

Kaia Sand named Street Roots' executive director

BY STREET ROOTS STAFF

Street Roots is pleased to announce that, after a national search, Kaia Sand has been hired to serve as executive director, effective Dec. 6.

Sand has worked with people experiencing homelessness and poverty both as an employee and a volunteer, applying her artistry and community organizing skills to various projects, including the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center's public poetry project in partnership with Street Roots, Sisters of the Road and Transition Projects.

Sand co-founded the Right 2 Survive Ambassador Program with Lisa Fay to create opportunities for the larger community to learn from the expertise of people on the streets. They hosted the Light the Hearth arts festival last May in the Pearl District, where Street Roots Vendor Poets performed, as well as peer youth artists.

Sand began her work with people on the streets in Portland two decades ago as a volunteer in street outreach for Yellow Brick Road.

The author of three books of poetry and the co-author of "Landscapes of Dissent," she has taught at Portland State University, Pacific University, Willamette University and St. Mary's College of Maryland. She has performed and taught internationally, including in England, Ireland and Brazil, where she created art with Rio de Janeiro street vendor Marcia Rodrigues Braga.

Sand is highly qualified to serve as Street



Kaia Sand

Roots executive director and to lead the organization in its next chapter.

Sand said one of the vendors who participated in the final round of interviews, "She seems like she's been tailor-made for this position."

"Kaia is a deep and curious listener, a skilled storyteller and a strong advocate who has a history of using her voice to strengthen the voices of others," said Brad Taylor, Board Chair with Street Roots. "We enthusiastically welcome her leadership and her sense of purpose to Street Roots, and we look forward to her enriching and inspiring our

community of vendors, staff and donors."

"I'm proud to build from Israel Bayer's extraordinary leadership of Street Roots," said Sand. "There's much we can do together to creatively address homelessness

and poverty, with Street Roots' vendors playing an important role."

Outgoing Executive Director Israel Bayer said, "I believe Kaia will be both a friend to the poor and a strong advocate, while helping lead Street Roots into the next era. It's an exciting time in the street newspaper movement both in Portland and beyond. I couldn't be more thrilled to pass the torch to Kaia."

Bayer's last date with Street Roots will be in mid-December.

Street Roots was established in 1999 with five vendors and a handful of volunteers. At that time, Street Roots was a monthly newspaper with a press run of 2,000 papers. Today, Street Roots is an award-winning weekly street newspaper with a readership of 20,000 readers online and in print. The organization serves more than 160 vendors experiencing homelessness and poverty who sell the newspaper at more than 70 locations throughout the Portland region.

Street Roots is a member of the Society of Professional Journalists and a founding member of the Welcome Home Coalition, a coalition working to secure revenue for affordable housing and homeless services in the Portland region. Street Roots is also a member of the International Network of Street Papers, a global movement working to empower people experiencing homelessness.

"Kaia brings to Street Roots a new energy and outlook on what is possible for our organization," said Joanne Zuhl, Street Roots' executive editor. "While readers can expect the same great journalism in our newspaper, we are excited to welcome the new perspectives that Kaia will bring to our advocacy and Street Roots' vital role in the community."

The Smile

by Ron Sanford

I love the human race, warts and all.
Just laugh with those who laugh and
Mourn with those who mourn.
A smile means so much especially from
The one that you love.
My friends know how to smile without
Faking it. I wish everybody could be like
That, happy and free, no hang ups
No keeping up appearances, content and
Comfortable in their own skin. Real
People that I was destined to meet.
We will be friends forevermore.

"There's much we can do together to creatively address homelessness and poverty, with Street Roots' vendors playing an important role."

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