

Readers help take newspaper to new level

There are many reasons why people rely on local media, and still many more why they rely on Street Roots. We are not just an engaging weekly news source; we are an income and advocate for hundreds of people experiencing poverty and homelessness in our city. Within our extraordinary network, we are a catalyst for real change.

That's why our coverage strives to connect with readers across class lines. Street Roots readers are as diverse as their opinions and perspectives on the city around them. You love music and art, unconventional ideas and innovations, complex issues and creative solutions — and so do we.

Behind the scenes, we've changed quite a bit this past year. In order to double our publication schedule — from once every two weeks to once a week — we brought on a full-time reporter, Emily Green. She joins a dynamic crew of freelancers who have worked with us for years.

In January, with your support, we launched our first weekly edition with a bang, reporting on the elimination of in-person visitation at the Multnomah County jail. The articles prompted a public outcry and ultimately compelled the sheriff to preserve face-to-face visits with inmates. We've followed with in-depth reporting on proposed changes to the foster care system, the proliferation of petty misdemeanors, and even the arrest of a homeless woman for charging her phone from a private outlet.

We've made a concerted effort to follow issues beyond the initial stories, reporting on the environmental concerns of our region, with a view from people experiencing poverty. And as we move forward, our coverage will continue to delve into issues not only around climate change, but also on our policies toward forest management and public oversight.

We're leading the way in

covering our cultural diversity, reporting on the men and women from the many communities of color in our region. Too often, the dialogue on issues involving race pivot on the sensational, rather than the compelling stories about our cultures. We've featured a series of in-depth articles on the Native American movement to protect the Columbia Gorge from ecological damage by the fossil fuel industry. Our series, Planet Portland, tells the personal stories of people's journeys from other parts of the world to become part of our social fabric.

We're pushing conversations forward around harm reduction, challenging tired notions of what it means to have an addiction. And we've never stopped pushing the ball forward when it comes to local and statewide opportunities to establish sustainable funding for affordable housing.

Of course, homelessness is where Street Roots began, and we continue to be the marquee publication on this issue with more authentic voices and depth of experience than any other newspaper in Portland. But we're always working to look at a broader spectrum.

Street Roots's commentary section features some of the city's most pressing issues, including mental health perspectives, police oversight, cyclist concerns and local government policies. As part of the International Network of Street Papers, we're able to tap into a world of news and features, from the streets on up.

And of course we always stay true to our roots, with great poetry and essays from the streets. Because Street Roots is also where we celebrate the creative work of our vendors. It's also where we celebrate their milestones toward housing, employment and success. That's why you see pictures of vendors holding keys to their new apartment, engaging with programs and being active in the community.

We're proud to be members of the Society of Professional Journalists and recipients of the local chapter's top honors for our reporting on social issues and the environment.

None of this happens without you, our readers, who have helped make Street Roots such a cornerstone of this

James Zukel
Managing Editor

