

EDITORIAL

Right 2 Dream Too has earned its place at the table

Not many people gave them a chance. From the neighborhood and bureaucrats to certain shelter providers and the business community, no one believed that a group of homeless people could be successful in creating their own safe refuge from the harsh realities of homelessness. Right 2 Dream Too has been proving those critics wrong for more than two years.

Tent cities created by people experiencing homelessness are nothing new in America. They date back to the Civil War and run through the Depression era with the emergence of Hoovervilles – homeless camps named after President Herbert Hoover for his lack of support of housing on a federal level. With the rise of modern-day

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homelessness came tent cities that were born organically and intentionally.

Right 2 Dream Too, in many ways is a version of Dignity Village – except that Right 2 Dream Too is located in the heart of

downtown Portland and will soon move to the Pearl District with the help of city officials.

Right 2 Dream Too has received the support of law enforcement for maintaining an orderly camp and civility with some of Old Town's hardest to reach individuals on the streets. They helped facilitate the housing of dozens of individuals with social-service agencies and helped maintain the safety of women experiencing the extremes of homelessness. They did all of this while experiencing homelessness themselves. Their service to the city and to themselves should be commended.

"I commend Commissioner (Amanda) Fritz, and the organizers of Right 2 Dream, for seeing these negotiations through. It is clear that no one answer will solve the homelessness issue in America. But Right 2 Dream has one answer, for one segment of the homeless population," Mayor Charlie Hales told the Portland Mercury. "We look forward to the next phase – the relocation of Right 2 Dream – and the public input process. I support her commitment to meet with the neighbors and businesses, prior to executing the use agreement, and to develop a good neighbor agreement."

Right 2 Dream Too is now set to move into the Pearl District under the Broadway Bridge. Ironically, the Pearl was a neighborhood once home to hundreds of people on the streets before gentrification and displacement. Today, the posh neighborhood, with a strong philanthropic spirit, has the chance to be good neighbors. We look to neighborhood leaders to rise above the hype and to welcome Right 2 Dream Too. We look to neighborhood leaders to rise above the NIMBY rhetoric that has become the norm in these kinds of circumstances.

Right 2 Dream Too deserves a chance to continue organizing to improve the living conditions of people on the streets. Street Roots is thankful to have elected officials and community supporters who believe the same. In order to combat poverty and homelessness, we must look at every alternative available. Right 2 Dream Too has proven time and again to be great partners, and it deserves a seat at the table.

Looking at our city on the hill

Portland is a city on a hill. A shining example of how to think about and plan urban growth, public transportation and sustainability, parks and the environment, clean water, etc. The list goes on. Add a bustling and growing tech community, urban gardening and the emergence of cycling and our light begins to shine even brighter.



DIRECTOR'S DESK

By Israel Bayer

Israel Bayer is the executive director of Street Roots. You can reach him at israel@streetroots.org or follow him on Twitter @israelbayer.

I love Portland. I'm a proud fan. We live in a city where ideas and innovations can be developed, crafted and supported. We are a young city, both in spirit and in the history of urban landscapes. Our traditions and values are constantly being shaped and recreated and driven by people, just like you, that have hopes and dreams of a better tomorrow. Where else can beer, food and the simple luxury of life blossom more than in Portland? Life is good.

Beyond the luxury, the challenges Portland and our region face are real. The economic challenges tens of thousands of individuals and families endure are very real. The lack of diversity and race in the heart of Portland's playground is also very real. Suburban poverty is real. Homelessness. I can keep going: A statewide mental health system that, honestly, is pathetic. Zero regional planning on transportation and affordable housing. Forget regulations. The list goes on and on.

Human capital, as it relates to poverty and displacement in our community, has become a patchwork of desperate attempts to combat decades' worth of the defunding of safety-net programs. It's what you get when we don't invest in people, specifically poor people.

Don't get me wrong. Our local government has prioritized the safety net at times and done its best to create livability and a quality of life for people struggling on the fringe. The faith and business communities are engaged. It's still not enough.

I can appreciate that as a region we continue to work towards sustainability, innovation and building a bigger, brighter city. In order to do that, we have to invest in people across a broad spectrum.

We must help create an economic engine that supports alternative incomes for people on the streets, people with disabilities, people coming out of prison, the mentally ill. We have to make serious investments in early childhood development. We must build and maintain affordable housing and homeownership opportunities for hardworking people. We must give immigrants and refugees a fighting chance at being successful. We must work across class lines and issues and support one another in ways that don't polarize and segregate our populations and ideas. We must rise above.

It's going to take a village, young and old, big and small, rich and poor. It is possible.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Send letters to the editor to Street Roots, 211 NW Davis St., Portland, OR 97209, or e-mail to joanne@streetroots.org.



Meanwhile, on Capitol Hill, the official elected to represent the state of Homelessness has vowed to keep his eyes closed, as long as he sits in the House.

By Marie McKimm

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 guides, call 503-228-5657. 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.