

Reflecting on 2016, with hope for the year ahead

For many of us, both individually and collectively, 2016 has been a year to forget. Ironically, for Street Roots, it's been a banner year.

This year, Street Roots won several awards from the Society of Professional Journalists for our reporting on the environment and crime and justice issues, and our commentaries on homelessness and housing. We helped play a leading role in passing the Yes for Affordable Homes ballot measure that will give thousands of Portlanders a safe place to

call home. We helped provide stable housing for dozens of vendors through our partnerships in the community, and we

helped hundreds more prevent homelessness through the sale of the newspaper.

Street Roots' work intersects many worlds, including media, nonprofits, politics, poverty and social justice. Our reporting is not just about the complexities of homelessness and poverty, but extends into the wider network of the environment, immigrant and refugees and the criminal justice system.

Street Roots bridges these worlds in a way that fulfills our mission: To provide income opportunities for people experiencing homelessness and to produce the best newspaper possible that are catalysts for individual and social change.

The relationship with readers, businesses and vendors selling the newspaper help change the face of homelessness in our community. In a city that continues to be economically divided, Street Roots is a forum to have both safe and challenging conversations about the problems and solutions we collectively face in our city.

In 2017, Street Roots will work to expand turf locations for vendors throughout the Portland metropolitan region. The city continues to change rapidly, and it remains our top priority to offer people experiencing homelessness the best location to maintain an income.

On the advocacy front, Street Roots will continue to support the Welcome Home Coalition, a coalition with a goal of creating more affordable housing in our community. We will be a watchdog for the incoming mayor on homeless and housing policies, work to shape conversations as they relate to people on the streets, and maintain our support for the Oregon Housing Alliance's work in Salem. Street Roots has a track record of maintaining and driving advocacy efforts that show results. We will continue to do so.

With all the noise about fake news, Street Roots is rededicating itself to providing quality journalism

on issues important to Portland – from local matters to global concerns – focusing on environment, housing, immigration and freedom of the press. Our coverage is intended to give readers insight not only into the facts about an issue, but also empowerment on their role in reaching solutions.

We are building on a solid record. Our series on the treatment of immigrant workers in our forests prompted lawmakers in Salem to review state standards for forestry contractors. Our coverage on how Measure 11 charges are applied locally revealed the social impact of racial disparities and coercive practices, along with the regressive impact of court-ordered economic sanctions on the poor. And our paper is leading the way on presenting the voices of the Native American communities, which have been at the forefront of environmental battles we all have a stake in. We also celebrate our diversity with our Planet Portland series, which dives into the life journeys that have led people to the City of Roses.

We will continue to be a platform for the issues affecting our communities of color, immigrants, LGBTQ – and all of us marginalized by economic and social disparity. There are so many stories, both unconventional and beautiful, that need to be shared.

Street Roots vendors will always remain a cornerstone of our paper. Vendors share their lives through the regular profiles, but also through their poetry and writings, which are featured in the paper and in limited-edition zines. It is some of the most powerful writing you may read all year.

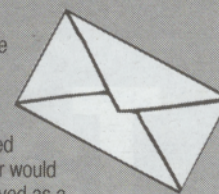
Indeed, 2016 was a year rife with division on a national scale, and there's little hope of it receding any time soon. So let's work together to make 2017 a year of cooperation and progress. That doesn't mean we will always agree. In fact, we hope we don't. The best ideas are borne from challenging our preconceived notions and expectations, and from considering all sides of an issue.

We head into 2017 with new leadership in our city and beyond, and change is inevitable. But what we hope won't change will be the civic and social engagement that pulses in this city – and its continued expansion. We trust the leadership of the city will continue to push reforms within our institutions and foster greater involvement with the next generation of Portlanders. And we hope our vendors and our mission will have your continued support as we move forward.

United we will stand.

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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Interested in advertising in Street Roots?
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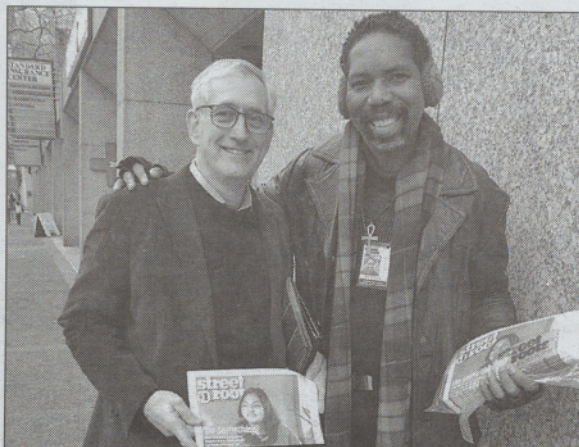
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Left to right: Street Roots vendors Paulette Bade, Michelle H., Mayor Charlie Hales on turf with vendor Marlon Crump.



STREET ROOTS PHOTOS