A year of many gains and emotional losses

Welcome to the Street Roots’ 2018 annual report. I am honored to have completed my inaugural year as executive director of an organization valued by people across our region.

More than 700 people struggling with homelessness and poverty earned an income selling Street Roots this past year. We’ve welcomed several committed and talented new staff members while benefiting from the constancy and leadership of long-term staff and board members. We’ve worked with extraordinary freelance journalists and photographers. Volunteers logged hundreds of hours. And people all over this city bought 10,000 copies of our newspaper each week, forging relationships with our vendors. Throughout our state and even farther, supporters read our news online and follow our social media. In a year of transition, Street Roots is remarkably stable and strong, rooted deeply in our community.

The newspaper is the enterprise that joins us together, and Street Roots plays an increasingly large role in our local media landscape. Executive Editor Joanne Zuhl outlines some of the year’s reporting highlights in her letter. This year, Jobs with Justice honored Street Roots with the Lucinda Tate Award for reporting that consistently breaks new ground.

We were also honored by Janus Youth Programs with the John P. Zuercher Award for “transforming the lives of people experiencing homelessness and poverty.” Our vendors earn an income selling Street Roots by buying the paper for a quarter and selling it for a dollar, a low-barrier way to support their lives. Street Roots vendors sell on street corners around the city, as well in Washington and Clackamas counties. We’ve expanded partnerships to get vendors to new posts, including with a number of faith communities. Some customers support vendors in additional ways, providing bus tickets, coffee, sandwiches and even assistance finding housing. Not only are vendors earning an income with dignity, selling a newspaper they can be proud of, but they are also interacting with people for whom their lives matter. These relationships make our community stronger.

We provide additional support to vendors through community partnerships. More people have transportation to posts, thanks to our partnerships with Biketown, Uber and Trimet through Ride Connection. We’ve engaged in a pilot program with Mercy Corps Northwest where a handful of vendors set up Individual Development Accounts that match fivefold their savings toward housing expenses. Care Oregon hosts Go Mobile Clinics in our office, signing up vendors for healthcare. Foot care, a pop-up library, voter registration – it all happens in our office.

Community partnerships helped make our annual family breakfast in October the most successful to date. We honored Sandra Hahn as vendor of the year and awarded Art Garcia for his enduring and essential volunteerism at Street Roots. Home Forward executive director Michael Buonocore gave a moving keynote address, “Learn to See Each Other.”

Our vendor emergency health fund helps vendors dealing with crises, and our monthly health and wellness events connect vendors to the community, such as theater and zoo outings, a movie at Hollywood Theater, and a summer barbecue hosted by the Pearl District Rotary. Our vendors marched in the Veterans Day and Pride parades. Partnerships with the Portland Art Museum, PICA and Gather: Make: Shelter expanded creative opportunities for our vendors to make and show art.

Business for a Better Portland transformed holiday parties of its members as opportunities to gather supplies for Street Roots vendors while also supporting our advocacy for deeply affordable and stable housing.

We’ve maintained a steady, high-profile public presence across media, advocating at events and forums – including the Lund Report Oregon Health Forum – for the poorest of our neighbors be centered in public policy. Our ongoing work with the Welcome Home Coalition was met with an extraordinary success – the passage of the $652.8 million Metro housing bond that will fund deeply affordable housing in the region. Some vendors took a prominent role in this advocacy, testifying before Metro council, handing out lawn signs and speaking to the media.

For the seventh year, we collaborated with Multnomah County, publishing the annual Domicile Unknown report to account for those who died homeless on the streets, insisting that those lost lives be remembered as we fight for housing as a health urgency. This year, Street Roots suffered a number of deaths among our community – we lost eight vendors as well as some of our Old Town neighbors decades before their time. At one point in late summer, we were holding memorials weekly in our office, grieving and supporting each other as a community.

People experiencing poverty continue to depend on the Rose City Resource guide for services. We printed more than ever before. More than 200,000 copies were distributed to neighbors in poverty. This year, we’ve expanded the guide to include Clackamas as well as Multnomah and Washington counties.

We are now moving into our 20th anniversary year, and will mark this milestone throughout the year, including a summertime community celebration. Looking forward, we will strive for increasing vendor sales and newspaper distribution, pursue important investigative journalism, dig deep as an organization into our equity work, cast our advocacy regionally and statewide, and pursue ways to expand our office space – now bustling and packed with vendors, staff and volunteers. There is much ahead.

