

## EDITORIAL

Marijuana debate an opportunity  
for larger talks about drugs

Street Roots believes that voters should vote yes in November to legalize marijuana. We also believe that Oregon has the opportunity to think about how it approaches outdated and ineffective anti-drug strategies.

It's also time for the federal government to loosen restrictions on federally funded housing programs that go to support low-income individuals. Why is it that elderly Oregonians have more access to pharmaceutical drug options than they do medical marijuana?

It's also time for local housing authorities to rethink their approach to allowing people access to marijuana, especially edibles. It's going to take more than a don't

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ask, don't tell philosophy to catch up with the times. If people are clearly in pain or experiencing a mental health crisis — doctors and low-income housing programs should think

strategically about what

it means to allow residents to have access to marijuana as a medical resource.

It's also important for the Multnomah County District Attorney's office and local governments to work diligently to drop any charges residents face for marijuana possession if Measure 91 passes in November.

Poor people have been selling and consuming marijuana for decades and been unfairly punished. It's important we rethink how marijuana will create job opportunities for low-income individuals and families. It's no joke.

And how many people have their employment opportunities virtually eliminated by felony records even with time already served? And how many felons choose between not having a job and selling an illegal substance to earn money? A lot.

By legalizing marijuana in Oregon in November we have a chance reshape how we educate children and the masses around the pros and cons of drug use in Oregon and throughout America. Currently, the reality is that most young people learn the ropes about marijuana through their peer networks. We now have a chance to have a much broader discussion about both marijuana and other drugs in our community.

Street Roots has long advocated for broader harm reductions strategies as it relates to all drug use. The more we can educate the masses on the effects of drugs in our communities, the healthier our communities will become.

We look forward to prioritizing these issues through the pages of Street Roots and maintaining a healthy dialogue with the community. It's out with the old and in with the new. It's time to turn the page on how we think about and approach marijuana in our communities.

## Honesty, sincerity part of our collective spirit

The reality is, if we're going to work for social justice on one hand and partner with a vast array of complex systems on another, it means partnering and working with everyone in the community.

Sometimes that means being the community partner and working within the system. Other times that may mean being the antagonist and challenging larger institutions. More often than not it

means working on a larger shared vision with the people of Portland. It always means being honest and sincere in both our reporting and advocacy.

At the end of the day, everything we do is about lifting people up. It's about meeting people where they are at in their own experiences. We could concentrate on our differences, but more times than not, if we find that sweet spot of commonalities, anything is possible.

We see it each day at Street Roots. Faced

with some of the most challenging obstacles a human being can face, we see people rise above at Street Roots — whether it's the individual surviving the harsh realities of homelessness or the family working their fingers to the bone to keep the lights on and bills paid. Really, Street Roots is made up of a group of rugged individualists who have a collective spirit — understanding that no one can do it alone. We need each other.

At 11,000 strong throughout Portland, Street Roots readers make all the difference in the world — bringing a smile and a laugh to someone in need, offering a hand up and encouraging people to take part in the improvement of their neighborhood. It's astonishing to see day in and day out. Sometimes I sit back and marvel at how something as simple as a newspaper set up to give people an income creates so much hope.

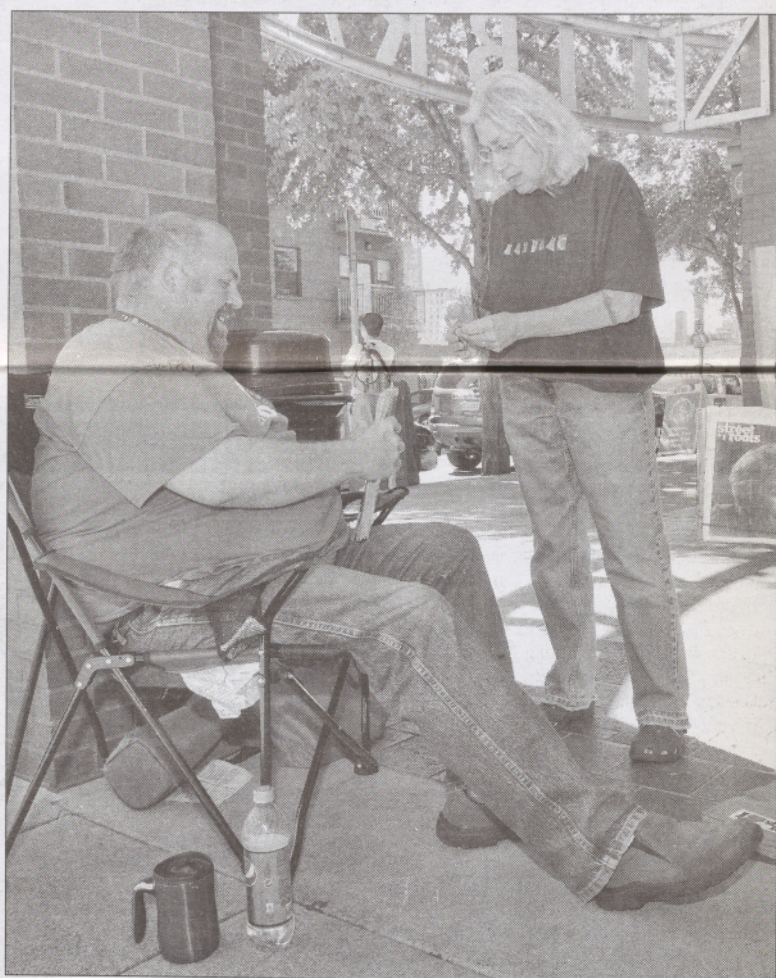
I often times describe Street Roots as a small train that carries a heavy load. It's a testament to all of the vendors at Street Roots, really, the entire Street Roots team and most importantly you, the reader.



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

DIRECTOR'S  
DESK

By Israel Bayer



Street Roots vendor Allen Bennett sells the newspaper at Hollywood Library. PHOTO BY ALAN BORRUD

## 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 International Network of Street Papers.

Street Roots  
211 NW Davis St.  
Portland, OR 97209  
503-228-5657  
Fax: 503-227-3117  
streetroots.org  
news.streetroots.org



## Staff

**Executive Director** Israel Bayer  
israel@streetroots.org  
**Managing Editor** Joanne Zuhl  
joanne@streetroots.org  
**Vendor Coordinator** Cole Merkel  
cole@streetroots.org  
**Operations Director** Sarah Beecroft  
**Program Assistant** Grace Badik, Jesuit Volunteer,  
grace@streetroots.org  
**Development Director** Sarah Cloud  
**Office Assistant** Amber Bielman  
**Reporters** Jake Thomas, Alex Zielinski, Nathan  
Gilles, Sue Zalokar, Ann-Derrick Gaillot  
**Photographers** Kristina Wright, Christopher  
Onstott, Adrienne Burkett

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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 online at [www.rosecityresource.org](http://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.