

## A Perfect Day

by Mary Daniels

On a perfect spring day, in 1980 I am in Southampton College's little painting studio, atop a long, gently sloping hill, and I am working on a still life, but much more interested in the vase before me and how it changed colors in the shadows, than the flowers inside it, remaining ever bright.

I rest my eyes by gazing out the long windows at a panorama of the Atlantic Ocean shimmering in the distance and when I look down, I see my 8-year-old daughter at the top of the hill playing with other children in the sun and hear their distant laughter.

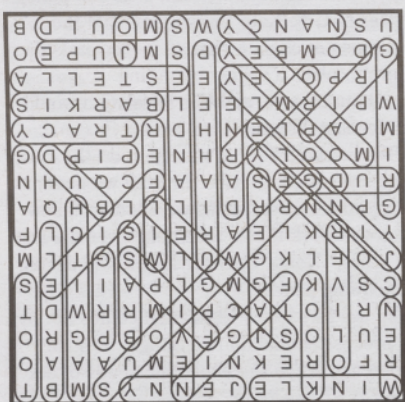
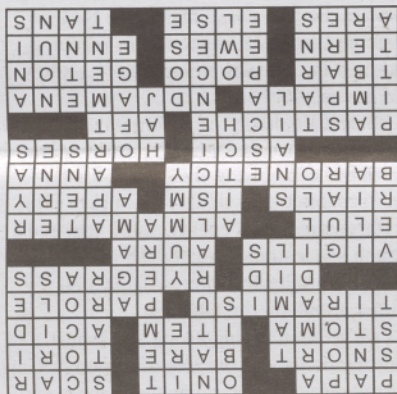


Left: Street Roots vendor Michael Lane's tired feet get a massage.

Below: Nursing instructor Kinara Fender speaks with vendor Eric Stayer as he enjoys foot care from a Concordia nursing student.

PHOTOS BY HELEN HILL

### Answers to Page 15 Puzzles



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

# Vendors, nurses help each other

*Concordia nursing students first came to Street Roots to understand the perspectives of people on the streets. Now they come to provide care.*

BY HELEN HILL  
STAFF WRITER

Concordia University's community health nursing instructor, Kinara Fender, was attending a free health fair with her nursing students last spring in downtown Portland when she struck up a conversation with Street Roots vendor Mark Rodriguez.

"I was so impressed with him. I kept thinking about him the rest of the day," she said. "He flew in the face of all the misconceptions I had of homelessness. He was confident, kind, well-spoken and intelligent."

Later that week, Fender bought a Street Roots paper from a vendor outside Trader Joe's. When she opened it up, there was a big picture of Mark on page 2.

"That settled it," she said. "I decided I needed to talk to him again."

So she called Street Roots and was able to connect with Mark. She told him she wanted her students to get involved with the vendors and be able to talk one-on-one with them, as she had been able to.

With the help of Vendor Program Director Cole Merkel, she organized a panel discussion with four Street Roots vendors: Kris Beck, Mark Rodrigues, Daniel Cox and Aileen McPherson. All her senior nursing students were in attendance for the discussion, along with another clinical group of 15 students.

The vendors each told a piece of their story, and then responded to questions such as "What have your interactions with health care professionals been like?" and "How can we be more compassionate?"

"It was amazing," Fender said. "Mark told about how he overheard a health care worker refer to him as 'a frequent flyer,' and how discouraging and stigmatizing that was.



One of my students is a scribe in the emergency room, and this was particularly helpful to him. He learned never to assume people can't hear you."

Fender said she thinks the Street Roots vendors present in the panel that day had an impact on her nursing students and helped further their understanding of possible hidden biases toward homeless people.

"My experiences with homeless people have led me to approach them with caution or even avoid them altogether," one of the nurses said after the panel discussion. "The biggest takeaway I had from this experience was to not judge a book by the cover. My stereotypes have been completely abolished by the Street Roots group."

Following the panel, Fender launched a plan to visit Street Roots with her students each new semester. Her students are in training for various specialties including intensive care, acute care, emergency room and public health.

Street Roots vendors had their first visit

from the Concordia nursing students in early August. Five students performed wellness checks, took blood pressure measurements and gave foot baths, massages and nail care to about a dozen vendors. They hope to visit on a monthly basis, offering consultations and treatments for symptoms of infection, abscesses and insect bites.

"It's about human touch," Fender said. "It's shocking to me to think how many people go for days and weeks without positive touch. There's a whole world out there of people facing unimaginable barriers. The more we hear their stories, the more we understand how to treat them holistically."

"This is great," vendor Michael Lane said while his feet soaked in a warm tub of soapy water. Mike sells newspapers at Starbucks on Southwest Fourth Avenue and Oak Street. "My feet have been wrecked. I walk so much. This feels amazing."