



## Affordable homes campaign unites community

Imagine for a moment, just a moment, sleeping outside tonight with only a blanket between your body and the cold, hard and wet concrete. Now imagine sleeping outside with your child or with your grandmother.

Friends, it's pure hell.

The Yes for Affordable Homes campaign is asking Portland homeowners to pay for no more than the price of two cups of coffee a month, \$6.25 a month, to build affordable housing for 3,000 seniors and families living on our streets.

Who among us would even remotely argue that being able to house one family, much less hundreds of families, for the price of two cups of

coffee a month is the wrong direction to go?

Believe it or not, there are some people in our community that would stoop so low as to argue against a measure that would allow the city to build affordable housing that will serve up to 60,000 people over the next 80 to 100 years. We can't stand for that. It's nothing less than heartless and cruel.

At Street Roots, we watch people who literally have nothing, homeless and alone, come together every single day to support one another.

Part of the beauty of the Yes for Affordable Homes campaign is it's changing the way campaigns are done. Dozens of house parties, phone banks and canvasses are being activated in the community led by local nonprofits and activists.

This grassroots effort is being driven not by your typical political party machine on the ground, but instead by first-time volunteers to a political campaign. These efforts are resulting in hundreds of people new to the political process in Portland this November.

It's extraordinary to see people experiencing homelessness and poverty being engaged, activated and motivated to get involved in democracy, led by groups like Street Roots.

"When so many groups come together from the homeless and housing community to talk about this campaign — they are bringing live stories from the front lines about the housing crisis," said Jes Larson with the Welcome Home Coalition, which is made up of more than 140 organizations. "They are delivering their own stories directly to the voters."

That's not all. People of color all over the city are organizing and engaging the larger community. For example, the Yes for Affordable Housing campaign has worked hard to deliver multi-language outreach to the broader community with groups like the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO), Living Cully, the Asian-Pacific American Network of Oregon and the Coalition of Communities of Color and more.

The hope is people who traditionally haven't been engaged in a political campaign or voted in the past will be turning out for the November ballot.

The reality is renters in Portland are getting bombarded with rent increases, literally.

In 2015, average rents in Portland increased \$128 dollars each month in Portland. That's insane.

The housing crisis and the lack of affordable housing units in Portland affects all of us, regardless of our circumstances. It's one of the many reasons you should cast a yes vote for the Yes for Affordable Homes ballot measure.

Saying that, regardless of how you vote: Vote! Don't listen to those pesky cynics that sit on the sidelines telling you your vote doesn't matter. It does. So join the revolution and vote for your favorite candidates and ballot measures today. The future of our city is depending on it.



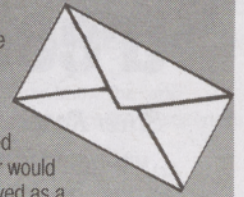
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By Israel Bayer

Israel Bayer is the executive director of Street Roots. You can reach him at [israel@streetroots.org](mailto:israel@streetroots.org) or follow him on Twitter @israelbayer.

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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](mailto:joanne@streetroots.org). We ask that all submissions include the author's name and contact information, if available.



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