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VENDOR PROFILE
Tanetta

BY BIANCA BUTLER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

When Tanetta moved to Portland in November, it didn't take her long to spot someone selling Street Roots. As she tells it, "I stood there, and I watched him, and I'm going, 'I can do this!'" By the time she had been in town for three weeks, Tanetta had attended an orientation and started selling papers, part of her effort to save money for when her husband would arrive.

Tanetta met her husband four years ago and fell in love after a three-day trip turned into a six-week visit. Tanetta left only to pack up the rest of her belongings in Wyoming. When they decided to get married, she said, she had "finally found someone that loved me and respected me and got to know me first. We're still getting to know each other; every day we're discovering new things."

One discovery they made together last summer was the Pacific Northwest. They had spent a week visiting Washington and Oregon for Tanetta's son's wedding and found that her husband's health, which has been troubled by the effects of asthma and lung disease, improved significantly during their trip. The couple decided to move to Portland for its milder climate and better Veterans Affairs hospital (her husband served in the Navy for almost 17 years). After a loss in her family, Tanetta found herself back in Oregon before her husband.

Tanetta's own health complications have kept her from finding a traditional job. When she was younger, she pursued dirt-track racing as a means of

escaping reality – or, as she describes it, "Have you ever seen 'The Fast and the Furious?' (I just) kept it to a track." Tanetta's racing career ended abruptly after a serious crash, and lingering migraines and muscle spasms keep her from working the longer shifts that a regular job demands. It's clear that a challenge won't scare Tanetta off, though. In the past month, she's started making and selling incense and fragrance oils. She also plans to work again this summer with an old boss to clear out unclaimed storage units and sell items at flea markets and on eBay.

In the

meantime, she continues to sell Street Roots, which she calls "a lifeline for me. It's a way to escape the kids and the chaos. It makes me feel normal to be able to have money coming in."

It gives customers the chance to get to know her and support her, as well, such as the generous woman whose husband also has to use oxygen right now, and the new mother who recently brought her twins for Tanetta to see.

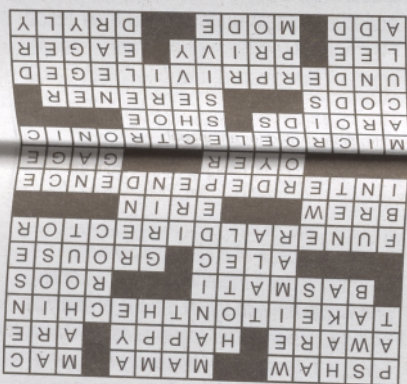
Tanetta appreciates their conversations and the relationships she's been able to build, but it's not always easy to stand on the corner and sell papers.

"The main thing I want people to understand is, we're not looking for a handout; we're looking for a hand up," she said. "And we're not going to be in this situation for long."

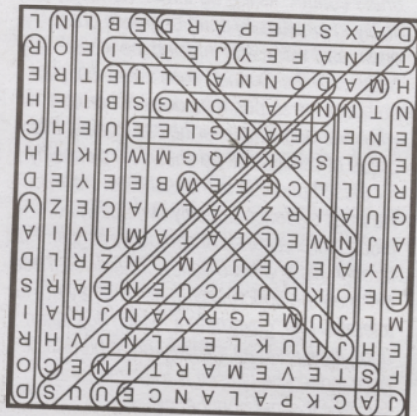
At the end of the day, the most important and comforting things to Tanetta are the people she's working to support: "I give my husband a big hug and kiss, and love on the kids and the dog, then I'm good again. I'm happy to be alive."



Answers to Page 15 Puzzles



1	9	6	7	3	2	4	5	8
5	7	4	9	6	8	1	2	3
3	8	2	4	5	1	9	6	7
9	3	8	5	2	4	6	7	1
6	4	1	3	8	7	2	9	5
2	5	7	1	9	6	3	8	4
7	2	3	8	1	9	5	4	6
8	6	5	2	4	3	7	1	9
4	1	9	6	7	5	8	3	2



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