
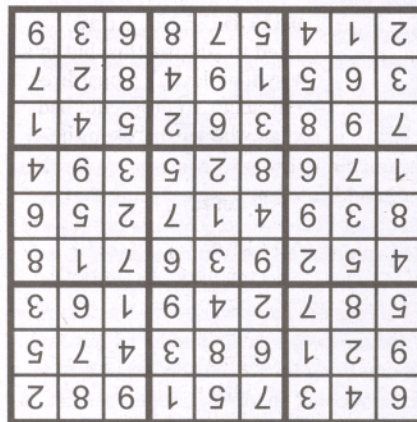
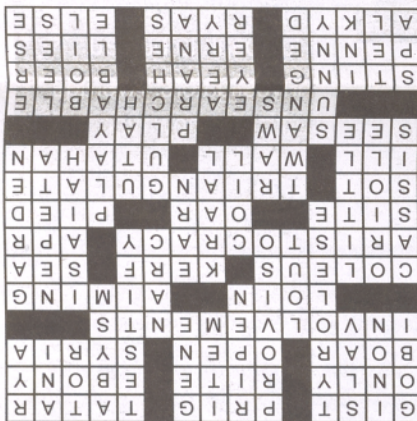


# Out of Luck?

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Answers to puzzles on page 15



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## VENDOR PROFILE Sophia Xavier

BY LEONORA KO  
STAFF WRITER

Sophia Xavier is learning to be responsible again. She was born in Yale, Mich., and learned about responsibility by mowing lawns for neighbors.

"I started cutting grass when I was about 13 years old," Sophia said. "My mom realized whenever something went wrong (with the mower), I put it in the repair shop. I paid for the repairs, and I was being responsible. And my ma was like, 'Son, you've got a talent. You've got responsibility.' We had two acres of property that I was tired of push-mowing, and when I surprised my mom with a new riding mower, she was really shocked."

"When I turned 18, I joined the Marine Corps," she said. "I was wounded after being ejected from a Hummer. So I pretty much, I came home in a wheelchair."

She suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder and has been homeless for more than 10 years. She came to Portland in 2011.

Outside In, a Portland organization that aids homeless youths and other marginalized people, helps Sophia with medications, acupuncture for pain and other life issues.

"People don't know that I'm

transgender," Sophia said. "I look more like a guy, and I tell them, 'It doesn't happen overnight. It takes time.' My name's not legally changed, but through Outside In, it will be. And they're helping me with the removal of my tattoos. I don't want my body to be scarred by tattoos.

"I'm also going to see if they have counselors where I can talk to them for my anger

management," she said. "I don't want to be an angry soul at all times." In the meantime, Sophia has strategies to deal with her feelings.

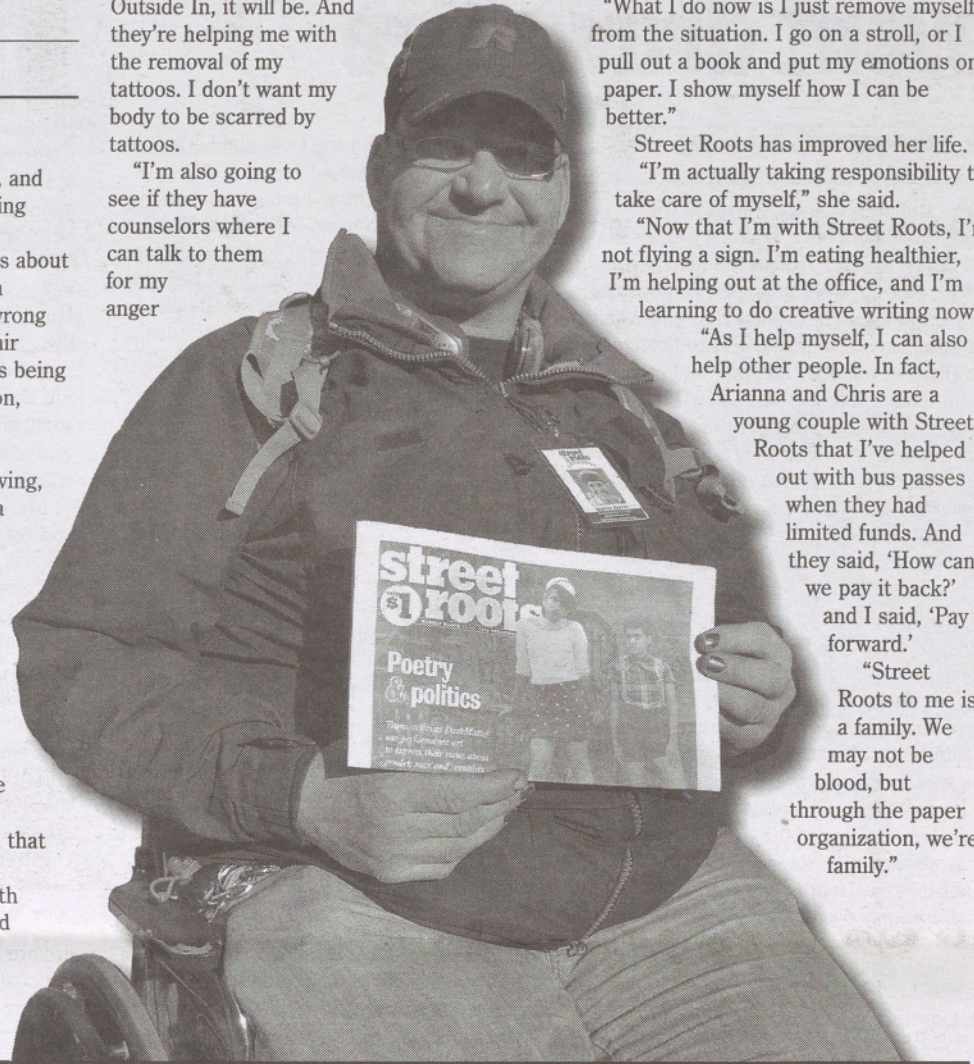
"What I do now is I just remove myself from the situation. I go on a stroll, or I pull out a book and put my emotions on paper. I show myself how I can be better."

Street Roots has improved her life. "I'm actually taking responsibility to take care of myself," she said.


"Now that I'm with Street Roots, I'm not flying a sign. I'm eating healthier, I'm helping out at the office, and I'm learning to do creative writing now.

"As I help myself, I can also help other people. In fact, Arianna and Chris are a young couple with Street Roots that I've helped out with bus passes when they had limited funds. And they said, 'How can we pay it back?' and I said, 'Pay it forward.'"

"Street Roots to me is a family. We may not be blood, but through the paper organization, we're family."



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"Nothing happens until  
something moves." - Albert Einstein

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