Street Roots celebrates a year of growth and looks toward the future

BY BRAD TAYLOR  STREET ROOTS BOARD CHAIR

As the year winds down, we at Street Roots are finding ourselves enjoying the success within our present moments and celebrating an inspiring past. We are also looking forward to a future that is full of promise.

Street Roots is a driving force for positive change in our community. We share empowering stories, partner with social justice leaders and organizations, and provide income opportunities for individuals struggling with homelessness and poverty.

Looking ahead, we will begin our next chapter with a new executive director and we will find additional ways to add value to the lives of our readers and our vendors while continuing to work to strengthen our local and global communities.

Our editorial department, led by our outstanding Executive Editor Joanne Zuhl, delivers some of the best journalism in the city. With her leadership, we will continue to develop and tell the stories that our community wants and needs to read in ways that give depth to the issues and to the lives of those engaged on the frontlines.

In the coming year, we will continue to not only inform, but also to empower readers and to celebrate the innovators and opportunities for change that surround us.

For instance, as we recognize that our housing crisis is not just a Portland problem. We are embarking on a statewide, two-year project to tell the story of our rural communities as they struggle with their own challenges around housing and homelessness.

As the year ends, we will say farewell to Israel Bayer, who for the last 15 years has masterfully led our organization as our executive director, participating in advocacy efforts across our community effectively and justly. He has touched our community deeply.

Although Israel is moving on to future projects, Street Roots will continue to be a leading voice in advocating and defending the civil and human rights of all people in our community.

We are excited to begin a new chapter with Kaia Sand as our executive director. Kaia is a deep and curious listener, a skilled storyteller and a strong advocate who has a history of using her voice to strengthen the voices of others. We enthusiastically welcome her leadership and her sense of purpose to Street Roots, and we look forward to her enriching and inspiring our community of vendors, staff and donors.

Her experiences from the frontlines of local social-justice movements and the relationships she has developed and nurtured throughout her career will serve us well as she guides Street Roots’ advocacy voice and efforts.

Our vendor program continues to grow in strength and numbers. Creating income opportunities for vendors remains at the heart of Street Roots’ mission, and currently we have more than 160 vendors who are experiencing homelessness and poverty. They sell the newspaper, every single day, at more than 70 locations throughout Portland.

The vendors themselves are the hubs that connect us. The vendors’ lives embody many of the stories that the paper highlights. And the vendors literally bring those stories from the pens of the writers to the hearts of the readers. They express the humanity of our organization as they make human contact with you and me, at a time in our world when human contact is becoming more and more precious.

Expanding our vendor program and expanding our vendor locations are the main focus for next year’s efforts. Not only will more vendors have the ability to sell more papers, as we expand our locations farther out from the city core, but more readers will be exposed to the award-winning journalism and the effective advocacy that Street Roots offers. These new readers will find not only a new paper for sale in their neighborhood, but also a new voice to express the stories and struggles and dreams that are most pressing in their lives.

We will continue working to strengthen the role that vendors play within the organization through their engagement in the vendor committee and representation on our Board of Directors.

We will continue to support vendors’ engagement with the public in ways that allow them to demonstrate their complexity as thinkers, advocates, storytellers and individuals who have skills and perspectives to add to our movement toward greater social justice.

Street Roots is now actively partnering with the faith-based community to support a vendor outside houses of worship, and to date, more than a dozen participants have signed on. We hope to see this number continue to grow.

As we look back at the success we have enjoyed in the past and the bright future we see from today, we also think of you – the reader. You who help provide income opportunities to individuals experiencing homelessness. You who support the paper that brings the stories that fuel the advocacy that shapes the policies that improve the lives of our most vulnerable community members. You are helping to improve our city and the lives of those of us who live here.

As we move into a new era at Street Roots, our organization is stronger than ever. Our paper and our programs are solid. We are partnering with Marigold Coffee to roll out a selection of Street Roots’ inspired blends – Street Roast – that will give us more financial stability while expanding our name and our mission to people who have not yet heard of us. We have a great team of vendors, staff, volunteers and board members who will continue to work together with our readers to carry the organization’s mission forward.

