

**Every Day**  
By Jason Wolf

I live just to die another day  
I sit and watch helplessly  
as another piece of me withers away  
I start to wonder  
does the pain ever come to an end  
The fact that it doesn't leave  
means that it's my only friend  
It does me no good  
to talk about it or cry  
I'll never get the answer  
to the question of why  
I have been swallowed whole  
by the lonely abyss  
I wish sometimes that death  
would blow me a kiss  
The only peace I get  
is when I'm asleep in my bed  
To wake up in the morning  
only fills me with dread  
So day in and day out  
I will die a little more  
Until the day the Grim Reaper  
comes knocking on my door.

**Passing the blessings forward**

BY COLE MERKEL  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Cynthia can be brought to tears when she witnesses the goodness in people. "The other day I started crying because of my customer," Cynthia explains, tears filling her eyes again. "She gave me a buck, then her grandma, who she was with, pulled out money and said she didn't want the paper, but she wanted to donate to me. After I thanked them, the customer said, 'Anything for you. That's why we're here; to help you.'

**VENDOR PROFILE**  
*Cynthia*

That touched my heart. She just brightened my day."  
Cynthia sells on NW 23rd Ave, typically at the Starbucks on Hoyt. There the baristas know her by name. "I've got this one for you," the man behind the counter tells her with a smile giving her a free refill.

"The people here are awesome," Cynthia says enthusiastically, "They brighten my day. That's why I love this job. It's like a blessing from God. God decides what he wants me to live on for the day."

A strong faith in Christianity has helped Cynthia get through tough times in her life. She is an active member of Carus United Methodist Church and attends most weekends when she visits her parents in Oregon City. Cynthia's faith in people has gotten her into trouble in the past. "I have an innocent mind. I believe everybody's word and everybody's word down here isn't always true."

"Street Roots has really been a blessing to me," she says. "Before I started with Street Roots I was down and out and I was homeless and not doing too good and I just felt lost.



PHOTO BY COLE MERKEL

Having Street Roots in my life has helped me have purpose. I'm doing this not only for myself, but it's a gift from God to help me in my heart. I'm a people person."


She is also a family person. The mother of three boys, Cynthia has gotten her oldest son William involved as a Street Roots vendor. She was brought to the paper by her boyfriend Don, who sells close by at the Starbucks on NW 21st and Lovejoy. Her dream is to get married to Don. And possibly move somewhere warm. After a lifetime in Oregon, Cynthia may be ready to get out of the rain.

Cynthia and Don are in shelter now, but

having experienced homelessness in her past makes Cynthia keen to help others.

She often gives money she makes selling Street Roots to other people on the streets.

"We always pick one person to give a dollar or more to," she says. "I love to help people. It's kind of like pay it forward; that's my motto. It keeps the world going round because homeless people need help. I'm almost homeless myself; I'm in a motel, which is right off the streets. Now I'm trying to get enough money to get first and last months rent and a deposit to move into a better place. People give me hand-ups so I like to hand up too."



