

## EDITORIAL

Right 2 Dream Too validates  
its role to the streets

The Right 2 Dream Too overnight sleeping area on Fourth Avenue and Burnside deserves to be taken seriously. Specifically, city officials, nonprofits and institutions that champion housing should practice what they preach and find a way to work with the group of 50-plus people on the streets doing everything in their power to help themselves.

Each night, more than 1,700 individuals sleep in the cold on Portland's streets. In response, Housing Commissioner Nick Fish led an effort along with local churches and the county (see page 3) to offer car camping and overnight sleeping to a small group of people in church parking lots. City Hall and the faith-based community should be

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commended for their efforts. Looking outside the box for short-term solutions while individuals and families wait to secure housing is a positive step in the evolution of working with thousands of people on the skids.

The group of 50-plus homeless individuals who

have been camped downtown since Oct. 2 is one small example of people on the streets standing up and doing something for themselves.

Since that time, Street Roots and others have noticed that Old Town/Chinatown has been calm, quiet even, on some nights. The camp, coupled with overflow shelter beds, has given downtown a sort of refuge during the cold spell.

We have gone around and around with city officials, neighborhoods and business representatives for more than a decade on the camping issue. We've watched different efforts come and go. Dignity Village was born out of similar circumstances in 2000.

First and foremost, the city should find a way for Right 2 Dream Too to coexist with scores of other nonprofits working with people on the streets. The camp is low-cost and offers a safe place to sleep away from the doorways, bridges and many other unhealthy environments that people on the streets are forced to sleep in every night. The city spends millions of dollars to staff services that Right 2 Dream Too can offer for less than pennies on the dollar.

Second, Right 2 Dream Too needs to make sure they learn from past campaigns and offer its best effort to partner with housing agencies, outreach workers and others to find people staying at Right 2 Dream Too permanent housing. If the city can offer a place for the camp, the camp can offer a place for outreach workers and other services to have a safe place to build relationships.

If the city simply sweeps Right 2 Dream Too aside and lets dozens of individuals filter out again into the cold of night, scattered throughout downtown. It will leave a bitter and cynical taste in the mouths of advocates and Portlanders who can see with their own eyes that the group is doing something positive for people experiencing poverty in our community.

People on the streets have little power when it comes to political wranglings at the city. Right 2 Dream Too, from the start, has been organized and professional. The camp is clean, orderly and, most importantly, safe. Something that you won't find in the dead of a cold, winter Portland night.

## Extraordinary stories, extraordinary people

Dear Street Rooters,  
Your support helps Street Roots create connections, one conversation and newspaper at a time. These relationships help build the dense social fabric in which change comes, both

individually and collectively.

The mission of Street Roots is 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. We believe in change. We embrace it, constantly.

Vendors feel a sense of community year-round, but it's at these times that your support of the vendor program goes above and beyond. Our vendors have been reporting just how kind you have been during the holiday season and appreciate your love.

Just this week, three vendors received housing through the support of Street Roots and community organizations. In the past year, SR has helped both secure housing for people on the streets and prevent other from becoming homeless. We know how important the relationships built between vendors, businesses and readers are. We also know how important the

newspaper has become for the community and a vehicle to deliver stories that you simply aren't going to find anywhere else.

This year, we have delivered several special series and in-depth reporting on traumatic brain injury, Asperger's Syndrome, and have been running interviews with local candidates for City Hall, giving you a perspective on how future leaders will represent our community on important poverty issues. We have featured the realities of HIV on the streets, given you budget policy analysis at a local and state level, covered the Occupy and grassroots homeless movements from the ground up and taken home an award for our on-going coverage of veterans and poverty.

People on the streets who sell Street Roots do extraordinary things to survive. The organization itself does extraordinary things with the resources it has with the newspaper, vendor program, the Rose City Resource Guide and our advocacy work.

We're asking you this holiday season to do the extraordinary, and to help Street Roots remain strong and vibrant. Grassroots support makes up one-third of the Street Roots budget. We need your support more now than ever to help us maintain all of the important connections outlined above. Help us remain strong.

You can give by giving safely on-line at [www.streetroots.org](http://www.streetroots.org), or by simply giving a check to Street Roots, 211 NW Davis, Portland, OR. 97209.



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DIRECTOR'S  
DESK

By Israel Bayer

## Story highlights challenges for small grocers



Making Portland's complex food deserts grow green

WHAT DO  
YOU THINK?

Send letters to the editor to the Street Roots office, 211 NW Davis St., Portland, OR 97209, or e-mail to [joanne@streetroots.org](mailto:joanne@streetroots.org).

Your article brings much-needed attention to a serious, far-reaching problem. Unfortunately, you have ignored an independent produce market whose mission has been to bring affordable fresh produce to North Portland's community since the early 1990s. ("Making Portland's complex food deserts grow green," Street Roots, Dec. 9.)

"Other areas, such as the residential Boise-Eliot neighborhood along North Mississippi Avenue, don't have any [healthy markets]. The nearest grocery store is a Whole Foods store, which many cannot afford to shop at regularly."

Cherry Sprout Produce, formerly the original Big City Produce, located at North Sumner and North Albina, is just north of the Boise-Eliot neighborhood, closer for

many residents of Boise-Eliot than Whole Foods, not to mention much more affordable.

Cherry Sprout—like Big City before it—strives to serve the neighborhood, including the African American community in North Portland and beyond. In fact, Cherry Sprout has served as a source of information to the Village Market's organizers. The store offers a broad, seasonal selection of produce, with a focus on affordable Southern cooking staples such as collard, mustard and turnip greens, yams and smoked meats. And some of what Cherry Sprout offers cannot be found anywhere else in the city.

Your overlooking of this North Portland staple underscores a problem I have found with new initiatives to promote healthy neighborhood markets and combat food deserts in general. Although many grants have popped up in the last few years as Michelle Obama and others have brought attention to the problem of food deserts, I am hard pressed to find grants that serve existing markets in need of expensive equipment upgrades, etc. It is not easy to maintain decades old refrigeration equipment, keep the lights on, pay the taxes, and provide living wage employment, while keeping fresh, high quality food affordable.

—KATIE NICHOLS  
Portland

## Our mission

Street Roots creates income opportunities for people experiencing homelessness and poverty by producing a newspaper and other media that are catalysts for individual and social change.

Street Roots publishes every two weeks, launching on Fridays, and is available exclusively through our street vendors or by subscription. We are proud members of the North American Street Newspaper Association and the International Network of Street Papers.

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## Street Roots Rose City Resource

Street Roots publishes the Rose City Resource, a comprehensive booklet of services for people experiencing homelessness and poverty. To inquire about getting an order of the Rose City Resource for distribution, please write to [pdxrosecityresource@gmail.com](mailto:pdxrosecityresource@gmail.com). Resources are also available online at [www.rosecityresource.org](http://www.rosecityresource.org).

## Vendors

Street Roots vendors buy the newspapers for 25 cents each and sell them for \$1, keeping the 75 cents in profit for themselves. In order to keep the cost low to our vendors, we receive additional support from donations and in-kind contributions.



**75¢**  
goes directly to the vendor who sold you the paper

**25¢**  
goes toward printing costs

Vendor orientations are at 1 p.m. every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at the Street Roots office.