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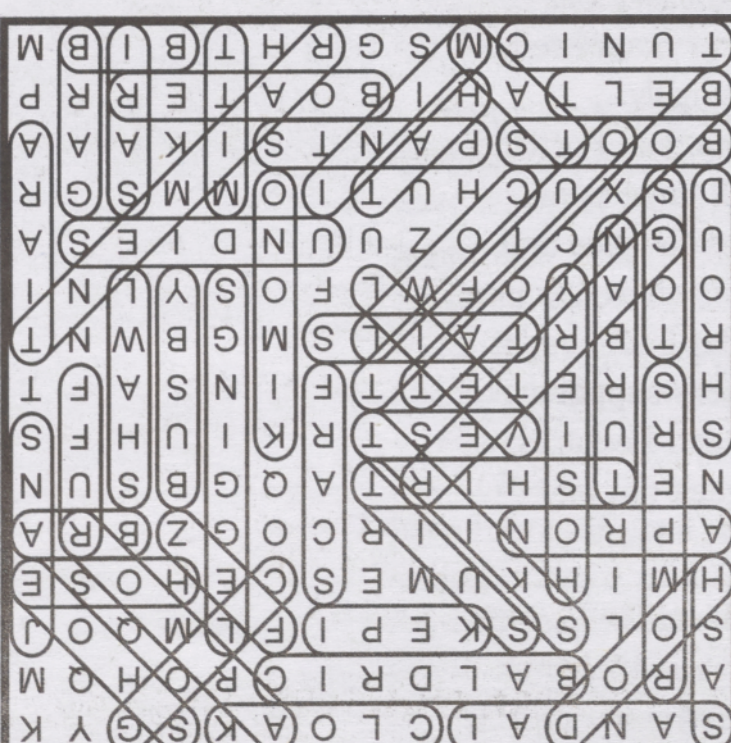
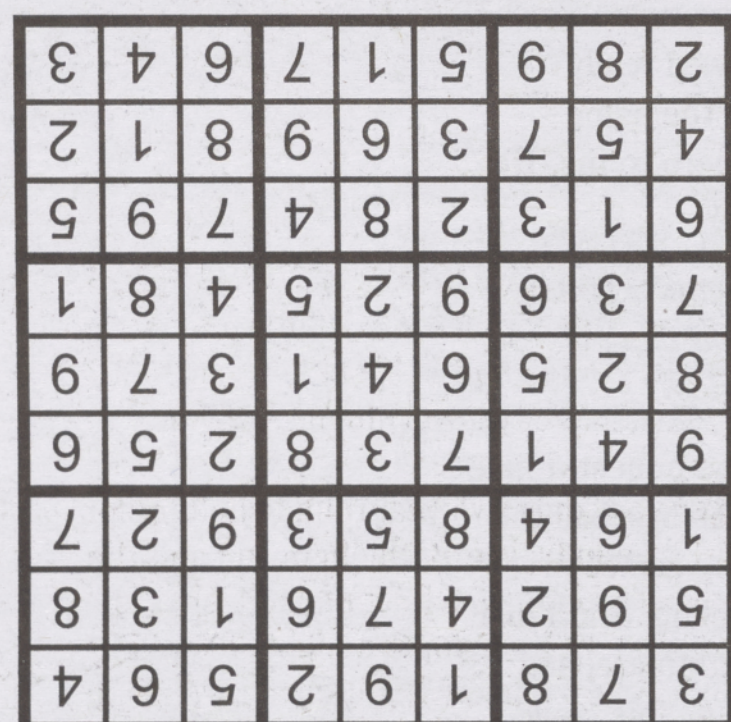
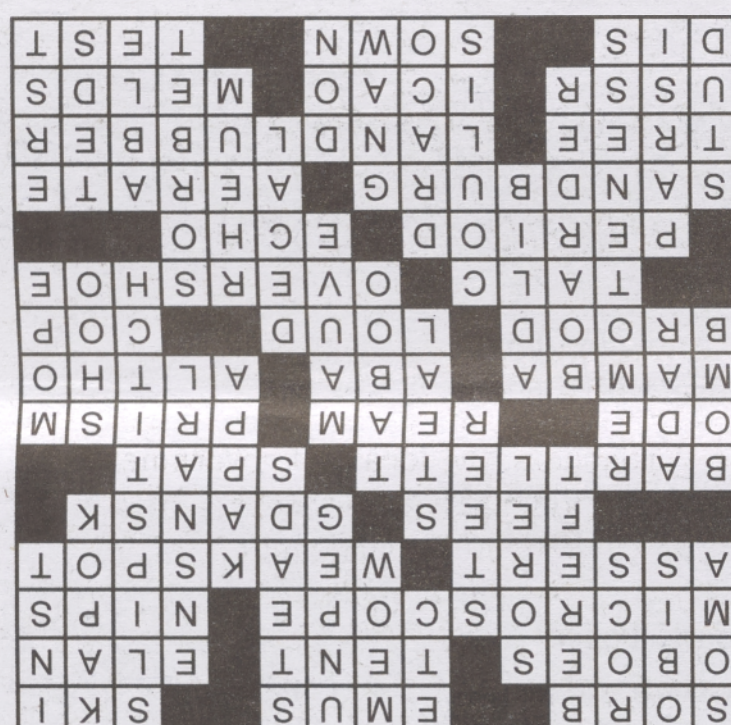
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Answers to Page 15 Puzzles



