

Summer is here, and filled with possibilities

Summer is a time of simple pleasures, and Portland is loaded with them. On the street, summer presents a new set of challenges for our vendors. But it also comes with new opportunities.

Experienced vendors are familiar with the cycle. Summertime means regular customers go on vacation, replaced by tourists who

know little about Street Roots or what the vendor is doing day-in, day-out, outside their favorite store. Sales can

be a challenge for some, a boon for others.

There's also a lot happening on our streets these days. Petitioners and salesmen, and the summer wave of young adults who travel through each year. It's hot out there, too. Street Roots keeps water on hand at the office and encourages all vendors to stay hydrated and screened. But there will be sun out for the next four months now, and it's only getting hotter.

Of course, summer is also filled with new possibilities.

We're working with summer events such as Sunday Parkways to bring vendors more sales opportunities and reach people who might not normally have access to a vendor.

We're also connecting with houses of faith to have vendors available on days of service.

Summer means schools are out, and kids are out as well. Children may be meeting a vendor for the first time. For us, it's an important meeting between generations, over an issue so important to both of their lives.

Summer is a time when some vendors secure seasonal work and move onward and upward. It's a time when new people come through our door looking for work because all other doors have closed. You might be seeing a few new faces out there in the coming weeks.

In the bigger picture, Street Roots is looking forward to a summer of real solution-based dialogue around the issues facing Portlanders in poverty and homelessness. The momentum has been building, and this year we now have a convergence of funding options, political will and business and community partnerships to move the ball forward.

There are a lot of different directions this momentum can go, and it's great to be talking about what we can do today – and what we can accomplish for a better tomorrow. Our time is always better spent exploring a new potential, rather than chasing our tails around the obstacles we have planted.

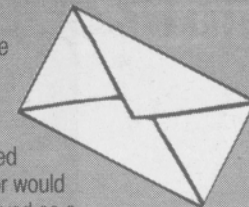
Summer is a time when we look forward, and be present. So do our vendors. Kenneth Snider looks forward to selling outside the Starbucks on MLK Jr. Boulevard and Weidler Street. He knows customers rely on him being there every morning.

"I'm part of their morning routine," he says with a smile. "They get their coffee and buy a paper."

Simple pleasures, indeed.

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.



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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.



STREET ROOTS PHOTO

From left to right, vendors Daniel Cox, Raymond Thornton, Cynthia Grubb, Allen Bennett and Mark Soine pause for a quick shot before heading out to their sales locations.