

Together we're strong – and getting stronger

As she flipped pancakes on the portable griddle she had transported on her bike, Katherine Deumling chatted with Street Roots vendors, calling them by name and remembering details of their lives.

A Street Roots supporter, Deumling is also the founder of Cook With What You Have, advocating that people create nourishing food in whatever conditions they face, rather than stall for perfect conditions. This spring, every other Tuesday, she has been bringing

that ethos to Street Roots because of the relationships she has formed with vendors all around the city.

"Once you know someone you care about them," Katherine said to me. And because she cares about Street Roots vendors, she wants to cook for them.

She began to talk with me about all the encounters she had just yesterday. One Street Roots vendor pulled up on a bike – thanks to a Street Roots partnership with Biketown – to say hello to her and her son. Another vendor was singing, as is his custom, as he sold Street Roots outside a bakery.

These were highlights of her day.

I hear from so many of you how much it matters to encounter Street Roots vendors. Just as Katherine did, you tell me stories. It is these relationships that make Street Roots so profound.

While each of you gives a vendor a hand-up when you buy a Street Roots, the impact is not just one way.

By talking with a Street Roots vendor, you come to know a person defined by more than homelessness and poverty. Street Roots vendors have so many interests – musical theater, karaoke, creative writing, Marvel comics and sports teams, to name only a few. We have vendors who are quick with the puns and corny jokes (my recent favorite came from a vendor named Doug who – after I called him a "donut connoisseur" – quipped that his dad used to playfully switch connoisseur to "common sewer.") We have vendors who chat about the latest national news, and vendors who are striving locally through political organizing to make conditions better for other

folks struggling with homelessness and poverty

There is no doubt that Street Roots vendors live varied and interesting lives. So much of who we are is played out all over the city through the relationships between vendors and supporters.

But it is also through getting to know people who are struggling with homelessness and poverty that those of us who are housed learn about struggles that are different than our own. We come to understand how chronic sleep deprivation makes everything else much more difficult; how people bang up against systemic barriers difficult to overcome; how layers of traumas weigh heavy.

We understand how it is difficult to maintain a job when there is no place to store one's belongings or shower. How catastrophic events often land people on the streets: The death of a family member. An accident. A health crisis.

Street Roots is about connection – about coming to care about each other through what we have in common, and through our differences – and finding strength in that connection.

With your support, we operate our vendor office every single day of the week, year round – because homelessness doesn't take the day off – supporting our Street Roots vendors and orienting new ones.

That connection extends even beyond your relationship with your vendor. With your support, our journalists can do social justice reporting in the best of traditions, launching the newspaper week after week. With your support, we print the Rose City Resource, making sure that people who are homeless and poor have access to them all over the metro region. And with your support, we continue our advocacy for systemic change, striving for a more equitable future.

For the month of May, we are running our spring appeal, and it has already been so successful, thanks to readers like you. We reached our initial goal of \$10,000, all matched by a generous donor. Thank you!

Let's keep it going!