VENDOR PROFILE

Kenny Chow

LEONORA KO
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Whether it's at the workplace or in his community, Kenny Chow strives to make the world a better place.

"I like helping people," Kenny said, "It's embedded in me."

He said his service to others and skills as a salesman come from his family.

Kenny grew up in Seattle and Salem. In Seattle, his uncle taught Kenny and other kids about salesmanship and kept them busy and out of trouble.

"My uncle took kids out of the inner city and showed us how to sell candy," Kenny explained. "He showed us how to make money legally without having to go rob, sell drugs or do anything like that."

For his part, Kenny sold candy and candles into adulthood, always with an eye to help out. One holiday, he and his buddy donated some of their sales profits to a restaurant that served food to the homeless. He said he would also spend a couple of hours a week picking up trash "just trying to give back to the community."

Kenny planned on starting a nonprofit called Doing Our Part, which would give young people jobs, when he discovered Real Change, Street Roots' sister paper in Seattle. He found the organization was already doing good work and joined them.

Kenny excelled and was named Vendor of the Year at the paper in 2011.

To be closer to family and friends, he moved to Salem. Soon he was commuting from Salem to Portland and working three jobs. He sold newspapers with Street Roots, memberships through LA Fitness, and shoes at Nike retail stores.

Nike was a dream job for Kenny. "I really have a passion for the brand," he

said. "I get a joy out of helping people, talking about the product and finding the shoe that really works for them."

The dream job got even better when Kenny earned a full-time position at the Nike employee store in Beaverton: "You've got a lot of high, executive Nike people coming in ... You get to see the Blazers. I've seen Ken Griffey, I've seen Janet Jackson. I was in awe."

Things came to a crashing halt when his father fell seriously ill.

Kenny said his father had a rough start in life but turned it around. After serving time for bank robbery, his father started the "Black Progress Shopper" newspaper in Kansas City, Mo.

Kenny said his dad went on to form two additional newspapers and was recognized for his community service.

Kenny said he and his wife hoped his dad would get better and prepared a room for him in their home: "We were going to try to start a newspaper. I was telling him he needed to write a book," he said.

But his father passed away around the same time of the deaths of other close family members and friends. Kenny said the bereavement leave from Nike was generous, but the impact of all of the deaths was too much and he

needed a break from Nike.

Kenny explained: "When you sign up for a job, you say you're going to be there and you are part of the team. They're depending on you. You can't let your teammates down because it's more work for somebody else."

He decided to work full time with Street Roots, selling the newspaper at the Slabtown New Seasons Market in northwest Portland.

It became a healing time for Kenny. "People have been so kind, so it's just kind of humbling to see how much people care," he said.

"When my Dad passed, they gave me flowers, cards. (New Seasons staff) treated me like part of the team. I've just really been grateful for them and it's been a true blessing."

"In fact, I've been doing just a great job for them," Kenny added. "I get carts, I help people with groceries. I just kind of look out for people there because they're so nice. It's the friendliest store. It's the best store."

