

CELEBRATION, from page 7

averaged 1,500 a month with 10 vendors.

At the end of 1999, two things happened: Word on the street spread that Street Roots was a way to make a buck, and masses of people protested the World Trade Organization in Seattle.

Several people from the organization traveled to Seattle for the protests, and the newspaper gathered insight and interviews from other Portlanders who attended the weeklong event. The result was a Street Roots special edition: "The Battle in Seattle."

With more folks on the streets and Portland's political left taking notice of the edition, people on the streets starting selling more newspapers. At the time, Portland was a ball of energy around activism — people were in the trees, in city streets, and constantly planning and acting out social-justice campaigns. For some, change was in the air. Street Roots capitalized on this through the newspaper by highlighting that electricity.

More vendors meant new ways of dealing with turf locations. Local businesses that had once been hesitant to have a Street Roots vendor on their doorstep now realized the benefit of having an individual they knew by name and a central location to call in case problems arose.

The realness of the streets and the politics of homelessness became a reality in the newsroom. Many vendors became housed, and some passed away. Long, drawn-out processes about how the organization would be run and maintained, were developed by volunteers and grizzled veterans of the streets.

Around the same time, Frank Mitchell, a street poet and volunteer, created a writers and poetry workshop. The newspaper drew on poets and artists living in poverty, including Sherry Asberry, Kevin Hull and Jay Thiemeyer. They organized poetry readings, and folks on the streets came to speak. People came and listened. The word was getting out.

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In the summer of 2000, Jack Tafari walked through the Street Roots door and became a Street Roots vendor. Six months later, many of the vendors and people on the streets began to camp in numbers — refusing to leave city parks. A handful of homeless advocates along with Street Roots organized the "Out of the Doorways" campaign.

Street Roots served as a launch pad for the homeless activists. The newspaper began to run investigative pieces on the camping ban and other laws criminalizing people on the streets while publishing the opinions and activities of the tent city movement. The organization soon found

itself alienated from City Hall and media outlets throughout Portland due to its aggressive stances on the issue. While the politically connected scowled, readership grew. People were standing up — in the streets and through the media. And however you sliced it, the city was going to have to act.

The newspaper would go on to support and cover the campaign all the way through its process of becoming a city-sanctioned tent city: Dignity Village. Street Roots also served as Dignity Village's fiduciary agent for four years.

Between 2001 and 2003 the newspaper maintained a rugged office on SW 12th and Morrison in the old Danmore Building. The newspaper somehow manages to stay in operation for five years straight, every day, on an all-volunteer staff. Street Roots had around 40 vendors and had established several locations on the east side of the river. Several dozen vendors got into housing; new faces began to appear.

In 2003, the newspaper and the organization began to evolve. For years, Street Roots had fought the hardships of being a monthly newspaper. Vendors had difficulty selling the newspaper after two weeks. People were being informed but often receiving old news. Writing journalism for a monthly newspaper is torture. Selling a three-week-old paper is worse.

After 16 weeks of extensive meetings and planning, the organization decided to hire a part-time editor and an office manager to go biweekly. Vendors voted to pay five cents more for each paper in order to help support the printing costs.

The newspaper hired long-time journalist and editor Joanne Zuhl and later that year published its first newly designed biweekly edition with a profile on Erik Sten dubbed the "Street fighter." It was another turning point for the organization.

Throughout 2004 and 2005 the newspaper would belt out news stories on a range of topics surrounding homelessness and poverty, while continuing to highlight the voices from the streets. Street Roots

street roots

dignity village...dignity village...dignity village

Victory for Dignity

(for now)

Officials succumb to the power of the people and Dignity Village is granted an extension and begins negotiations for 1-year deal

by Jerry Mena

Like Caesar descending to fight the Gauls in the Roman Empire, city officials succumbed to the power of the people and Dignity Village is granted an extension and begins negotiations for 1-year deal.

Street Roots' Dignity Village extension and representative has been at the negotiating table working out the one-year lease deal, according to the city. The city is not willing to give a lot of the possible new rules to the city. They have said September 1st is the deadline to sign the deal.

One of the conditions to be met is getting the population down from 30 to 40 people.

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Friends and allies

Street Roots covered the development of Dignity Village from its earliest days as a moving camp of people looking for a home. Dignity Village was organized out of the Street Roots office, and is today a functioning, city-sanctioned tent city and it's own nonprofit. Below, the new look of Street Roots is unveiled in 2003 with a feature on the agenda of Portland City Commissioner Erik Sten.

street roots

ART, POETRY FROM THE STREETS



WHAT HAPPENED TO MY STREET ROOTS?

DEATH ON MOUNT TABOR

SYRINGE PROGRAM WEATHERS STORM

STIFLE IT, PEACENIKS

Concert, raffle benefit street roots' mission

by JOANNE ZUHL

With a performance by the street roots band and a raffle, the street roots mission was celebrated at the concert.

The street roots band performed a set of songs that were inspired by the mission.

The raffle was a success, with many people winning prizes.

The street roots mission is to provide a safe and healthy environment for all.

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Portland's streetfighter

Commissioner Erik Sten battles outdated policies to resolve housing issues

by JOANNE ZUHL

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Homeless groups march against war

by JOANNE ZUHL

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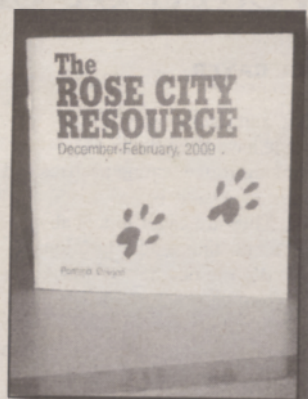
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Refining the Rose City Resources

From the beginning, Street Roots has been a resource for people experiencing homelessness and poverty. In 2007, we improved our unique guide, the Rose City Resource, by publishing a pocketbook sized booklet with additional features. With support from the city of Portland, 211 Info and United Way, we published 80,000 Rose City Resource guides in 2008, along with 20,000 in Spanish. They are distributed at no cost to more than 100 agencies and organizations in the city.

10 CELEBRATING A DECADE
street roots
Education • Dialogue • Independence

Join us!

Readers and supporters, You're invited to come celebrate 10-years of Street Roots!

Come meet vendors, volunteers and staff and hear about the organization mission at the Street Roots office:

211 NW Davis
Tuesday, March 24 from 4 to 6 p.m.

Throughout 2009, Street Roots will be hosting different events to celebrate 10-years of publishing the newspaper and putting money directly into the hands of people experiencing homelessness and poverty.

For more information, contact Israel Bayer at 503.228.5657
or e-mail us at streetroots@hotmail.com