

Home sweet home

Street Roots vendors Don and Cynthia get a place to call their own

BY ASHLEY KORONKO
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

It was cold and windy when I pulled up to meet Cynthia and Don near what was soon to be their new apartment at Stark Firs. They flag me in, spotting me from two blocks away, Don waving and Cynthia ready with her warm smile.

We trek down to the management office as they tell me about their journey. Both Cynthia and Don started working for Street Roots back in 2011.

Currently paying for a motel to keep out of the late winter weather, Don and Cynthia walk and talk with excitement about having a place to call their own. The help of many organizations working collaboratively has made it possible for Cynthia and Don to move indoors.

I tuck my camera under my jacket to keep out the smattering of icy rain and pull my coat close against the gusts of wind that is so infamous in Southeast Portland. Cynthia and Don don't seem to notice the cold weather.

We arrive and Cynthia is bouncing up and down with anticipation as we wait for the property manager to unlock the front door to their apartment. Don and Cynthia walk in to experience their new home for the first time.

"It smells so clean!" Cynthia remarks upon entering.

"It's so big!" Don exclaims.



Above, Don and Cynthia with the keys to their new apartment. Below, they sign the paperwork that gets them inside.

PHOTOS BY ASHLEY KORONKO

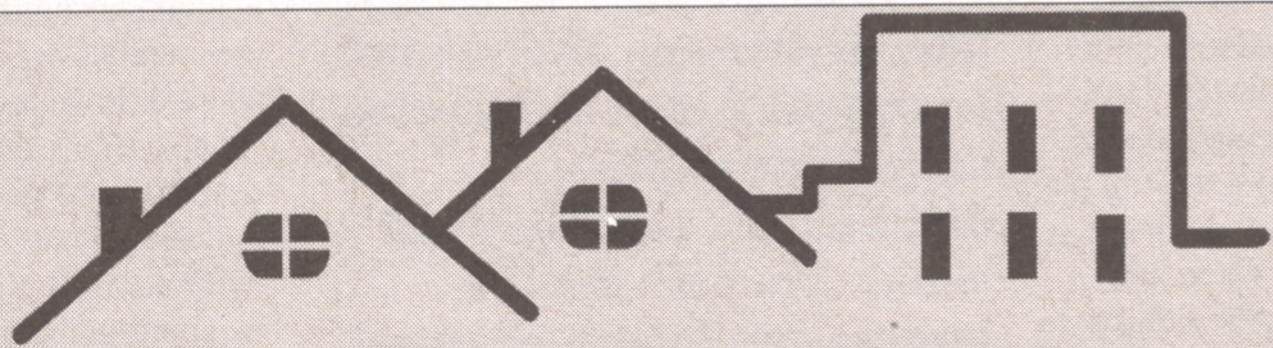
After paying \$225 every five days for a motel room, Cynthia and Don start opening every cupboard, closet and drawer as they begin to realize that they now have a place to call their own.

I ask them how they are feeling at this point and a look of joy and gratitude starts to shine in their eyes and crack in their voices, sometimes talking over each other, as they begin to tell me how many people they wish to thank.

"Thanks to Rick and Moe and everyone at Stark Firs."

"We want to give a special thanks to, Cole Merkel and (the housing agency) JOIN for all of their support with the deposit and rent."

If anyone desires to wish them well or give them a hug or a high five on their accomplishment don't be shy, Don works in front of the Whole Foods in Northwest Pearl district and Cynthia sells at Pearl Bakery.



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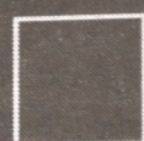
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