

opinion

EDITORIAL

Optimism wins out as one year closes and another begins

Do you look to the New Year with hope or apprehension? Does the season bode celebration or isolation? From our vantage point, it's always a mix. We're realists, after all, but optimism wins out.

Indeed, from the grassroots to the state's highest office, the year moved the ball forward on some fronts.

Politically speaking, the city and the county have taken the first steps toward a new collaborative approach to homelessness, reassessing their relationship and responsibilities, and forcing leadership's hand to declare that if we really want to end homelessness – not just for some, but for all – then we have to be intentional in our

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efforts. It isn't a passive goal to be shelved when the job gets tough. New alliances are pursuing options for sustainable funding streams to keep housing affordable. There's initiative from Salem too, with the governor's pledge of

\$100 million toward creating new, low-income housing units. It's a new infusion of money and commitment that complements efforts to raise our standards in health care and education. There's no panacea, of course, but the conversation is slowly changing.

In Portland, we close the year on many uncertainties, including the integrity of affordable housing funding through urban renewal districts. But we're hopeful that the powers that be will prioritize low-income and workforce housing – as it already does with transit and infrastructure – when investing in new development.

Closer to home and on a more personal level, we've seen many vendors find greater success in selling the newspaper, to the point of finding stability and housing. Two in particular, Duane Wagner and William Howard, connected with the VA to find housing for veterans like themselves. For others, milestones have been reached in income and opportunity. They come in the form of new jobs, sustainable housing, reunited families or just a bus ticket home. If the past is any indication of the future, there will be more and more vendors crossing our threshold in 2015.

With each passing year, we say goodbye to friends, always thankful for the time we had together. This past year we lost three vendors before their time.

And of course, your support has secured the launch of a weekly Street Roots in 2015. We are not jumping into this new cycle lightly, but with the knowledge that sales stability is fundamental to managing a sustainable income for housing. It's really that simple.

So before you rush off to your busy holiday schedule, please take a moment to look over page 11, where some of our vendors have written their thanks and wishes to readers. It's where vendor Tory Boone perhaps said it best: "Tis the season when we all have to figure out what we're thankful for. I see nothing more obvious to me than you. I have an income and hope because of your support of Street Roots. Thank you!"

At the end of the day, all you need is love

"Street Roots offers me the opportunity to get the things I need in life. Plus, I love all of the people that I get to meet. I'm so thankful." – Paulette Bade, SR vendor.



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.

It's a busy time of year. I'll be brief. We know readers are very busy before the holidays. Lots to do.

As the year winds down and a new year begins, Street Roots and vendors want to

thank you for all of your love. Every day we hear story after story of readers being extremely generous to vendors. It's an amazing thing to witness. It doesn't take much to bring joy into people's lives who don't have a lot – maybe it's as simple as a smile.

Regardless of how busy we might be or the challenges we may face, we believe the majority of people want to do the right thing given the opportunity. That might be reconnecting with a long lost family member, or taking the time

out to spend more time with a significant other. Possibly it's sharing a coffee with a stranger or offering your appreciation for the small things someone has done for you this past year. It's not easy, given the world we live.

People who read Street Roots and this column know how much we talk about the collective strength of people and our community. We live and breathe it. We know that regardless of where you're going or where you come from, at the end of the day, all you need is love. Love in all forms.

Together, we've got lots of love at Street Roots.

It's your generosity that is helping Street Roots grow. In the process, helping hundreds of individuals and families. Talk about amazing.

From all of us at Street Roots, we want to wish you a happy holiday.

P.S. As the holidays approach. Don't forget to support your local neighborhood vendor.

P.P.S. A donation to Street Roots would also be, well, golly gee, out of sight. Thank you!



Vendor Paulette Bade

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 a proud member of 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 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.