

EDITORIAL

We need the region to step up on the poverty front

The rainy season is settling in. For people experiencing poverty that means hard times. For many hard working individuals and families struggling it can be stressful just trying to make the bills each month. Throw in the holidays and life can become overwhelming.

For people sleeping without a safe place to call home, survival becomes a daily grind. Catching something as simple as the common cold or flu for someone experiencing homelessness can be a matter of life and death. The vast majority of people sleeping outdoors that Street Roots serves will develop walking pneumonia over the course of the winter.

"For people sleeping without a place to call home (in the rainy season) survival becomes a daily grind."

More than 1,700 people sleep outdoors every night, with thousands more in shelters and in transitional housing.

One of the biggest challenges we face is what we call compassion

fatigue. People born after the mid-1970s grew up in an environment where homelessness is normal. It's not uncommon to see one, two, hundreds of people lined up in soup lines or sleeping in doorways or under bridges in urban settings. That's just the way it is.

It wasn't always that way. Prior to the late '70s the Federal government prioritized housing for people experiencing poverty. Housing was seen as an essential component in stabilizing local communities. Unfortunately, many of the housing programs at that time (some still today) were set up as profiteering ventures and filled with discrimination. Still, there was money allocated for housing from the Feds.

Three decades later, and local governments, for the most part, have become the sole foundation for maintaining many of the social problems urban environments face — homelessness, mental health, gang outreach, etc.

In response, local governments, including Portland have patched together different funding opportunities to combat poverty. The problem is there are only enough resources to prevent the system from collapsing in on itself, but not enough to actually get ahead of the problem.

Who then is responsible for helping curb homelessness? Right now, it's us. Foundations, private citizens and the business community are helping through philanthropy and creative innovation.

According to Mayor Sam Adams, 40 percent of the population in Multnomah County and the City of Portland are spending 80 percent of funds (twice the number of local dollars than we should be based on population) on housing and homeless services.

It's time for the rest of the region to step up. That means figuring out ways to partner with private businesses in real and meaningful ways, holding suburban governments responsible and looking at poverty through a regional and statewide lens.

Metro has to be at the point. Advocacy groups have to figure out better ways to build more inroads and relationships with politicians outside of Portland. Business groups have to help facilitate conversations about ways to tackle poverty around the region. We, as in all of us, have to be more vocal on Oregon's responsibility on the poverty front.

Street Roots proud partners with vets group

Street Roots is proud to start a new partnership with journalist Robert Britt and The Mission Continues, a nationwide veterans organization out of St. Louis, Missouri.

The Mission Continues works with returning vets and partners with non-profit organizations around the U.S. — giving veterans the opportunity to give back to the community while

transitioning back into civilian life.

Robert has been volunteering and writing on veterans issues for Street Roots for nearly a year. Robert is a nine-year veteran who served two tours in Iraq. His

knowledge and insight of veterans issues is something that translates both through the newspaper and in the vendor program.

In the next six-months you will see a heavy dose of veterans coverage in Street Roots through the program. We will be highlighting in-depth news stories on veterans issues and poverty, while soliciting veterans to give their opinions through the newspaper. Robert will also be leading a service project with veterans and offering vets on the streets a place to offer their poetry and artwork.

If you are a returning veteran or someone who works on the poverty front or is experiencing homelessness and would like to get involved, please contact Robert at robert@streetroots.org.

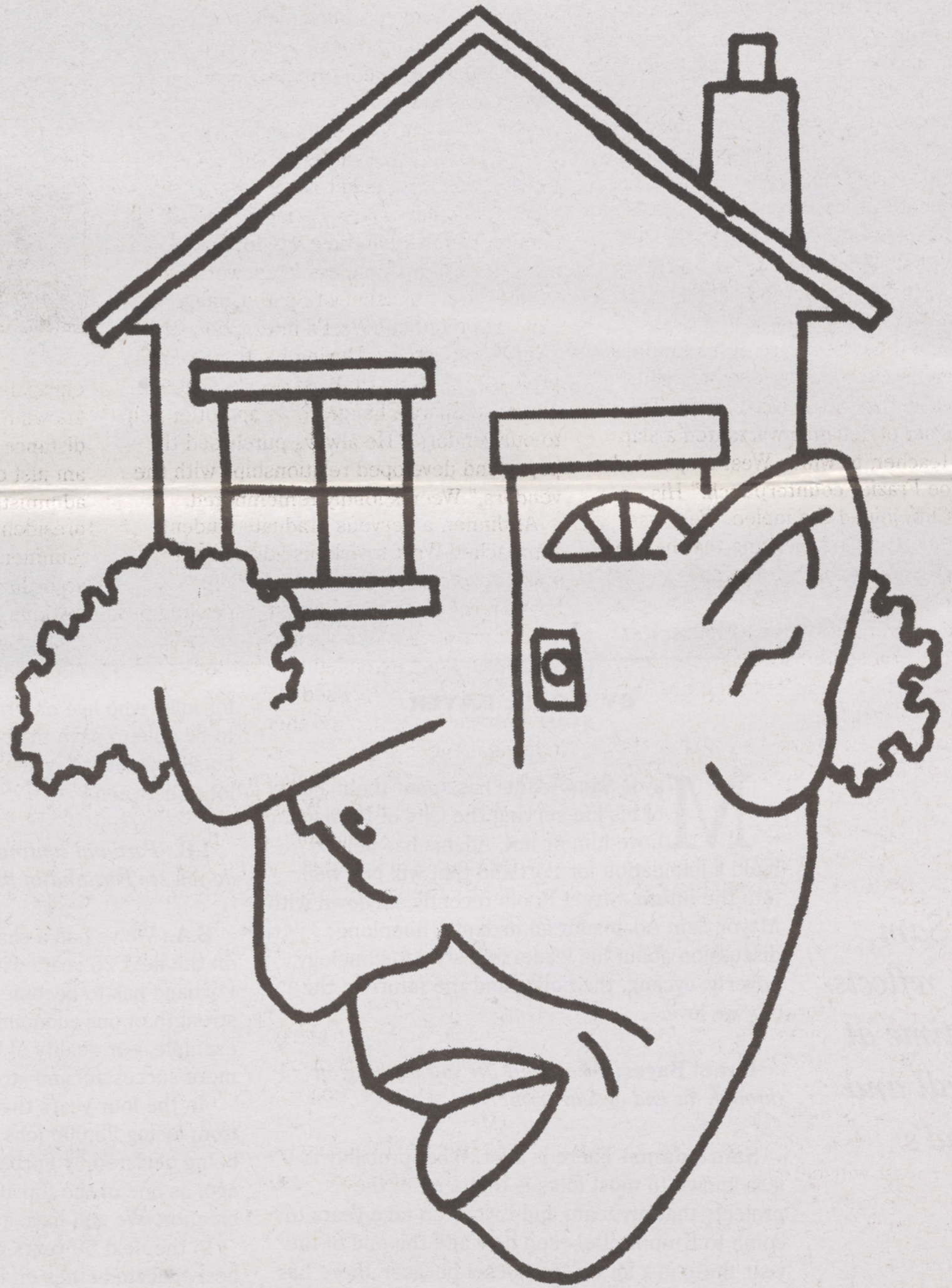
We couldn't be happier with the project and hope readers will enjoy.



DIRECTOR'S DESK

By Israel Bayer

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



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.