

EDITORIAL

This is no political season
for sitting on the sidelines

Fifty percent of people ages 18-40 in Multnomah County are not registered to vote. Not cool. Some say that it's a combination of people having moved from one address to another, or not voting in the mid-term and primary elections. In Oregon, that means you will need to register again to vote.

Others say the poor rate is because demographics of Portland are changing, and many young people have yet to be introduced to the level of civic engagement that makes Portland special.

It's time to tune back in. If you care about the world you live, regardless of your issue or passion, placing your vote in November matters.

Apathy also plays a part. Some voters have tuned-out since the 2008 elections. That's no excuse. Maybe the past four years didn't go exactly the way you wanted

and the constant barrage of bad news about war, poverty, global warming and the recession has left a sour taste in your mouth. Whatever the reason, it's time to tune back in. If you care about the world you live, regardless of your issue or passion, placing your vote in November matters. Seriously.

Oregon offers one of the most progressive and effortless systems with vote by mail. Being able to have dinner parties with friends, or an evening with your significant other, discussing the many ballot measures and political races this November is civic engagement at its best. It's the perfect time to be able to discuss a range of important issues and then directly weigh in on those issues with a vote.

Street Roots will be publishing an election postcard this year highlighting our views on local and statewide ballot measures. We will also be running interviews with local candidates for mayor and city council. Look for coverage throughout the month of October leading up to the November election.

Street Roots along with its partners will also be sponsoring a candidate forum on housing and homelessness where we'll be drilling mayoral and council candidates on issues of poverty. The event will be held 6-8 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 17, at the Portland Community College Southeast Center at Southeast 82nd Avenue and Division Street. Be there.

Registering to vote is easy as pie in Oregon. Go to www.oregonvotes.org and register, simple as that. You can also register to vote at your local post office or the Department of Motor Vehicles. There will also be an army of young people out and about at busy crossroads and on college campuses registering folks. Don't put it off. The deadline is Oct. 16.

Voter registration is down in Oregon and around the country. Let's not follow the whole baby boomer, disillusionment-in-politics thing that happened after the 1960. Our global environment cannot afford it, literally.

All types of people – one community paper

Street Roots works hard to present the vendors and public with a great newspaper each issue. We work hard to present voices on a variety of issues that touch poverty. People ask me all of the time, what's the focus of the newspaper? Does Street Roots work to present in the paper people experiencing homelessness, or is it more of a community newspaper? My answer is always the

same – both.

Street Roots believes that the changing demographics and highly educated readership in Portland have created a public interested in a broad range of social justice issues. In each edition you will find poetry, artwork and sometimes opinion pieces from people on the streets. You will also find a range of investigative reporting on local issues that matter, as well as with interviews with musicians, authors, experts in a specific field, and many others. We do our best to present local politics on issues that affect people experiencing poverty, and how policies and happenings will shape the lives of those we serve.

We also believe in coalition building and providing a platform for many individuals and organizations to communicate to a broader audience. Although we may not always be able to lead a specific campaign, we can provide an outlet for those who are working on issues ranging from equity to

transportation to housing and homeless services.

When Street Roots can, we work hard to be leaders on the homeless and housing front. We aren't shy about highlighting and giving voice to new ideas and to push local leaders and the broader community to think about issues in a different way.

The effects of poverty are constantly changing in our community. Everything is interconnected – from high unemployment rates to domestic violence to gang activity to how institutions respond to these issues. It all has an effect on our entire community. We dive deep into important issues and give people the opportunity to have a global view on issues that matter.

For new readers just being introduced to Street Roots, we welcome you to our pages and hope you can find the time to develop a relationship with a local vendor. For many of you who have been reading and supporting Street Roots for years, we hope you continue to enjoy what we produce and our path continues to offer you new and interesting ways to engage in the issue. We are also open to suggestions and would love the feedback. Visit us at streetroots.org or on Twitter and Facebook, where a lively discussion is always taken place.

Lastly, to find out more about Street Roots, visit our annual report in this edition. We sincerely appreciate your support, your readership and your engagement in this ongoing conversation. At Street Roots, we believe in humanity. We believe in you. Thanks for believing in us.



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

DIRECTOR'S
DESK

By Israel Bayer

LETTER

Vendor's positive outlook reflects on customers

I'm a manager at a restaurant on Fourth Avenue and Taylor. I take my breaks across the street near one of your vendors, Marlon Crump. I noticed him there in October, and ever since then I see him every day I work. He has become almost a family member to me.

In the last 6 months I have lost 3 family members and I am over 1,500 miles away from home. He was the first person to lend an ear and a kind word to make me feel better. I notice that everyone who works in the area feels the same way. I can't explain how much he has helped me, through more than just a great source of entertaining news articles. No matter what the weather, no matter what kind of day he's had, he'll be out there in dress clothes and a smile on his face. It's reassuring to know that your attitude does not have to reflect the situation you are in.

Having a positive outlook can not only change your own life, but also those around you. Indeed it has! Marlon is a fixture in that area. I couldn't imagine him not being there greeting everyone that walks by. He tells me he loves his job, and is grateful every day for it. I thank you for creating a program that helps deserving people like him, and that you have brought his smile to our community. Thank you so incredibly much for what your paper is doing for those around me. And I hope you could give him some recognition for the above-and-beyond work he does daily.

—ALYX STEPHENS
Portland

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.

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. Resources are also available online at 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.