

Street Roots in review

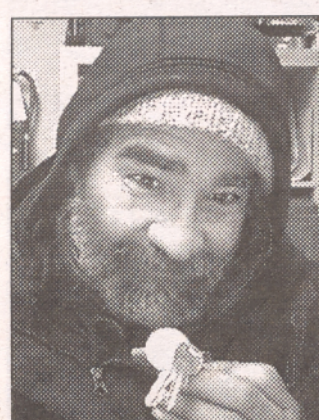
BY ISRAEL BAYER
STAFF WRITER

Here's a brief recap of Street Roots over the past year:

Newspaper

Street Roots published more than 600 community voices in 2012. The newspaper partnered with more than two dozen organizations that ran op-eds in the newspaper on upstream approaches related to health care, prison reform, equity and other important social justice issues. The organization continued its relationship with Portland State University Capstone class on journalism.

The newspaper continued to strengthen its journalism by reporting on a range of issues related to poverty in our community. We took home five awards from the Society of Professional Journalists, including two first place awards for our reporting on traumatic brain injury, culture and health care. The newspaper began running interviews with socially responsible musicians with the hopes of bringing a new audience to the newspaper. We published dozens of poems and artwork from people on the streets, giving readers an inside look at people's creative skills and expression.



Saul Cortez holds up the keys to his new apartment. After being homeless for years, Saul, a Street Roots vendor, now has a place to call home.

Vendors

Street Roots was open for 365 days last year to vendors, for the 14th straight year. Vendors and Street Roots work with more than 60 local businesses in the community. The organization helped house more than 60 individuals through the sales of the newspaper and with the help of partner agencies. We help prevent another 100 people from becoming homeless through the vendor program. Through the sales of the newspaper, we help put more than \$300,000 into the hands of our vendors last year.

We dedicated a 1,000-square-foot day space for vendors to access. Vendors are able to use computers, get mail, get hydrated and converse in the office. We also developed a successful weekly writers group.

Advocacy

For the first time ever, with the support of the Oregon and Multnomah County Medical Examiner's offices, the Multnomah County Health Department analyzed medical examiner records of homeless people who died while not under a physician's care. The report was initiated and co-authored by Street Roots. The goal of the report is to better guide the community's response for health care and

services. Look for the second annual report this spring.

Street Roots helped lead a campaign to preserve millions of dollars in the Portland Housing Bureau budget for homeless and housing services through the "I support the Safety Net" campaign.

Street Roots continues to advocate for the civil rights of people experiencing homelessness and for a range of policy efforts that effect people on the streets. Street Roots isn't afraid to speak truth to power, respectfully, and sometimes write about and say things that may be unpopular on the poverty front.

Rose City Resource Guide

Street Roots published 106,000 guides that were distributed to more than 250 organizations and institutions throughout the metro area. The guide serves as the most comprehensive list of services for people experiencing homelessness and poverty in the region. It allows local services and institutions the ability to create relationships with people in the community and educate individuals and families on what services are available.

Organization and capacity building

Street Roots launched its first official volunteer program. The new program entails a monthly orientation and a point person for volunteers to access the different programs within the organization.

Street Roots partnered with the local tech community and launched a new organizational and news website, news.streetroots.org. We experimented with social media strategies to raise more

awareness about the issue of poverty and our work. We upgraded our internal communications systems so we could better communicate with one another and added a paperless, digital vendor database to track vendor sales and information. We became a Personal Telco node, meaning we are providing a free Internet signal to the areas surrounding Street Roots.

We expanded our offices, adding a 2,000 square feet of space for our editors, writers and development team. We built a new ADA restroom for vendors and the public.

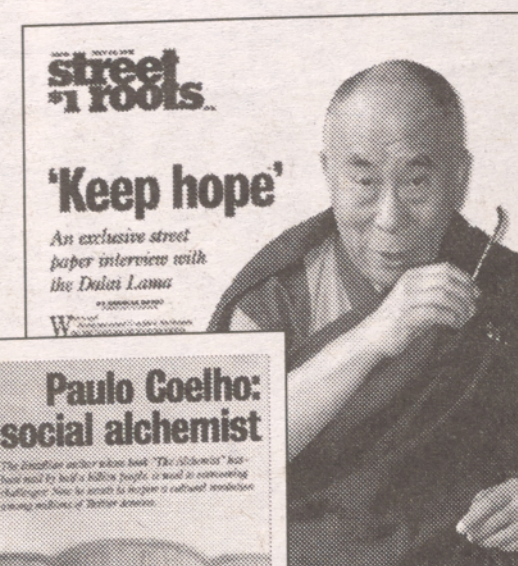
We continued our relationship with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest and other organizations working to create social change in our community.

