

Together, great things are always possible

Nearly 18 months ago, Street Roots set out to go from a biweekly to a weekly publication schedule. No easy task.

The goal of going to a weekly publication schedule was twofold: One was to give vendors selling the newspaper a stable income to support their quality of life every week. The second goal was to maintain a quality newspaper that gives readers a way to educate themselves and engage in social justice issues in our community.

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.

Eighteen months later we're still hard at it, and the weekly publication has been wildly successful. Saying that, we need your help, but not for the reasons you might expect.

We need your help not because we have fallen behind or that we're not able to maintain a rigorous weekly schedule. It's because we've far exceeded many of our three-year goals in just half the time. More vendors are selling the newspaper than ever before.

"Street Roots means that I can sell the paper and get off the streets," says Michael Ssali. "The people that I sell it to can also read something new, and connect with us who sell the paper."

With readers' overwhelming support, newspaper sales continue to increase and we're providing immediate income for more than 150 individuals, giving people the opportunity to improve their quality of life and help them get off the streets.

"I can focus on the future and see the possibilities Street Roots can bring into my life, not only financially but just contact with the part of society that I find myself in," says Johnny Harkrider.

Johnny is right. Street Roots is all about community.

Being able to sell the newspaper throughout Portland gives people the opportunity to gain self confidence and ultimately change the course of their lives. We all want to feel like we belong to something bigger than ourselves. It's one of the reasons we launched a new biannual publication of poetry, artwork and prose by people experiencing homelessness. The latest publication, "Sleeping Rough" is on the streets now and is helping vendors gain additional income, while highlighting important perspectives by those effected by homelessness and poverty.

The relationships between vendors selling the newspaper, local businesses and you, the reader, allows us all collectively be a part of something special. Building relationships through the sales of the

newspaper helps breakdown many of the stereotypes peddled in the media about people experiencing homelessness and poverty. At the end of the day, we are all human and it is that human connectivity that will help us do great things in our community.

Street Roots advocacy has never been stronger. We've thrown much of our capacity into working to support the Welcome Home Coalition to deliver ongoing resources for housing and homelessness, including pushing for a November ballot measure to support affordable housing, working to support a short-term rental tax (Airbnb) to go to a local housing trust fund and pushing the city to prioritize housing and homeless services and policies in our community.

The newspaper itself is all about delivering quality independent, investigative journalism and social commentary on issues that matter. Street Roots doesn't just report the news – it tells the story of human beings affected by the policies and environments that surround them. We tackle hard subject matters about the plight of immigrants, the drug war, health care, housing and homelessness, to name a few.

"Street Roots is a guiding light for our city," says Sybil Hebb, an attorney with the Oregon Law Center. "Through Street Roots, vendors find love, community and self-worth. The weekly paper is some of the best journalism on the most compelling topics impacting our city. Street Roots reminds us of the best Portland can be, and reminds us to expect the loving best from one another."

True that.

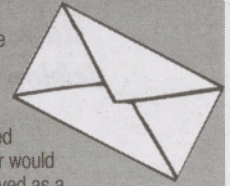
We believe in the power of love and forgiveness over hate or resentment. Sound cheesy? Possibly it does, but I can honestly say there is nothing more powerful than love when faced with raw trauma and poverty. We see the unimaginable horrors and affects of poverty every day at Street Roots. It's that love that carries us through.

We believe that we need one another, as individuals and as a community. We understand at a very deep level that it's impossible to overcome the insurmountable problems we face, such as our housing crisis and climate change, without working together. And it's this very reason that we need your help this spring and I humbly ask you for your support.

If you give \$50 or more to Street Roots in the month of May – including giving a small monthly recurring donation and get a "Housing is a human right" T-shirt. You can give a donation at streetroots.org or see the back page of the newspaper. Your support matters! Together, we are stronger. Love!

Write in

If you would like to have something that you've written published in our pages, or would like to get involved as a member of our reporting staff, contact Managing Editor Joanne Zuhl at 503-228-5657, joanne@streetroots.org. We ask that all submissions include the author's name and contact information, if available.



Street Roots

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Interested in advertising in Street Roots?
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If you are interested in volunteering with Street Roots, please submit a volunteer application at streetroots.org/volunteer. Or call our volunteer coordinator for more information at 503-228-5657.

