

Roots taking hold in our community

Street Roots editorial goals in 2009 were the same as they are every year: to produce an outstanding newspaper, provide comprehensive coverage on the important issues, and deliver the voices of our community. All of this is done with the aim of ensuring that vendors not only have a paper they're proud to sell, but also one that Portlanders want to read.

In 2009, we brought you breakthrough coverage on the deaths occurring on our streets and the high likelihood of morbidity among Portland's homeless. We reported on the rising numbers of veterans falling into homelessness, and the hidden homeless residing in hotels, off the grid, as they work toward an opportunity for stable housing.

Indeed, the past year was filled with hard times, but we have a responsibility to bring you the positives as well; including the story of a small group of people coming together to help one of our vendors get the leg up he needed to secure his own apartment, and our return visit to Dignity Village, the homeless "camp" that has weathered political, social and economic obstacles to become a truly unique success story for Portland and the nation. The story of Melissa and Sean Walsh, told through the remarkable photography of Leah Nash, brought home for many readers the struggles of living with disabilities and poverty, offset only by the love and resilience this young couple share.

Our coverage has broadened to include the city's diverse and growing cultures, including a story on the experience of African immigrants in their effort to adapt to their new home, and the healing process engaging generations of Cambodian-Americans still scarred from the Khmer Rouge regime.

And we brought you some familiar faces with their own perspectives on what's happening in the world, including Michael Franti, Bob Dylan, Tony Hawk, Rick Steves, Helen Thomas and Joey Harrington.

And on April 1, we broke the unbelievable story that former president George W. Bush would be moving to Portland, prompting a wave of calls from readers — not to mention the Associated Press — asking for the source. Thank you for indulging in our April Fools — the satire did us some good and gave us a new way to talk about the issues.

Of course, behind every edition of the paper is a volunteer team — housed and homeless — that meets throughout the year to help develop

stories and support the production and mission of Street Roots. Our editorial team comes together on their own time and energy to make Street Roots an inspiring collaborative. In these days of newspapers cutting back on news and staff, Street Roots is blessed with a team of talent who are in it for the right reasons — for all the reasons outlined at the beginning of this letter.

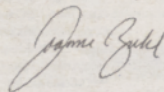
We've added new writers in our commentary section, lending a fresh voice to topics of our environment, mental health and housing. And brought the best of poetry, essays and artwork the streets produce. We are unlike any other paper in the city in our diversity of expression. And for many of the writers who contribute their work, it is an empowering experience to have their views not only heard, but make an impact.

In 2009, we were honored with three awards from the Society of Professional Journalists Oregon Chapter: Mara Grunbaum for her remarkable report on the forgotten graves of residents of the Hawthorne Asylum; Tye Doudy for his stirring diary "The Addicts Almanac;" and for the combined effort that produced our special edition on affordable housing, titled "In need of a new deal."

This year, we will continue to expand our coverage, drawing in more voices and reaching new neighborhoods, issues and attitudes.

All this work may just mean a vendor talking with a customer about freedom of the press, or the violence against women on the streets, or the twists and turns of Section 8 loopholes and the people trapped in between. Indeed, maybe it just means that two people are gathered at a corner talking about things that are important to them and the community, in ways they've never considered before. And one of them happens to be homeless. Maybe it's just shared opinions, common goals — a renewed and enjoined effort. But it is the foundation of a profound relationship for the community at large. We owe that to you and the vendors, and we look forward to being a part of that community for years to come.

Sincerely,



Joanne Zuhl
Managing Editor
Street Roots

"The articles in Street Roots cover a broad range of issues and provide unique insights that help inform my decisions as a Multnomah County Commissioner. Reading Street Roots on a regular basis reinforces my commitment to do everything possible to help those in need."

— Deborah Kafoury, Multnomah County Commissioner



Network Affiliations: Street Roots is a proud member of the following organizations

The North American Street Newspaper



North
American
Street
Newspaper
Association

Association exists to support and build effective, self-sustaining street newspapers that promote power and opportunity for people

living in poverty. NASNA offers technical assistance to new and growing street newspapers, content sharing with the Street News Service, and an annual conference featuring skills-building workshops and other topics of common interest. Learn more about NASNA at www.nasna.org

The International Network of Street Papers is



a global organization set up to promote the concept of the street paper as a means to address homelessness, social exclusion and poverty in our society.

INSP is a network of 80 street paper members situated across 27 countries. INSP's head office is in Glasgow, Scotland. INSP offers support and developmental opportunities to its members and provides advice to individuals or projects seeking to develop street papers. Learn more about the INSP at www.street-papers.org

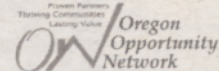
The Western Regional Advocacy Project



WRAP is made up of organizations along the West Coast and exists to expose and eliminate the root causes of civil- and human-rights abuses of people experiencing poverty and homelessness. Street Roots

and Sisters Of The Road are founding members of WRAP. We are dedicated to exposing the roots of the housing crisis, building pressure for more just federal priorities, and defending the human and civil rights of low-income people.

The Oregon Opportunity Network. The network is



made up of more than 90 organizations and members in Oregon dedicated to creating

and preserving low-income housing throughout Oregon. Oregon ON works to support members' efforts to build sustainable communities, develop affordable housing for working families, and provide economic opportunities for Oregonians who are struggling to meet their basic needs.