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readers in ways to take action on local, national and global campaigns working to change the world in which we live.

That same year, the Street Roots Rose City Resource guide, for years a four-page section of the paper, was transformed into a 104-page pocket-sized guide to services available to people experiencing poverty in the Portland region. Today, we work with more than 150 non-profits, government agencies and local businesses to distribute more than 80,000 English guides and 20,000 Spanish guides in the metro area.

By 2008, Street Roots was reaching an entirely new audience. The organization hired a grant writer and began to cultivate a real and working relationship with a wide range of individual donors and foundations. Street Roots now had three full-time staff and a part time person working on development.

Street Roots was recognized with awards from the Portland Trail Blazers, the Oregon Coalition on Housing and Homelessness and the City of Portland. A new turf system was created through a six-week democratic vendor process with more than 50 people selling the newspaper.

In December 2008, the newspaper published "In need of a new deal" a special edition covering the affordable housing industry. After 10 years, the organization had finally put all of the pieces of the puzzle together. But we also realized that we had opened the door to a complex system that very few people in the city understood. We still have work to do.

The organization ended 2008 ahead of its goals and hired a part-time development director and reporter to help with the continued growth – still small in comparison to larger institutions.

We've witnessed many miracles and endured much tragedy over the years. We

have had doors closed in our face by institutions for our reporting and exercise of the free press. At the same time, we have been celebrated by others for our courage and investigative approaches. We have been told we are enabling some, and empowering others through our low-barrier approach to working with folks on the streets. But nothing on the streets is black and white. For one person it takes a week to climb a mountain, for others a lifetime. It's Street Roots role to treat with dignity all people living through the hell we call poverty. We are neither judge nor jury. For some this is hard to grasp, for many including us, it's the only way to meet people where they are at and to offer dignity in a time of survival.

In 2009, Street Roots will continue to improve the newspaper and engage readers in a way that creates dialogue and offers degrees of solutions for problems rooted in a broken system, while offering ways to improve the

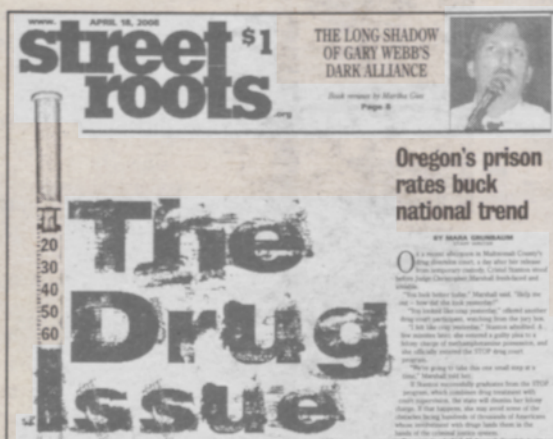
vendor program. In August/September the organization hopes to open a satellite office in outer Northeast and to work towards going

"It's helped me mature and helped me socially. It gives me that daily social contact with the people that I need."

- Dan Reece

weekly someday.

Today, the conversations around the Street Roots' table continue, more relevant than ever. As much as times change, they remain the same on the street. There are many reasons individuals become homeless and end up walking through our doors – mostly born out of an unjust system that doesn't value human life in a way that believes that all people deserve a warm and safe place to call home regardless of their circumstances. Until that day comes, Street Roots will be working hard to inform and educate readers while building relationships and offering individuals a hand up and not a hand out. Together, we will continue walking up the mountain.



A collection of perspectives on drugs, addiction, and policies that affect us all

Recognizing the face

The addiction gives all the attention, but one more is working to...



One job that became a family, and much more

BY ART GARCIA

STREET ROOTS VENDOR COORDINATOR

I'll tell you right now ol' friend, I wouldn't be sitting here writing this article were it not for Street Roots. Now pull up a comfortable chair and I'm going to let you know what Street Roots has done for me, and how my life has changed for the better because of it.

Street Roots has been around for about 10 years and I've been with it practically every day. I did take a couple leave of absences (family problems) but I came right back. Before Street Roots, the paper was called the Burnside Cadillac. Personally I think we've come a long way since then. The Burnside Cadillac was a nice little paper, but that was it—just a little paper with a handful of vendors. But that's another story for another time. Let's get back to Street Roots.

When Brian Pollard and Mike Parker took over the paper, they came with ideas on how to better the paper and Street Roots started to sprout wings and take off. We started getting a lot more vendors, which helped our sales increase monthly. I remember when I first started selling Street Roots. I sold 800 papers in one month. Well, now I was hooked! I was actually making decent money. I didn't have to sleep in doorways if I could sell papers like this.

You want me to let you in on a little secret ol' friend? That was over 10 years ago, and it's been the longest job I've ever had. Yes siree! Now, I've worked all my life; in fact, I've had more than 150 jobs. Some

two weeks, some two years—a couple I kind of liked were about 3 years, but never had I stayed 10 years, anywhere. Street Roots put a smile on my face; it brought me self-esteem, which was dragging along behind me most days, to a nice comfortable place where I felt like I was actually doing something with my life.

You see, after getting out of the Marine Corps in 1969 I spent a lot of useless years trying to be a professional drug addict. I had put more than 20 years into this lifestyle before I realized I wasn't getting anywhere with my life except making friends in all the state prisons I was checking in and out of. I managed to finally pull away from that lifestyle and was able to get a job, which paid pretty good. But you know the story by now. I couldn't keep one of those pretty good jobs. My self-esteem was just too low.

Now this is how Street Roots saved me. You see, you don't have to be a college graduate, or have a perfect employment history to become a Street Roots vendor. That's the magic of it. You are accepted into the Street Roots family, (that's what it feels like to me now) without anything—just your person.

I also have been fortunate in having good locations to work at where I've met lifelong friends who have purchased the paper from me. I'll be walking down the street and a passerby will say, "Well, hi Art!" I look into those warm caring eyes of one of the people I've met while selling the paper. It's such a great feeling when you know people out there care. I no longer feel like just a



Mike Parker (left) and Brian Pollard, who helped launch Street Roots in 1998, stand on either side of Sharon Nielson, who ran it's predecessor, the Burnside Cadillac.

statistic. I belong to a great organization which incidentally helped and guided me through writing my first book, "Sitting on the Edge: Memoirs of a Vietnam Vet." That's right ol' friend, I am not just Arthur, I am also published Arthur! It feels great.

Street Roots itself has come such a long way, right with me. It now comes out twice a month, and ever since Joanne Zuhl the managing editor has joined Street Roots, I believe the content of the paper has become so much better. Our paper is becoming quite well known throughout the Portland community, thanks to the leadership of our director, Israel Bayer, who does many things for the paper. I believe we are truly blessed to have Joanne and Israel here. I hope they never leave.

I was once just a homeless face in

Portland with no agenda to his days, hoping I could find some work to get me off the wet, cold, rainy streets of Portland in winter. I never panhandled so chances of getting money were that much slimmer.

So in ending, I believe that you can tell that Street Roots is an answer in these hard times. Not just for the money, but also for so many more things, which I hope you now understand. Street Roots is here to help you get on your feet, to make a friend, to put some meaning back in your life. As I now look out of my living room window, at another beautiful day, I smile and say, "Thank you, Street Roots, for being there!"

Semper Fi!