

EDITORIAL

Don't let the fog cloud our path ahead toward change

About this time in the last presidential election cycle we were building up to Barack Obama's famous push for the presidency with slogans such as "Change we can believe in," and "Yes we can." It didn't take long to realize that collectively as a community, a country, that the road ahead was much more of a challenge.

Since that time the president has worked to create change in health care, transportation and on other domestic fronts. But he has also continued to be a war president and has not stood up for many poor and working people, disillusioning many of the people that lined up to support him.

It's more important than ever to stick together and to continue to push for change, to not let the fog of politics make us jaded and cynical over the very real issues of poverty and violence that exist in our own neighborhoods.

But like so many other times in the history of our country and the world, the people that helped elect a great leader took a collective breath, and in many ways expected that change to come swiftly. It doesn't. It won't. But to act

like there's nothing left but the finger-pointing is turning our backs on our own responsibility. Despite the pall of this economy, the uncertainty of unemployment and the constant distraction of petty politics, it's the people themselves that do have the power to change the world around us. But we can also be our own worst enemy.

It's more important than ever to stick together and to continue to push for change, to not let the fog of politics make us jaded and cynical over the very real issues of poverty and violence that exist in our own neighborhoods. To do so is to ignore the heat coming from under the pan.

Instead of getting real solutions from our elected representatives, we too often are simply the weary spectators as one political interest volleys the issue to another, and back again, around and around.

What happened to the "we" from "Yes we can?"

Each day at Street Roots we see people who have nothing, literally, work together to make it through each day. Their resilience gives us something to believe in — there is love, laughter, and yes, hope.

Together, as a community and a country, we must muster that same attitude towards changing the world around us. It takes time, more than any of us would like, but with the right support, and political will we can create an atmosphere that does foster change.

We know how to win the battles, but it is the larger war that will be our undoing: cuts to services for the poor and unemployed, losses in jobs training, cuts to education, food and shelter programs, and on and on.

Facing those realities, it will take more than creating a Facebook page for change, or writing a blog or penning an editorial in a newspaper. It will take sacrifice and speaking out of turn. It will take organizing friends and family, neighbors and others to become politically active. It will take challenging unjust laws. It will take civil disobedience.

Cesar Chavez once said, "From the depth of need and despair, people can work together, can organize themselves to solve their own problems and fill their own needs with dignity and strength."

He also said, "We must confront the privileged elite who have destroyed a large part of the world." That means speaking out of turn in our own lives. That means challenging the status quo, both individually and collectively.

STREET ROOTS' EDITORIAL BOARD

The views expressed in the editorials in Street Roots are the consensus of members of the editorial board and contributing volunteers.

Staying strong this summer depends on you

Street Roots is asking for your help this summer to support the organization for our annual Summer Fund Drive. The newspaper and the vendor program has become a leading voice in the Portland region on homeless and housing issues. To



DIRECTOR'S DESK

By Israel Bayer

Israel Bayer is the executive director of Street Roots. You can reach him at streetroots@hotmail.com.

continue our work, we need your support! "Street Roots is playing a catalytic role in affordable housing policy at the city level. They have stepped into the leadership role and are bringing new

voices, new partners, new energy and new ideas together in really exciting ways," says Janet Byrd with Neighborhood Partnerships.

When you support Street Roots you are supporting a small organization that packs a very strong punch. We publish 26 editions of Street Roots with award-winning journalism and commentary.

Each year, we engage more than 500 people experiencing homelessness and poverty to gain immediate income to help both prevent and end people's homelessness, while building self-esteem and self-worth to become productive members of our community.

We distribute more than 100,000 Rose

City Resource Guides annually to more than 170 organizations and institutions that interface with people experiencing homelessness. The 104-page guide is the more extensive list of services in the region and is used by homeless providers, government agencies, emergency first responders, and law enforcement.

During these shaky economic times, the work of Street Roots is more important than ever. We offer a way for people experiencing homelessness and poverty to gain a hand up and not a hand out, while presenting readers with some of the best news and commentary the city has to offer. We aren't asking for a lot: anything helps. If you could give five cups a coffee a month, or a \$10 recurring donation on-line at www.streetroots.org, or send a modest check (211 NW Davis, 97209), we will continue to create income opportunities for people experiencing homelessness and poverty by producing a newspaper and other media that are catalysts for individual and social change.

SR is a mission driven organization that is reaching 12,000 to 15,000 readers every two weeks. We appreciate your consideration and support. Making us strong means making Portland strong on a range of social issues that matter. Thank you.

LETTERS

Due credit on Vial of Life project

Thank you, Street Roots and Stacy Brownhill, for the excellent article, "Life on the Line" in your July 8 issue.

I would like to note that the one person not mentioned in this article who did so much to make the Vial Of Life program a success at the Downtown Chapel, is Elizabeth Lien, RN and Parish Nurse.

Because of her diligent and caring work, she was able to find the red pouches that contain the pertinent information carried by those

without permanent shelter.

Thanks to Elizabeth and her work for obtaining these pouches and also a BIG thank you to Providence Medical Systems for their continued financial support for these projects through the Parish Nurse Ministries.

SHARON CHRISTENSON, RN
Parish Nurse, Downtown Chapel



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Send letters to the editor to the Street Roots office, 211 NW Davis St., Portland, OR 97209, or e-mailed to streetrootsnews@gmail.com.

Vendor helps out in a pinch

Just wanted to take a few minutes to tell you how great your members are. I was obviously struggling with my bags of veggies when one of your team members (had a cap on, long hair, thin man) actually recognized that I was having issues (while all the business people walked by just staring at me fumbling) and asked if I needed help. Hell yes, I needed help! Besides my bags slipping, I was pretty darn sure my skirt was gonna slip off!

I didn't get his name but I wanted to make sure he knew how thankful I am. I'm a longtime Portland resident and buy Street Roots when I see your team members' downtown where I currently live. Thanks for bringing some kindness into the day!

CARRIE FUENTES
Portland

Ooligan stood out

By Jay Thiemeyer

the ooligan stood out against the flow of trafficking visitors from another state or planet, luxury cruisers like tanks moving down the insects of the West with full frontal nudity the insects died the tourists trapped an assault on everything else but themselves laid bare in their lack of discretion firm in their triple A direction there was a bond among them their grills were all the same a melt of insects' bodies their hard bodies burned beyond recognition as though fallen from the Empire State Building onto a hot June pavement the ooligan stood against the flow and when his ride approached, he took his time walking on the shoulder of an interstate indistinguishable from any number of others in that country he had seen to the ride, whose door opened like it was family

Our blog and our Facebook page are great ways to join the conversation. Visit www.streetroots.wordpress.com and friend us on Facebook to chime in!