The vendors themselves are the hubs that connect us. The vendors’ lives embody many of the stories that the paper highlights. And the vendors literally bring those stories from the pens of the writers to the hearts of the readers. They express the humanity of our organization as they make human contact with you and me, at a time in our world when human contact is becoming more and more precious.

Expanding our vendor program and expanding our vendor locations are the main focus for next year’s efforts. Not only will more vendors have the ability to sell more papers, as we expand our locations farther out from the city core, but more readers will be exposed to the award-winning journalism and the effective advocacy that Street Roots offers. These new readers will find not only a new paper for sale in their neighborhood, but also a new voice to express the stories and struggles and dreams that are most pressing in their lives.

We will continue working to strengthen the role that vendors play within the organization through their engagement in the vendor committee and representation on our Board of Directors. We will continue to support vendors’ engagement with the public in ways that allow them to demonstrate their complexity as thinkers, advocates, storytellers and individuals who have skills and perspectives to add to our movement toward greater social justice.

Street Roots is now actively partnering with the faith-based community to support a vendor outside houses of worship, and to date, more than a dozen participants have signed on. We hope to see this number continue to grow.

As we look back at the success we have enjoyed in the past and the bright future we see from today, we also think of you – the reader. You who help provide income opportunities to individuals experiencing homelessness. You who support the paper that brings the stories that fuel the advocacy that shapes the policies that improve the lives of our most vulnerable community members. You are helping to improve our city and the lives of those of us who live here.

As we move into a new era at Street Roots, our organization is stronger than ever. Our paper and our programs are solid. We are partnering with Marigold Coffee to roll out a selection of Street Roots’ inspired blends – Street Roast – that will give us more financial stability while expanding our name and our mission to people who have not yet heard of us. We have a great team of vendors, staff, volunteers and board members who will continue to work together with our readers to carry the organization’s mission forward.
Newspaper expands scope, impact

BY JOANNE ZUHL EXECUTIVE EDITOR

In the nearly three years since Street Roots became a weekly newspaper, we have expanded our role as an essential source of news and information on critical – and often overlooked – issues important to our community.

After the 2016 elections, Street Roots renewed our commitment to covering issues we knew were going to be important in the year to come. We aligned our journalism around four pillars: climate change and the environment, freedom of the press, immigration and, of course housing. While our coverage is not exclusively on those topics, we view them as core responsibilities in our scope of reporting.

On the environment, our investigation into the impact of Oregon’s cattle industry opened people’s eyes to the true cost of our love for beef and dairy. We’ve covered the forest industry like no other publication in the region, analyzing the management of one of our most precious resources and sifting through the arguments forest industry managers and environmentalists make for their future. We also introduced Portland area readers to The Valve Turners, a group of men and women who shut down the flow of tar sands oil into the United States from Canada. We’ve reported on the Native American communities’ efforts throughout the region to protect our natural resources against the fossil fuel and extraction industries.

Our past year has meant a greater awareness on the power of the press and the essence of free speech. We’ve been bringing readers the voices of people who are calling out truth to power, including “Evicted” author Matthew Desmond, consumer rights icon Ralph Nader and NARAL Pro-Choice American President Ilyse Hogue. And we brought you a primer from the Rural Organization Project on the political and social influence of the radical right across rural Oregon.

On immigration, we’ve put a spotlight on repressive and damaging policies, while highlighting the remarkable and essential contributions of immigrants in our community. We’ve informed readers of the grassroots and legislative efforts in Oregon to protect farmworkers from harmful pesticides sprayed over their homes. And we’ve connected the dots on the profit motive behind incarcerating – indefinitely – immigrants arrested for violating civil immigration policy.

And of course, we remain true to our roots in covering the issues of housing and homelessness, and elevating the voices of people living through the trauma of poverty.

We’ve also made a more concerted effort to shepherd more vendor writings in the newspaper. While vendors have always been the poets of our team, we’re hoping to bring more long-form pieces to readers. In our opinion, works by Marlon Crump, Aileen McPherson, Maddy Brown-Clark and others are treasures among the published world of Portland. Street Roots strives to provide news and information with meaning – whether it’s as simple as plugging into local culture or as complex as a lifelong commitment to changing the world around us.