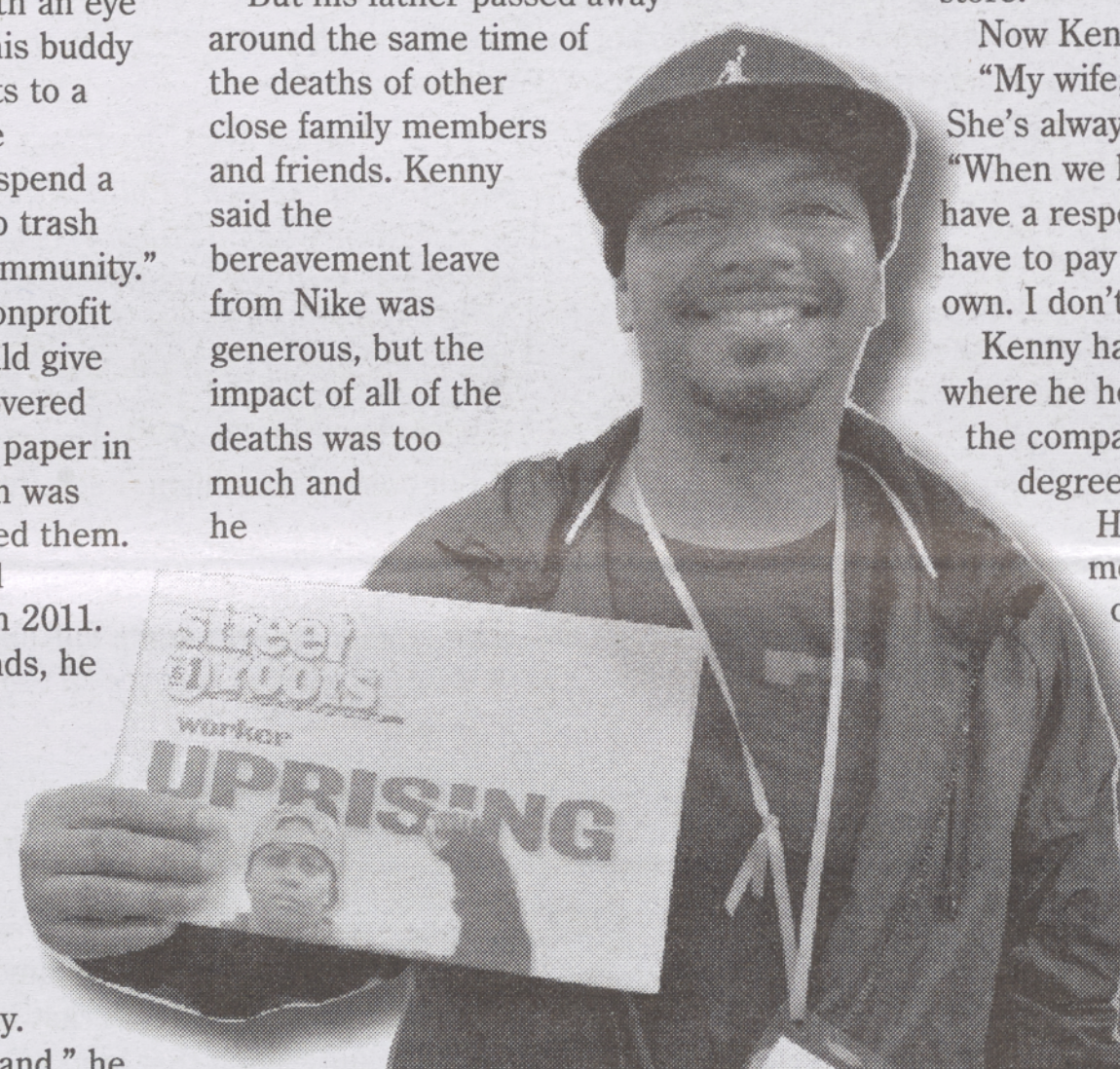
Now Kenny is ready to move on.

"My wife, she's just the love of my life. She's always been there for me," he said. "When we have tough times in life, we still have a responsibility, you know? We still have to pay the bills. She can't do it on her own. I don't want her to do it on her own."

Kenny has an interview with Nike, where he hopes to go as far as he can with the company, while finishing his college degree.

He admires the career path his mother took. She had personal obstacles of her own but went on to earn two college degrees and worked for the Chicago Housing Authority.

He said, "My ultimate endgame is to be a public servant. Try do what I can to make this place a better place. That's my whole thing."



Deb Debozy sells Street Roots at the Milwaukie Farmers Market every Sunday morning. Street Roots is proud to have relationships with nearly two dozen farmers markets across the region. Next time you're picking up your weekly produce don't forget to pick up a copy of Street Roots as well.

PHOTO BY COLE MERKEL

