

EDITORIAL

Homes, not bullets,  
end the violence

Whenever I see the police kill another homeless person, my heart cries out and I shed a tear. When is enough, enough? These people are just housing challenged. Who knows what their background may be or their chances at success in life?" Thank God I am clean and sober and now have the ability to live inside. It could have been me."

These are the words posted this week on Street Roots' Facebook page by former vendor Justin Dalby, a 20-something street youth who had spent most of his life in and out of prison and institutions.

**Justin's story matters because he was able to transcend homelessness and find stable housing and personal stability, unlike so many of the individuals who experienced the cruelty we have come to know as homelessness.**

This is the same Justin Dalby who a year ago was living on the streets and was getting into fights and experiencing the harsh realities of homelessness.

In fact, police officers had dropped by SR on one occasion to tell us that Justin was too aggressive and that if we didn't find a way to calm him down, they would have to bring him in. On

another occasion, the police had to subdue Justin and his pit bull in front of the SR office.

We told the police that we believed Justin could go either way, and we weren't ready to give up on him. SR has seen far too many individuals on the streets like Justin who have lived a violent and tortured past — people who are trying to find stability in a world that has been shattered from the start. There is no logic and sometimes no place to turn for the resources needed.

Fortunately, Justin never gave up on himself. Today, he is in stable housing and working 40 hours a week at a local gas station. He has been sober for more than a year.

What does Justin's story have to do with the recent shooting of a homeless individual who died of gunshot wounds, or the homeless individuals who were beaten by gang members last week, or the individual who froze to death during the cold spell? Justin's story matters because he was able to transcend homelessness and find stable housing and personal stability, unlike so many of the individuals who experienced the cruelty we have come to know as homelessness.

Despite years of public outrage and talk of improving trust, people experiencing poverty — many times dealing with a mental health issues — continue to be shot by police officers. Knowing first hand the violence that exists on the streets, we also know there has to be another way.

We also recognize that the police are working a tough beat and have recently worked to apprehend the individuals who assaulted two homeless people, and dealt with the realities of finding an individual who froze to death. It all equals trauma — trauma for the community and trauma for the police officers involved. And thousands of people experience that trauma night in and night out on Portland's streets. The simple answer to this trauma is housing and stability.

Like Justin, and the countless souls that have found a productive and meaningful life beyond the streets, there is hope. For the ones that have died on the streets needlessly, and there are many, we have to do better. And that means housing should be the highest priority for our city. People's lives are depending on it.

An amazing year behind us, and ahead

It has been a breakthrough year for Street Roots. With your support of vendors and the organization we have been able to do some amazing things in 2010.

We wanted to stop and say thank you for making this happen. We are now better positioned to start the New Year where we left off — creating real change in our community.

Each day, people like you help individuals

experiencing homelessness and poverty gain a hand-up and build relationships through the sales of the newspaper. Your support has meant more than 400 people gained immediate income and were able to improve their quality of life.

You helped SR produce some of the best journalism, commentaries, poetry and artwork in the city. Our investigative reporting revealed a nation-wide movement to dismantle the Catholic Campaign For Human Development, which gives millions of dollars to community organizations in the U.S. (SR was cut from the grant process, a \$10,000 annual income for the organization, for refusing to remove Planned Parenthood from our resource guide.) We brought you

in-depth news stories on harm-reduction models, the sex and drug trades, and profiled some of the smartest minds and organizations in our city. We introduced commentaries from a police officer, a gay man living on the streets, and columns from leading local and national advocates and experts on homelessness and affordable housing.

We published 60,000 Rose City Resource guides that were distributed by more than 150 community organizations and institutions.

Our advocacy efforts produced a larger conversation about a local housing levy, while creating an important dialogue about health and homelessness. Our targeted campaign to have the medical examiner begin to count individuals on the streets who pass away was successful. In January of 2012, our region will better understand how many people are dying, and why — helping create a broader conversation about targeted resources for our community.