Street Roots is beloved by so many in the community, and I love it, too. Onward we go!

Kaia Sand
Executive Director

“Street Roots has provided me with a safe place to be, a place that welcomes me. I’m wanted. There’s a sense of family.”

Heather Harrington, Street Roots vendor
Editorial Update

Friday mornings can be great wherever you work, but at Street Roots, they are something special. It's the morning the new newspaper arrives, and the vendors fill the office to hear what's heading our way from the printer. It's a meeting that's at the heart of not just our vendor program and mission, but our newspaper as well. This is the time when the room fills with a sense of ownership in our publication, and a curiosity for learning something new – two elements essential to a community newspaper like Street Roots.

With each edition, readers see that Street Roots vendors contribute poetry, but they also take part in occasional interviews and provide ideas for stories from their own experiences. We love telling their stories, and our Vendor Profile section is rightfully among the most popular features of the newspaper.

Most recently, vendor experiences were the inspiration for our interview with Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw, and the stories of some of our female vendors gave readers an unsettling glimpse into what the woman on the streets experiences.

Senior Staff Reporter Emily Green has made the following possible:

- In advance of the 2018 primaries, Green’s reporting revealed the misleading messages of canvassers to Oregon voters around a petition to repeal our “sanctuary state” status, and as the November election approached, we gave you a full “fact or fiction” comparison of the arguments surrounding a petition seeking to carve out tax exemptions for corporate grocers.
- Our pool of amazing reporters has brought you stories on the world of foster care youth, the environmental champions in our Native American communities, and profiles of incredible people who have escaped peril and tragedy and now call Portland home.
- Looking beyond our Portland roots, we have been reporting on the housing crisis throughout the state in our Housing Rural Oregon series. We’ve looked at the particular dynamics that impact housing in Central Oregon, the coastal counties and the frontier region in Ontario. We will be continuing our coverage into the next year, looking at affordable-housing campaigns in the Southwest and the challenges facing towns in the Northeast.
- It’s remarkable the span of issues that have upset the market, from scarce development interest and resources, to the influence of the short-term-rental market.
- The rural housing project was supported by a grant from Meyer Memorial Trust, which, like all of our journalism funding, comes with no strings attached. Street Roots at its core is independent media, and our journalism integrity remains solid.

About Our Vendors

In 2018, Street Roots worked with 700 vendors, and those vendors earned more than $500,000 this past year. As in years past, our office was open 365 days in 2018, and was a welcome respite for vendors to buy the paper, grab a cup of coffee or some fresh water, use a computer, get socks and other essential hygiene and toiletry items and use the restroom. This past year, your support made the following possible:

- An average of 150 vendors sold the paper at 100 sales posts around the metro region each week.
- We hosted monthly health and wellness events, including two summer barbecues, an afternoon at a local movie theater, marching in the Portland Pride Parade, a Valentine’s Day party, a holiday party and a trip to the Oregon Zoo.
- We partnered with Mercy Corps NW to launch IDAs (Individual Development Accounts) for five vendors to open bank accounts to save for housing expenses. Every dollar they save is matched with $5; up to $800 is matched with $3,000.
- Concordia Nursing students hosted monthly foot care clinics in our office.
- We continued to offer weekly creative writing workshops.
- 95 percent of our vendors are signed up for health care through the Oregon Health Plan.
- We published our annual holiday zine, providing an additional income opportunity for our vendors.
- We partnered with Biketown, Uber, and TriMet and Ride Connection to make it easier for our vendors to get to their sales posts.
- We maintained our vendor health fund, which supports vendors with medical, housing or other life emergencies.
- Vendors participated in art projects with the Portland Art Museum, the Portland Institute of Contemporary Art and Gather: Make: Shelter, earning stipends for their artistic labor.

With our coverage, we strive to present an in-depth perspective, often through the lens of marginalized populations, providing a platform for the voices not commonly heard.

But that doesn’t mean you won’t recognize some familiar faces in our paper. We’re proud to bring you conversations with a diverse collection of politicians and popular celebrities, including Robert De Niro, Bill Murray, Benedict Cumberbatch, Rep. Maxine Waters, Sen. Cory Booker, former NBA star Eton Thomas, Black Lives Matter organizer Deray McKesson, environmentalist David Attenborough, Planned Parenthood CEO Cecile Richards and musicians Stephen Malkmus and Portugal. The Man, among many, many others.

