roots and the success of individual vendors selling the newspaper. By working together with local businesses, community members and others, we are able to witness both the power of love and the strength of the human spirit.

Since going weekly Street Roots has gone from 75 regular vendors to more than 125 vendors working with more than 70 local businesses throughout the region.

The simple act of purchasing a newspaper allows the community to come together across class lines and to hold a conversation in a safe space. The newspaper allows individuals and families to not only gain an income, it offers self-confidence and self-worth. It allows both the public and vendors to build authentic relationships that would otherwise not happen without Street Roots. We are grateful.

The newspaper
• Street Roots published 39 quality editions of the newspaper last year (July-June) highlighting an array of social-justice issues. (It will be 52 next year after a full year of the weekly cycle.)
• The newspaper highlighted more than 100 individuals experiencing homelessness and poverty.
• Street Roots put a special focus on issues facing people of color in our community, including immigrants and refugees, the environment and the criminal justice system.
• The newspaper gave a voice to more than 40 social-justice organizations working on issues ranging from immigration and criminal justice reform, the environment, affordable housing and homelessness, marriage equality and equity.

The vendor program
• Street Roots provided a safe place for more than 450 people experiencing homelessness and poverty – including access to computers, a mailing address, hygiene items, socks, fresh water, coffee (Thanks, Stumptown!) and public restrooms.
• We created a vendor health fund to support vendors when they are sick or in an extreme crisis.
• Street Roots offered hospitality 365 days a year, rain or shine.
• Street Roots partnered with CareOregon and Central City Concern to sign up more than 90 percent of our vendors with health care.
• Street Roots partnered with JOIN, Northwest Pilot Project, Central City Concern and Transition Projects to facilitate housing for more than 40 individuals, while helping prevent homelessness for more than 100 people.
• Street Roots hosted a weekly Writer’s Group for people experiencing homelessness and poverty.
• Street Roots also hosted and partnered with Write Around Portland a writing workshop.
• Street Roots also hosted a vendor holiday party — serving more than 80 vendors a fresh holiday meal.
• Street Roots worked with individuals and institutions to provide monthly summer barbecues for vendors, tickets to Hops games, visits to the zoo, ice cream parties and marching in the Veteran’s Day and Pride parades.
• Partnering with Ride Connections — vendors received more than $7,000 worth of bus and MAX tickets.

Street Roots’ Rose City Resource
• Street Roots published 150,000 Rose City Resource guides distributed to more than 300 nonprofits, businesses, health care providers and government institutions. (See more on page 3 of the annual report.)

Advocacy
• Street Roots has put much of its energy in the past year into developing leadership and support for the Welcome Home Coalition. The coalition, starting with six organizations, now has more than 100 organizations joining forces to support creating additional revenue for affordable housing in our community. Street Roots is a founding member of the organization.

What’s next?
The focus of Street Roots this next year is strengthening the organization and maintaining weekly publication.

The organization is in the process of finishing a new, three-year strategic plan. The plan focuses on a range of goals to improve both the vendor and editorial programs — which includes expanding sales locations throughout the region and supporting vendors to increase their income.

Street Roots is currently working with Frank Creative, an award-winning marketing firm in Portland. The company also works with Friends of Trees. The organization and Frank Creative have been developing a marketing plan that we will be unveiling in 2016. The goal of the marketing plan will be to increase readership to support vendors. Frank Creative is donating both their time and expertise.

Saying all of that, going weekly was no small achievement. To many, going weekly felt like the ending to a long race, but in reality it was just the beginning. Being able to maintain a quality publication week-in and week-out is the utmost importance to Street Roots. Giving vendors and readers the best possibly publication and being able to provide quality news will remain our top priority.

We appreciate both your readership and love. #TuckABuck and support your neighborhood vendor each week. We promise you won’t be disappointed. Love.

Executive Director
There are many reasons why people rely on local media, and still many more why they rely on Street Roots. We are not just an engaging weekly newsource; we are an income and advocate for hundreds of people experiencing poverty and homelessness in our city. Within our extraordinary network, we are a catalyst for real change.

That’s why our coverage strives to connect with readers across class lines. Street Roots readers are as diverse as their opinions and perspectives on the city around them. You love music and art, unconventional ideas and innovations, complex issues and creative solutions – and so do we.

Behind the scenes, we’ve changed quite a bit this past year. In order to double our publication schedule – from once every two weeks to once a week – we brought on a full-time reporter, Emily Green. She joins a dynamic crew of freelancers who have worked with us for years.