Together, we are in many ways like the little train that could. And with supporters like you, we will continue up the mountain in search of dignity, justice and information to help us better understand and do something about the issue of homelessness in our community.

From all of us at SR — thank you for being a part of our team!



DIRECTOR'S  
DESK

By Israel Bayer

Israel Bayer is the executive director of Street Roots and the chairman of the North American Street Newspaper Association. You can reach him at streetroots@hotmail.com.

LETTERS

Vendor's work doesn't go unnoticed by readers

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Street Roots encourages readers to submit letters and columns for publication. Send letters to the editor to the Street Roots office, 211 NW Davis St., Portland, OR 97209, or e-mailed to streetrootsnews@gmail.com.

Too often people go without recognition for their contributions to making our day a better place to be. And I would like to communicate a tip of the hat to George. He is a witty and pleasant fellow who I regularly see at my evening bus stop on 10th Ave at Powell's. Now, I don't know George's last name, as we just pass the minutes between buses chatting about the latest issue of Street Roots, and having a good laugh at life in general.

This is a cold time of year making a smile on a vendors face more challenging than normal. But George's smile is always at the ready.

Best of the holiday seasons wishes to you George and all the good people at Street Roots!

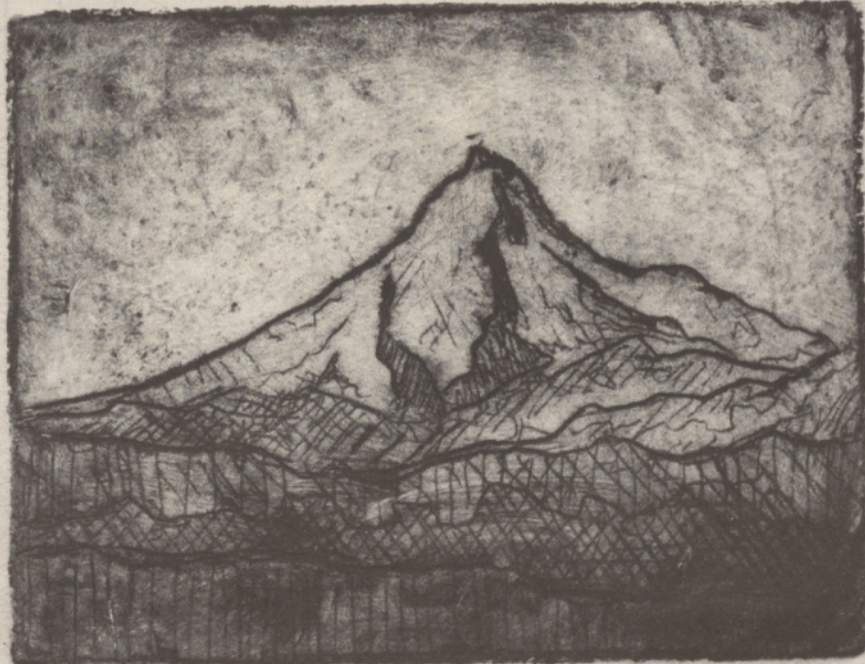
BILL FALKENHAYN  
Portland

people probably try to complain about something, I thought I would let you know that Skip, who works at SW Alder and 10th, and George, who works the afternoons at Powells on Burnside, both do you proud. They read the papers and can discuss what's in them, and tell you why they'd be of interest to you. They always have a smile on their faces, and I've seen both of them deal with street hustlers, drunks and aggressive individuals with kindness and authority. Quite frankly, I had started walking a block out of my way on the way home to avoid the corner of Burnside and SW 10th because I felt like I was running the gauntlet every night. Thanks to folks like George, I feel safe on that street again.

I'm looking forward to reading the stories and meeting the people in 2011. You, by example, have made me want to share your vision in a more active way.

MARY JANE  
Portland

This past year I have gotten a chance to get to know a couple of your vendors. Since most of the time



By Alex Lilly

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