In short, we did a lot this year (with a fairly small budget) with the support of people like you and through partnerships with local businesses and foundations.

Looking forward

In 2013, you'll see Street Roots become more active on the web by bringing in a variety of new voices through the news site. You'll see the newspaper continue to deliver quality journalism and voices from the streets. Portland will continue to maintain new and old relationships alike with vendors. We will continue to work with local housing organizations to gain access to housing for our vendors. We will expand and publish more Rose City Resource Guides and our advocacy will take on smart and winnable campaigns that help change the lives of people in poverty and the entire community for the better. We look forward to spending the next year with you.

We thank you, and sincerely appreciate your support.



Street Roots published more than 100,000 Rose City Resource booklets in 2012 and distributed them to hundreds of programs working with people in poverty and homelessness

RESET, from page 3

The reset plan does not explicitly name chronically homeless people as a priority population. But its authors say that does not mean that subset of the homeless population will receive fewer services.

"The chronically homeless are still a priority population in the plan," Jolin says. "It calls out individuals with disabilities, and that will really capture those folks."

But Jolin says it is important for the new 10-year plan to have strategies and goals for ending homelessness "that are appropriate across" different populations of homeless people. "Calling out chronically homeless people doesn't address what we're doing already and what we should be doing with the other populations," he says. "It's too limiting."

"We have a robust network and system for the chronically homeless," Kafoury says. "We just haven't spent as much time, energy or dollars on homeless families."

Increasing the emphasis on flexibility and nimbleness of programs and services is also emphasized in the reset plan. The 10-year plan has focused on providing permanent supportive housing just as heavily as it has

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— DEBORAH KAFOURY
MULTNOMAH COUNTY COMMISSIONER

focused on housing chronically homeless people. But the people involved in writing the reset plan say one size does not fit all.

"We don't need to have every program be that comprehensive. Many of these families that we see don't need that high level of services," Kafoury says. "We need to have a range."

Many who have become homeless because of the recession, including families, need little else than help paying a security deposit, a few months of utility bills, or a few month's rent through the short-term rent assistance program.

"They tend to not be outside as long. They have a more recent work history, more recent residential history," Jolin says. "That, in some

respects, makes it easier."

The reset plan also recommends beefing up the safety net's programs related to helping homeless or formerly homeless people get jobs and make their own income. In general, the reset plan emphasizes building collaborative partnerships with a wide variety of groups that have a stake in ending homelessness — including faith-based groups, private business, education, health care agencies, and particularly the new coordinated care organizations — Oregon's revamped Medicaid delivery system.

"It isn't just a housing plan," Manning says. "It's also about health care, education, (and) income attainment. Technically we knew that, but it's a lot more explicit about having those people at the table."

Related to developing that big tent of partnerships is the creation of a new governing body that will oversee efforts to end homelessness. Manning says identifying what the governance body will be, exactly, is the last piece the reset committee has to hammer out.

"It's about tapping the intellectual and maybe the financial resources of the whole community," Manning says.

In general, Kafoury hopes the reset plan will "really quantify what services are needed, so we can give the public an idea of how much we spend now, and how much it would ultimately cost if we want to eradicate homelessness."

The reset plan will also reflect the federal government's new plan for ending homelessness, enacted under the Obama administration. Simply called the Federal Strategic Plan, it calls for ending chronic homelessness and homelessness among veterans in five years, preventing and ending family homelessness in ten years, and creating a way to end all types of homelessness.

The federal plan says that "high-performing communities," or areas that meet targets for ending homelessness, may be more competitive for additional federal funds. These communities would have to show that homelessness was reduced by 10 percent from the previous year, that less than 5 percent of formerly homeless people become homeless again, or that 85 percent of housed families remained housed within two years.

"There are new opportunities we can leverage there," Manning says.