In January, with your support, we launched our first weekly edition with a bang, reporting on the elimination of in-person visitation at the Multnomah County jail. The articles prompted a public outcry and ultimately compelled the sheriff to preserve face-to-face visits with inmates. We’ve followed with in-depth reporting on proposed changes to the foster care system, the proliferation of petty misdemeanors, and even the arrest of a homeless woman for charging her phone from a private outlet.

We’ve made a concerted effort to follow issues beyond the initial stories, reporting on the environmental concerns of our region, with a view from people experiencing poverty. And as we move forward, our coverage will continue to delve into issues not only around climate change, but also on our policies toward forest management and public oversight.

We’re leading the way in covering our cultural diversity, reporting on the men and women from the many communities of color in our region. Too often, the dialogue on issues involving race pivot on the sensational, rather than the compelling stories about our cultures. We’ve featured a series of in-depth articles on the Native American movement to protect the Columbia Gorge from ecological damage by the fossil fuel industry. Our series, Planet Portland, tells the personal stories of people’s journeys from other parts of the world to become part of our social fabric.

We’re pushing conversations forward around harm reduction, challenging tired notions of what it means to have an addiction. And we’ve never stopped pushing the ball forward when it comes to local and statewide opportunities to establish sustainable funding for affordable housing.

Of course, homelessness is where Street Roots began, and we continue to be the marquee publication on this issue with more authentic voices and depth of experience than any other newspaper in Portland. But we’re always working to look at a broader spectrum.

Street Roots’s commentary section features some of the city’s most pressing issues, including mental health perspectives, police oversight, cyclist concerns and local government policies. As part of the International Network of Street Papers, we’re able to tap into a world of news and features, from the streets on up.

And of course we always stay true to our roots, with great poetry and essays from the streets. Because Street Roots is also where we celebrate the creative work of our vendors. It’s also where we celebrate their milestones toward housing, employment and success. That’s why you see pictures of vendors holding keys to their new apartment, engaging with programs and being active in the community.

None of this happens without you, our readers, who have helped make Street Roots such a cornerstone of this
### Financials

**Revenue:** $453,319
- Newspaper sales: 16%
- Individual donations: 33%
- Foundation support: 28%
- Government (Rose City Resource Guide): 16%
- Business/Nonprofit Support/Sponsorships: 5%
- Advertising: 2%

**Expenses:** $455,535
- Newspaper and Vendor Program: 62%
- Rose City Resource: 19%
- Administration: 19%

$90,336 was carried over for reserves and grants allocated for the next fiscal year of 2015-16.

1,025 individual donors donated a total of $160,540. Your support means the world to us. Thank you!

Street Roots partnered with more than 150 local businesses in 2014-15 through both the vendor program and Street Roots online auction. Thank you!

Street Roots is proud to partner with the following foundations:
- CareOregon: $5,000
- Coon Family Foundation: $25,000
- Evelyn L. Jones Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation: $20,000
- Ganapati Fund: $18,000
- Larson Legacy: $2,000
- Madeleine Moore Donor Advised Fund: $2,000
- Marian and Elihu Schott Family Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation: $2,000
- Meyer Memorial Trust: $60,000
- OCF Joseph E. Weston Public Foundation: $2,000
- Peter H. Michaelson Foundation: $2,000

Street Roots Rose City Resource

Street Roots published 150,000 Rose City Resource guides, distributed to more than 300 organizations and business in the Portland region.

The Street Roots Rose City Resource is a pocket-sized, 104-page guide filled with the most comprehensive, updated list of services for people experiencing homelessness and poverty in Multnomah and Washington counties.

This year, Street Roots put a special focus on distributing the guide to culturally specific organizations.

Street Roots and Rose City Resource Sponsorships:

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Desmond Haridson, a vendor and canvasser with Street Roots, reflects on the organization before an audience at the Radio Room for a special Street Roots’ Love Bomb earlier this year.
Street Roots is among 120 street newspapers and magazines around the globe united through the International Network of Street Papers. We are proud to take a leadership role in working with other thriving street papers across the country. Street Roots is also an active participant in the Street News Service, which consolidates news and features about social justice for the worldwide network.

Thank you!

To all of our wonderful supporters!

Investing in Street Roots means investing in vendors. Give a one-time or recurring donation today.

You can donate securely online or by mail to:
Street Roots, 211 NW Davis St., Portland, OR 97209

streetroots.org

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