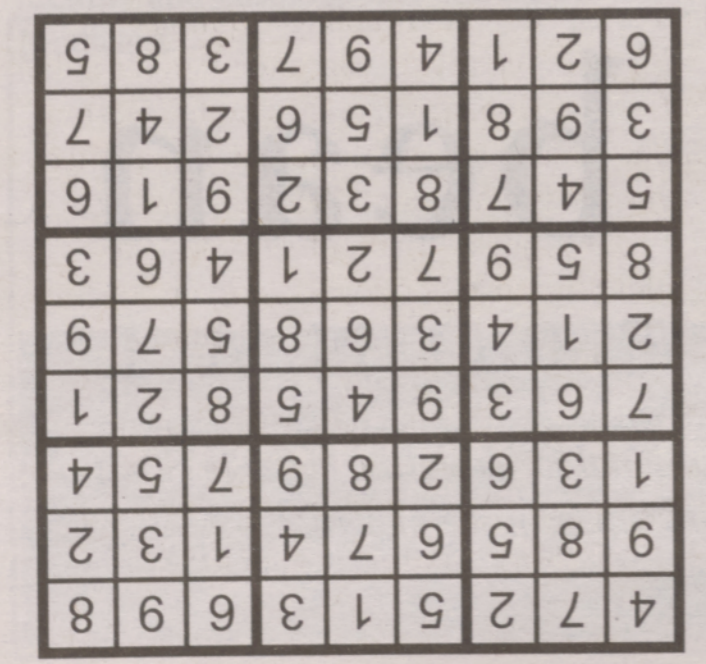
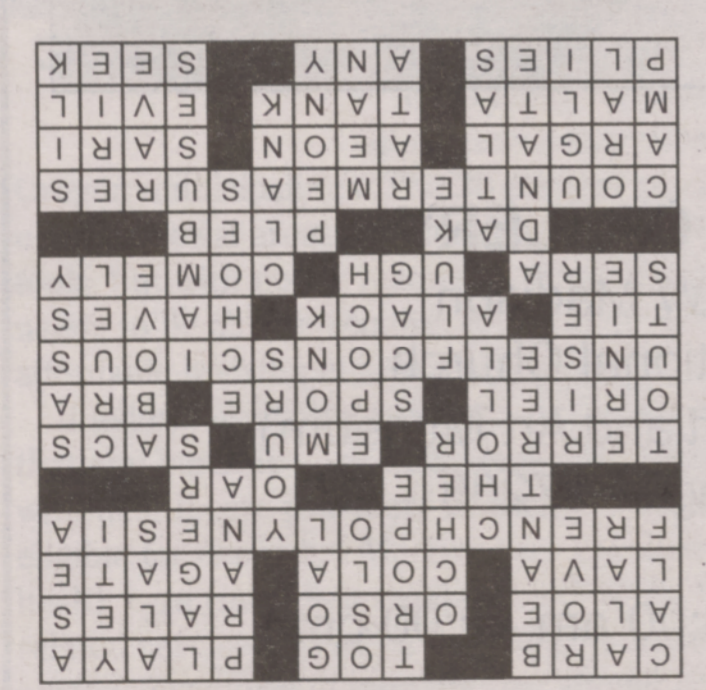
**Changing Lives**

