

Building a better Street Roots for a sustainable future

Welcome to the 2011-12 Street Roots Annual Report. The past year has been a year of capacity building for the organization.

Street Roots is a stable foundation for many people experiencing poverty and homelessness in our region who find themselves struggling in today's economic climate. It's easy to give up hope. For many individuals and families experiencing dark times and enduring the passing storms, SR serves as a lighthouse of hope — offering proactive measures to help people day-in and day-out get back on their feet.

In the community

The newspaper and vendor programs are tools for scores of people to create stability in their lives. Hundreds of people last year were able to get off the streets and/or avoid homelessness through the vendor program. Vendors are able to gain an income through selling the newspaper at dozens of local

business partners throughout the Portland metro area. Individuals and families are able to build relationships with

the broader community. Confidence replaces self-doubt, and people experiencing homelessness are able to have some discipline in their lives. At the end of the day, Street Roots equals opportunity in people's lives.

The organization produced 105,000 Street Roots Rose City Resource booklets that were distributed by more than 300 organizations and institutions in the Portland region. The 104-page guide, listing services available to people experiencing homelessness and poverty, offers people an opportunity to become their own advocates and to understand in layman's terms the complexity of the system. It also allows groups, including hospitals, police officers and local social-service agencies, that are interacting with people on the streets the opportunity to build relationships and to have access to the latest information available for people experiencing poverty.

SR continues to be a leader on the homeless and social justice front. We led campaigns (along with partners) to protect Portland's safety net and helped secure \$4.8 million dollars in the city of Portland's budget for housing and homeless services. We co-authored Multnomah County's first ever homeless deaths report with the Health Department and continue to work with partners to broaden the scope of the

report to determine how and why people are dying on the streets. Last year, 47 people died on the streets. Our goal is to create a long-term prevention strategy, while offering dignity to those who have passed away needlessly. We continue to advocate for long-term resource development for housing and homeless services locally and statewide, and will continue to speak up on issues of human rights for people experiencing homelessness.

At Street Roots

While SR was able to accomplish a lot in the community for such a small group of people, we spent much of the year focused internally. We are partnering with the Meyer Memorial Trust on a two-year capacity building grant. We began a relationship with

the Jesuit Volunteer Corps — offering the organization full-time vendor and editorial assistant each year. We expanded our space — adding about 1,000 square feet to our editorial and administrative offices, and allowing vendors to have their own drop-in space.

We launched a new organization structure that centralizes our advertising, sponsorships and other inquiries online, including the ability to find a vendor or to report a vendor incident in the community. We overhauled our communications system internally so we could be better organized and communicate more clearly with one another. Our vendor program went from a paper to a digital system, allowing the organization to help curb waste and better track vendor sales and trends in the community.

What's to come in 2012-13

SR will be launching a new "news" website this fall. The new site will be a platform for the newspaper and for voices of people in poverty. The goal of the site is to provide an online opportunity for experts in a variety of fields, community voices and poor people to communicate with broader audience. Street Roots will be unveiling some very cool projects through social media — working to tell the stories of vendors and poverty through a variety of tools online. (Please visit us on Twitter and Facebook.)

SR will also introduce new and innovative community voices through the newspaper and maintain our in-depth journalism. We will work to build our individual support in the community and new partnerships. We will think out of the box and won't be afraid to take risks. We will also work to improve our ability to provide the best opportunities possible for vendors selling the newspaper and for the thousands of readers who support Street Roots.

We believe SR is a vehicle for creating real change in our community. We believe with your support, there is hope, and together we will continue to make a difference one newspaper and conversation at a time.



Vendor program core to Street Roots mission

Vendors selling the newspaper are at the heart of the Street Roots mission. Our goal is to create income opportunities for people in poverty by publishing our high quality, advocacy newspaper that empowers vendors to become agents of personal and social change.

"One of the things I love about the newspaper is that it will keep money in your pocket. The economy is still bad right now, but when I sell, I know I can get money in my pocket every day, and I can pay some bills here and there. This is paying my rent, believe it or not," says Earl Bennet, a SR vendor.

In the past year, the vendor program served more than 250 men and women. In addition to a basic income and economic dignity, vendors have a support network within the organization and through our many partners in the community.

Through the help of our community agencies, several of our longtime vendors have ended their homelessness and gotten into housing. Many of them will continue to sell SR to supplement their rent and support their basic needs and health care. Some have saved up to travel to a new place where work or family waits.