With your support, our journalism gets stronger every year. Thank you for reading our newspaper and supporting our vendors. We look forward to another Friday morning to bring you the news!

Joanne Zuhl
Executive Editor
Street Roots Rose City Resource

The Rose City Resource is a pocket-sized guide filled with a comprehensive list of all the services available to low-income and homeless individuals in the metro region. This year, we are proud to expand our coverage to include Clackamas County in addition to Multnomah and Washington counties. This past year, Street Roots published 207,500 Rose City Resource guides and distributed them to more than 550 organizations and businesses in the metro region.

Advocacy

Street Roots is a founding member of the Welcome Home Coalition, which played a critical role in the successful passage of the Metro housing bond, $652.8 million to house up to 12,000 people in the Portland metro area. Street Roots is a proud member of the Oregon Housing Alliance, a statewide coalition working to increase housing and homeless services in Oregon, which helped pass the document recording fee during the past legislative session, projected to bring in an additional $30 million each year for affordable housing, rent assistance and first-time-homebuyer assistance. 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.

“I am grateful that Street Roots opened up doorways to make new friends. I am grateful for my dog Mo.”

Dave Whitney, Street Roots vendor

“Street Roots means to me an opportunity to express and grow in my creative writing with my friends.”

Ron Sanford, Street Roots vendor

Financials

Revenue: $897,791

Expenses: $805,736

Street Roots is brought to you by readers like you! Thank you to the 1,332 individual donors who gave gifts to Street Roots in 2017-18.

Thank you to the dozens of local businesses that supported Street Roots with in-kind donations and sponsorships to keep the office running daily and our vendors safe and healthy.

Thank you to these foundations for their support:

Meyer Memorial Trust
Yazdani Foundation
The Wyss Foundation
The Oregon Community Foundation
The Collins Foundation
The Larson Legacy
Morgan Family Foundation
Mann Family Fund of The Oregon Community Foundation
Sangham Foundation
Bland Family Foundation
O’Callaghan Family Foundation
Helen B. Sutherland Foundation
Joseph E. Weston Public Foundation of The Oregon Community Foundation

The $92,055 surplus in fiscal year 2017-18 represents funds granted for use in future years.
Volunteers

So far in 2018, 78 volunteers have contributed 3,663 hours to Street Roots. Volunteers keep Street Roots running – staffing the front desk, copy editing the newspaper weekly, distributing Rose City Resource guides, picking up supplies, cooking breakfast twice a month for vendors and more.

Volunteer Spotlight

“I love Street Roots – the newspaper, the community, the civic-minded and compassionate network of people – and I want to be a part of that! Sharing food is a great way to get to know people, and cooking breakfast for Street Roots vendors enriches my life. I have dozens of new friends whom I get to see all over town. Working with Street Roots connects me to my city in a deeper way.”

Katherine Deumling, Street Roots volunteer

“Street Roots gives me a chance to do something productive. I am limited because of my disability, but I’m glad for the chance to work.”

Brian Lane, Street Roots vendor

Street Roast

In partnership with sisters Joey and Cassy Gleason of Marigold Coffee, change is brewing with Street Roast. For every pound sold of this local, direct-trade coffee, $3.33 benefits Street Roots and our vendors. And every other cent goes to the farmers in Peru, Ethiopia and Guatemala who grow the coffee for the three different blends and to the workers at the woman-owned Marigold, who roast and package the coffee.

Street Roast can be found at most Portland-area New Seasons Markets; Market of Choice stores in West Linn and on Belmont, Green Zebra Grocery at PSU, at Lloyd Center and on Lombard, Cherry Sprout Produce and Marigold Coffee. Street Roast represents a new, sustainable income stream for Street Roots.

Thank You

You make Street Roots possible!

Making a donation today is an investment in Street Roots and our vendors. To give a one-time gift or recurring donation, visit streetroots.org/donate or mail to:

Street Roots
211 NW Davis St.
Portland, OR 97209

streetroots.org

Street Roots is part of the International Network of Street Papers, a collection of about 120 street newspapers and magazines around the globe. We are proud to take an active role in working with other thriving street papers. Street Roots is also an active participant in the Street News Service, which consolidates news and features about social justice for the worldwide network.