In the coming year, Street Roots pledges to continue raising the bar on independent, nonprofit journalism. We will continue to bring you the voices of marginalized populations. And we’re excited to announce that with a grant from Meyer Memorial Trust, we will be diving into the dynamics, challenges and opportunities in rural Oregon’s housing crisis. It’s not just a Portland problem. We’re looking forward to bringing you those stories - and so much more. Thank you for your continued support!

About our vendors

Street Roots provided a safe place for more than 700 people experiencing homelessness and poverty in 2015-16 – including having access to computers, a mailing address, hygiene items, socks, fresh water, coffee (Thanks, Stumptown!) and public restrooms. This past year:

- An average of 160 vendors sold Street Roots at nearly 100 locations throughout the Portland region.
- Street Roots launched a vendor health and wellness program to help vendors connect with the larger community. The program supports vendors in participating in social events and hosts parties for the vendors to connect socially.
- Street Roots maintained a vendor health fund to support vendors when they are sick or in an extreme crisis with hotel stays.
- Street Roots offered hospitality 365 days a year, rain or shine.
- Street Roots partnered with JOIN, Northwest Pilot Project, Central City Concern and Transition Projects to facilitate preventing homelessness for vendors and supporting new vendors in getting access to housing.
- Street Roots facilitated health care access for vendors working with our partner at CareOregon.
- Street Roots maintained a weekly writers’ group for Street Roots vendors.
- Street Roots published two zines made of vendor poetry and artwork in 2015-16.
Affordable housing, front and center

Street Roots is a founding member of the Welcome Home Coalition. In 2016, the Welcome Home Coalition played a support role in helping pass several local revenue tools for affordable housing in our community. Those tools included a short-term rental tax, a construction excise tax and a ballot measure to support a $258 million dollar bond to build more affordable housing in Portland. Street Roots played a critical role in supporting these efforts.

Street Roots is a proud member of the Oregon Housing Alliance, a statewide coalition working to increase housing and homeless services in Oregon.

Street Roots is also a member of the Western Regional Advocacy Project, a coalition of West Coast organizations working to maintain the civil rights of people experiencing homelessness and poverty.

---

Financials

Revenue: $708,693

- Newspaper sales: 15%
- Individual donations: 28%
- Foundation support: 20%
- Government (Rose City Resource Guide): 25%
- Business/Nonprofit Support/Sponsorships: 3%
- Events: 7%
- Advertising: 2%

Expenses: $676,433

- Newspaper and Vendor Program: 58%
- Rose City Resource Guide: 25%
- Administration: 17%

Street Roots has $82,715 carried over from our previous fiscal year in our money market account.

---

Street Roots Rose City Resource

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

In the 2016-2017 fiscal year, Street Roots published 180,000 Rose City Resource booklets, distributed to more than 350 organizations and businesses in the Portland region.

Street Roots and Rose City Resource Sponsorships:

- Oregon Food Bank
- NW Natural
- Salvation Army
- Sisters Of The Road
- Travel Portland
- Portland Business Alliance
- Voodoo Doughnuts
- Cascadia Behavior Health
- Portland Clean and Safe
- Volunteers of America
- Transition Projects Inc.
- Albina Community Bank
- CareOregon
- Radio Room
- Home Forward
- Planned Parenthood (Columbia-Willamette)
- Central City Concern
- William Temple House
- Alano Club

Street Roots is proud to partner with the following foundations:

- Northwest Health Foundation
- Meyer Memorial Trust
- The Larson Legacy
- The Ganapati Fund
- Bright Fund Foundation
- Yazdani Foundation
- The Wyss Foundation
- The Oregon Community Foundation
- OCF Joseph E. Weston Public Foundation
- The Collins Foundation

---

Street Roots is reader-inspired.

1,460 individual donors donated to Street Roots in 2016-17.

Street Roots partnered with more than 170 local businesses in 2016-17 through both the vendor program and Street Roots’ online auction.

Thank you!
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

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.