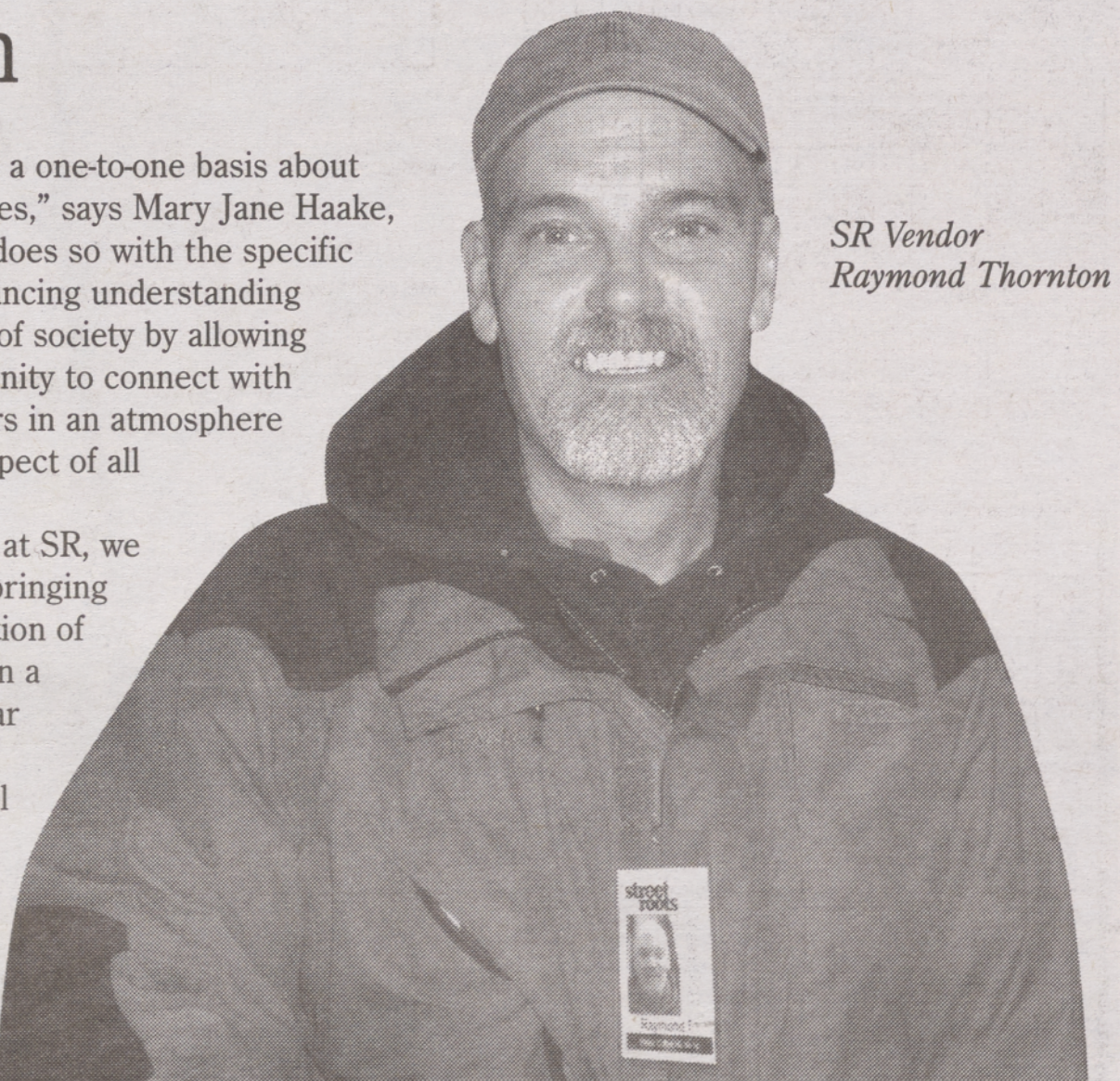
Street Roots serves a spectrum of individuals of many ages, sexual and gender identities, ethnic backgrounds, nationalities, religions and beliefs. This openness creates a beautifully broad community where people of all backgrounds make friends, trade sales tips, share resources and connect. We believe in a low-barrier philosophy, where every human has worth, and that work is available for anyone who desires it, and that will continue to guide the vendor program for years to come.

"In a time where civil discourse is all but gone, the SR Vendor Program encourages

conversations on a one-to-one basis about much larger issues," says Mary Jane Haake, a SR reader. "It does so with the specific intention of enhancing understanding among all levels of society by allowing the flow of humanity to connect with individual vendors in an atmosphere that requires respect of all participants."

From all of us at SR, we look forward to bringing you the next edition of the newspaper on a street corner near you.

Cole Merkel
Vendor
Coordinator



SR Vendor
Raymond Thornton