

The match is on to support Street Roots!

One-by-one last Sunday, a dozen Street Roots vendors approached the podium to recite their poetry at the Multnomah County Central Library, a packed house cheering them on.

They read love poems and poems for people they had lost, poems packed with ideas and poems bearing witness to the struggles of being homeless. Then they leaned forward in their chairs to talk with the audience about their writing. Several vendors began to speak

DIRECTOR'S DESK

By Kaia Sand



Kaia Sand is the executive director of Street Roots. You can reach her at kaia@streetroots.org. Follow her on Twitter @mkaiasand

passionately about the importance of Street Roots and how it connects them to the larger community – to all of you.

It was powerful to hear.

Every day our Old Town office is bustling as vendors stop in to buy the paper and share a cup of coffee, while the editorial team is conducting interviews and composing this high-quality newspaper.

But we all know that Street Roots reaches far beyond the confines of our office – to all over the city. At any given moment on any Portland corner, a vendor and customer are launching into a conversation, catching up, trading a joke, lending comfort or maybe simply smiling and nodding.

By supporting our vendors, you are Street Roots.

There is so much that is isolating about homelessness and poverty, and at Street Roots, we strive to connect all of us, housed and homeless. It matters to know each other.

We believe that if you come to know someone, you come to care about them. And that's what we need as we grapple with homelessness.

We need to care about each other in a big, big way.

For the month of May, we are launching our spring fund drive, and a generous donor has agreed to match your donations up to \$10,000. It is these individual donations that keep us strong – that make all we do possible.

Your support makes this newspaper possible. At a time when media is under attack from the highest office in the land, we produce a newspaper chock-full of quality journalism with a sharp eye for economic, environmental and

social justice issues. Our editorial team is nimble, attuned to news not being reported and challenging power imbalances.

This year with the support of Meyer Memorial Trust, we've launched a Rural Housing series, most recently reporting from Central Oregon. In the coming weeks, our senior staff reporter Emily Green will be reporting on the particular dynamics of the housing crisis along our central coast. And we'll be expanding our coverage of housing and homeless concerns throughout the state, issues that impact so many Oregonians.

Your support makes it possible for people to walk off the streets into our office, go through orientation and become a Street Roots vendor. After their first set of 10 free papers to get them started, Street Roots vendors purchase each newspaper for a quarter and sell it for a dollar. Each vendor is a micro-entrepreneur, sharing tips with other vendors and forming community.

Your support also makes the Rose City Resource booklet possible. This little book fits into the palm of thousands of hands across the city, connecting people to services they need. We gave out 210,000 copies of the Rose City Resource last year.

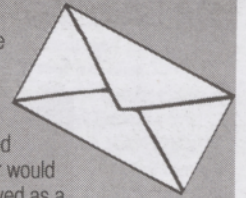
Your support makes our advocacy for systemic change possible. We stand strong for the dignity of people struggling with poverty, challenging the criminalization of their lives. We are committed to making sure that all people have quality housing in this city. Street Roots is a founding member of the Welcome Home Coalition, which is advocating for a strong Metro bond to fund affordable housing, and I will be writing about that in the coming weeks while Metro seeks public comment on its draft framework. I am very optimistic that we can step up in a big way as a region.

We are Street Roots because all of you across the city support us in many ways, including financially. Please give to us online (select the orange donate button at www.streetroots.org) or send a check to 211 NW Davis St., Portland, OR 97209. (And watch for a return envelope stapled into the May 18 edition of the paper.)

At Street Roots, we face the hard and beautiful truths of being alive together. Our newspaper keeps our eyes open. The vendor program keeps our hearts open. We are all in it together.

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 Executive 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.



Street Roots

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Interested in advertising in Street Roots? Email Andrew Hogan at andrew@streetroots.org

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Vendors gather after a public poetry reading at the Multnomah County Central Library.



STREET ROOTS PHOTO