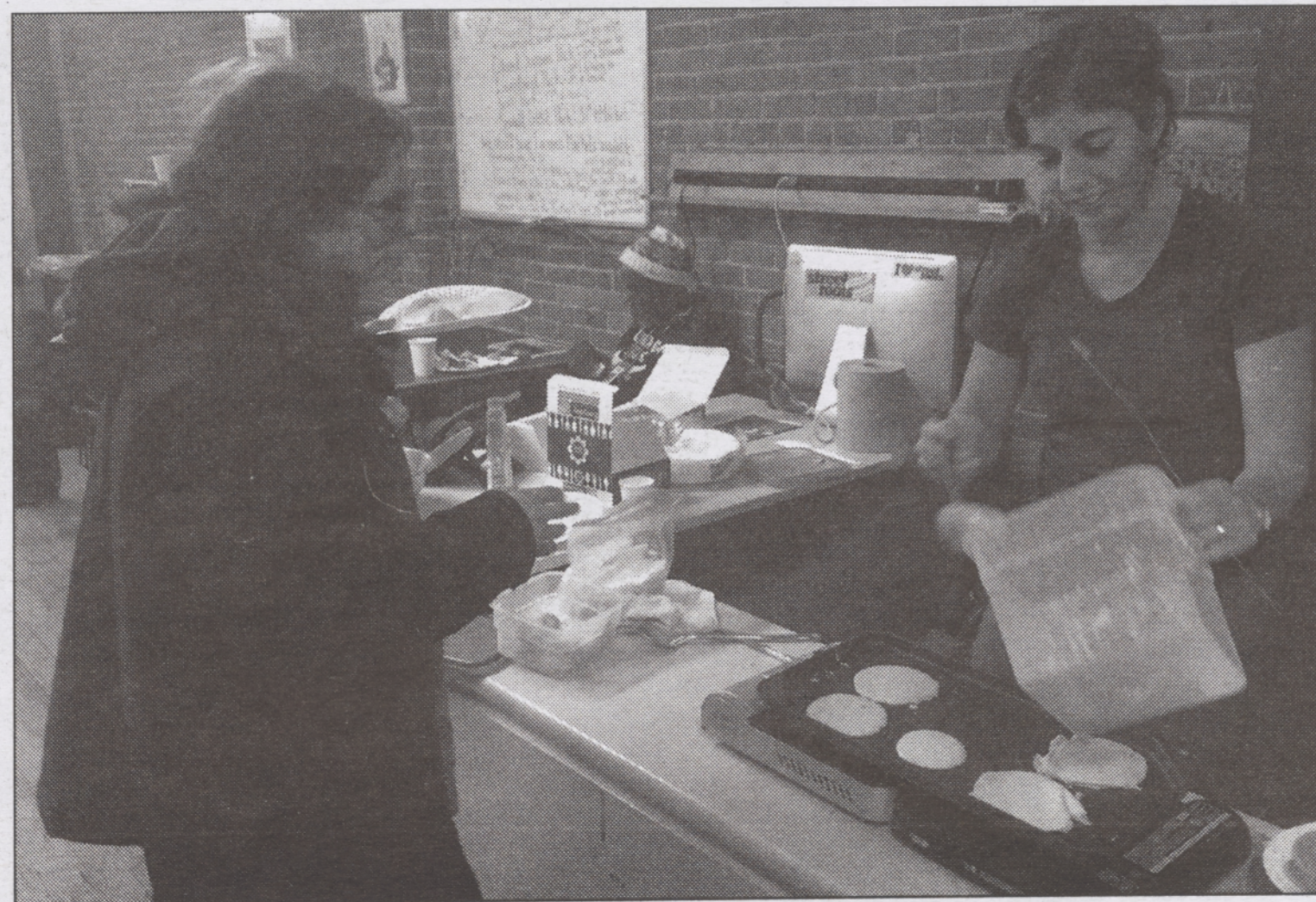
Please find the envelope stapled into this edition of the paper and help this spring appeal be wildly successful. Together, we are strong and getting stronger. Thank you for being a part of Street Roots.



DIRECTOR'S DESK

By Kaia Sand

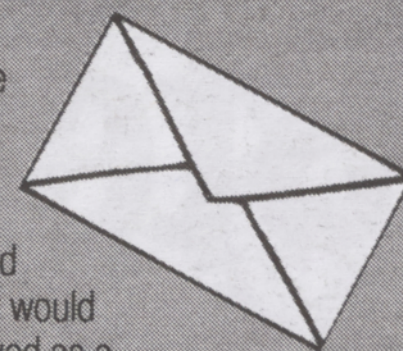
Kaia Sand is the executive director of Street Roots. You can reach her at kaia@streetroots.org. Follow her on Twitter @mkaiasand



Street Roots volunteer Katherine Deumling fixes pancakes for vendors in the Street Roots vendor office, May 15. Deumling comes every other Tuesday, hauling food and equipment on her bike, to fix a healthy meal for the crew.

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.



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

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