**Building Communities**

**Creating Opportunities**

www.centralcityconcern.org  
503-294-1681

Answers to puzzles on page 15



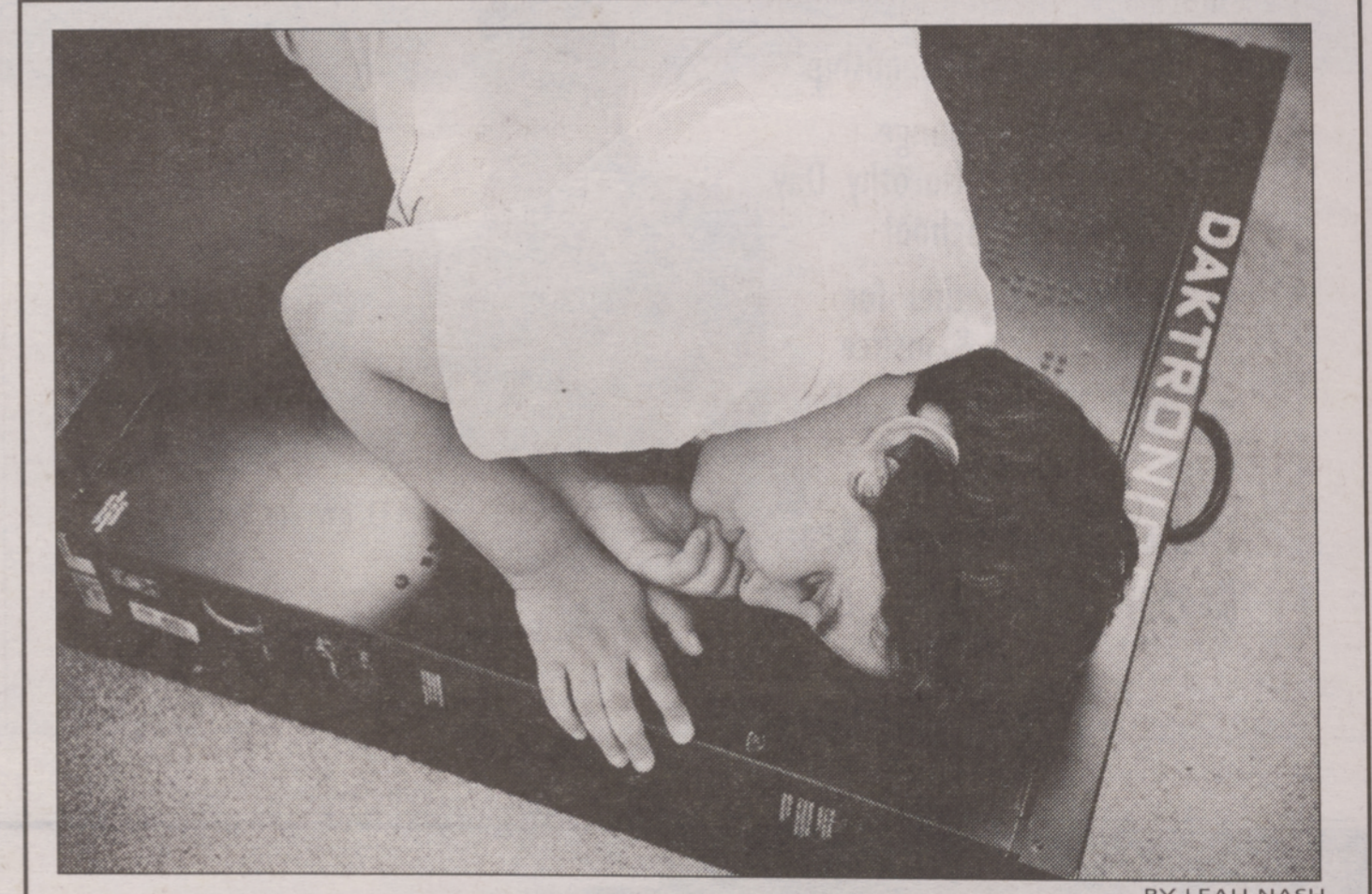
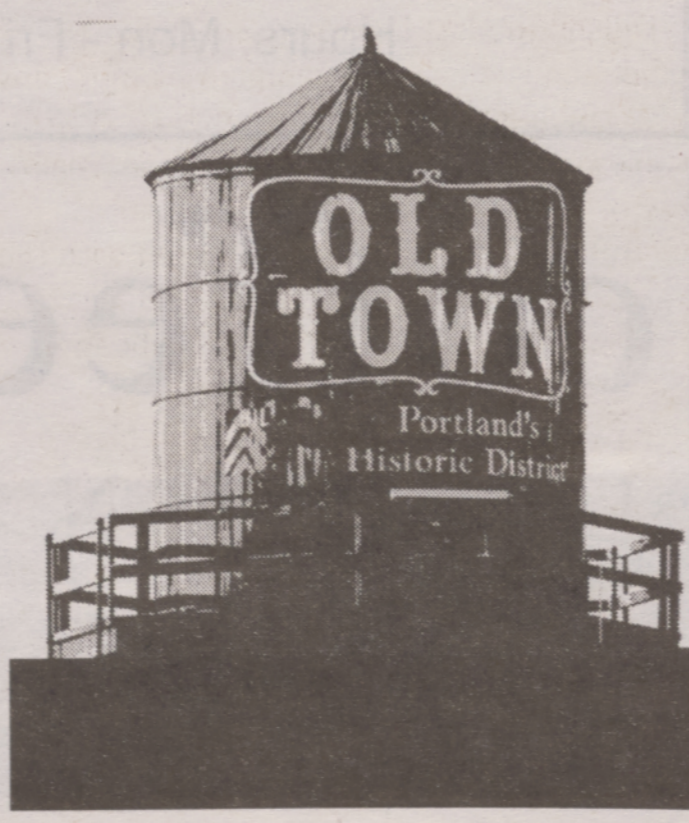
**Vendor Wish List**

Donations keep Street Roots and our vendors working by keeping our operating costs low.

- Paper cups
- Hygiene items
- Towels
- First-aid supplies
- TriMet bus tickets/passes
- Printer paper

**CORRECTIONS**

Street Roots strives for accuracy, but we're human. So we also strive to correct errors in our paper whenever possible. Please report any errors to our managing editor, Joanne Zuhl, at 503-228-5657, or write to joanne@streetroots.org



BY LEAH NASH

**Leah Nash Photography Exhibit**

**A Different Kind of Normal: Stories of Asperger's Syndrome**

May 4-June 30  
Opening reception 6-9p.m. Friday, May 4.  
Artist talk, 2-3 p.m., Saturday, May 5

Autism is the fastest growing disability in the U.S. with an economic impact of more than \$90 billion. And according to the Autism Society of Oregon, Oregon state has one of the highest rates of autistic diagnosis in the country. Photographer Leah Nash spent more than a year focusing on five individuals with Asperger's, exploring the diversity and complexity that exists across the spectrum. However, in the 2013 edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, the diagnostic encyclopedia of American psychiatry, the term Asperger's will be discarded altogether, replaced with the broader diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

For more information about i witness gallery or NCP visit  
www.nwcenterforphotography.com  
Leah Nash is available for interviews.