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the country to establish local consultation policies, establishing a direct, government-to-government relationship with local tribes.

In October, Grand Ronde Chairman Reyn Leno explained to Portland City Council that their relation with Portland is "not just with the city, but to the ground."

"You can pour a lot of concrete, pour a lot of blacktop and lay down a lot of gravel, but it does not change for us that when we come here we are walking in the footsteps of our ancestors. That is really important to us, so to have you acknowledge that by naming this day is very great."

The indigenous peoples who originally lived in Portland include the Multnomah, Clackamas, Cathlamet and several Chinook bands. These tribes were forcibly removed to the Grand Ronde Reservation in 1854, and now make up the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde. In the winter of 1856, native peoples were gathered near present-day Medford and forced to march continuously over 263 miles to the new Grand Ronde reservation under the force of U.S. military officers – an event known as the Grand Ronde Trail of Tears.

In 1953, more than 60 Oregon tribes were terminated in Oregon, sending thousands of people to places such as Portland with little more than a one-way bus ticket. The goal of this "termination" policy was to force the assimilation of tribal members and eliminate their tribal identity – a goal described by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz as a form of genocide. More tribes were terminated in Oregon than any other state in the union. After termination, the Grand Ronde tribe only re-gained its tribal status from the federal government in 1983.

The title for this article was inspired by Professor Judy Bluehorse Skelton, a senior instructor at Portland State University in the Indigenous Nations Studies Department. Bluehorse Skelton advocates for the creation of an inter-tribal food gathering park in the Cully neighborhood, and has used the phrase "recovery from discovery" to describe the re-connection of native peoples with the native plants of the region.

A letter of thanks for the Street Roots family



Kate Cox is the former development director for Street Roots.

BY KATE COX
CONTRIBUTING COLUMNIST

I've learned a lot about generosity over the past year. And, I guess you could say, I've learned it the hard way.

At 45, at the end of a five-year investment in graduate school, I was diagnosed with aggressive breast cancer. Instead of heading into my new career as a speech therapist, I jumped into a year of disabling cancer treatment. And, instead of paying down student loans, my family braced itself for a whole new financial burden – expensive insurance premiums and thousands of dollars of out-of-pocket medical expenses – all while I was sick, scared and unemployed.

That's when I started to learn about generosity.

My friends put the word out. They organized fundraisers. They started a meal train and took turns taking care of me when I couldn't take care of myself. In every respect, I relied on my community to survive, which was both incredibly uncomfortable and deeply touching.

Before graduate school, I had worked in the nonprofit sector, including four years with Street Roots. I understood firsthand the importance of giving. The health of the organization, the vendors and the community as a whole relied on the generosity of others. I could happily pitch a new program or an expansion of services. But receiving for oneself isn't so easy. And while I felt genuinely grateful for every check that arrived in our mailbox, I also felt the vulnerability of saying, "Yes, I will accept your help."

So, when Israel showed up at my door with two plain white envelopes, I knew I was going to cry. And I knew I couldn't open them in front of him. We talked. We hugged. And after he left, I sat alone in the living room of our Southeast Portland home. I opened the first envelope. It was filled with cards from the Street Roots staff and board, including some far-too-generous checks from people earning very modest salaries. I felt the increasingly familiar sense of gratitude

and unease. I was so humbled by these gifts.

Then I opened the second envelope.

I pulled out a giant handful of one-dollar bills and a huge card covered with heartfelt wishes from Street Roots' vendors. I was stunned. Some were from old, familiar faces – vendors who had been selling the paper for a long time and remembered me from my days in the Street Roots office. Some were from people I'd never met. People who wrote, "Stay strong!" and "You're in my prayers."

That was when I really learned about generosity.

Here I was, sitting in a bungalow in Southeast Portland, holding a handful of one-dollar bills from people who know what it means to struggle. People who are willing to share what they have with a total stranger, just because that stranger is sick and is part of the Street Roots family.

Yeah, that's when I started crying.

We are living in a tenuous time. Unprecedented rent increases have thrust too many Portland residents into housing instability. Wages don't cover the cost of student debt. And many of us are one health crisis away from homelessness.

Yet, we are also part of something much bigger. We are a community that truly cares about the welfare of our Portland family. We know how to pull together, to stand up for each other, and to share what we have with those who need it.

I have always loved street newspapers and the important role they play in creating real opportunities for people facing poverty and homelessness. But I now I get it in a very personal way. It takes a lot of strength to rely on our communities for survival. Sometimes the most we can hope for is to do it with a little bit of dignity. And if we're lucky, we get to give back. And we get to be a part of something bigger than ourselves.

That's what it means to be part of Street Roots. "So, thank you, Street Roots. Thank you for being generous with me when I needed a hand. But really, thanks for being there for all of us."



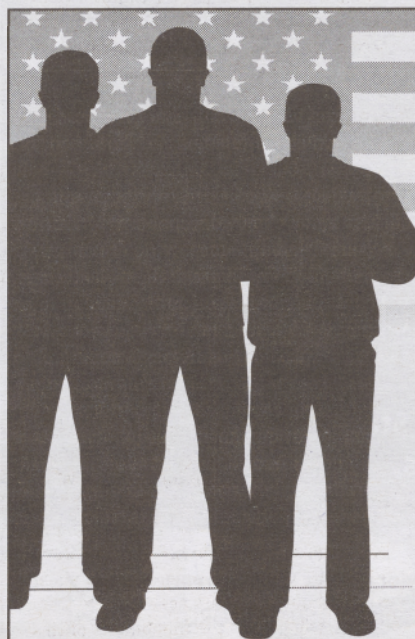
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