



Street Roots vendors stand with author Chris Hedges, third from right, who visited the office on Oct. 5.

Together, we will continue to fight for our future

Our Winter Fund Drive is on! Street Roots has become a leading media voice in our community and we have big plans for the future.

Our newspaper staff worked long hours leading up to the election to make sure our content helped voters make informed choices. Then, our 170 active

vendors hit the pavement around the city getting the newspaper to the public.

We heard from many of you that our elections coverage mattered when you filled out your ballot, and we take this responsibility seriously.

We covered Oregon ballot measures extensively, breaking

down myths and creating context, staking out our editorial positions with research and deliberation. We published questionnaires with city council and gubernatorial candidates – all except for Knute Buehler, the first major candidate to ignore our requests. And we showed readers how big out-of-state money played an outsized role in too many measures.

We celebrate that local voters came down time and time again on the side of justice. Voters supported the biggest regional housing bond in our history, building a foundation for up to 12,000 people to be housed in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties. Voters supported the Clean Energy Fund, an innovative and thoughtful approach led by communities of color to both fight climate change and create jobs. And voters resoundingly refused to criminalize our immigrant neighbors, supported reproductive choice and refused to allow out-of-state corporations dictate our values.

We need to fight for more deeply affordable housing around the state, greater renter protections so that people can be stably housed, and progressive responses to climate disruption. We look to Gov. Kate Brown to shepherd these state-wide concerns toward solutions.

This election is already distinguished by several remarkable firsts, including a record turnout in Oregon for a mid-term election – nearly 68 percent of those registered. This is a bright success cast against disenfranchisement efforts across the country, from North Dakota to Georgia, and the virulence of racism coursing through national campaigns.

Nationally, the gender scales have tipped toward greater equality with more than 100 women elected to Congress, including more women of color. Voters

elected to Congress the first two Native American women – Sharice Davids and Deb Haaland – and the first two Muslim women – Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar. And we are sending the youngest woman ever to Congress, also a woman of color, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

At Street Roots, we are energized. It's not the time to retreat into corners with our computers – at least not all the time! It's the time to fight for our future, housed and unhoused neighbors in solidarity!

Our newspaper is only ratcheting up our reporting, knowing that readers across the region turn to us. Expect great journalism from us and support us in getting it done.

What's particularly special about our model of journalism is that news and information still get exchanged in our public sphere – on the street corners, in front of your coffee shop, in the lobby of the Multnomah County building. Street Roots vendors – all either homeless or in extreme poverty – earn income by purchasing the paper for a quarter and selling it for a dollar. They stand, no matter the weather, at posts throughout the city to get the paper to you.

But there is so much more to the vendor program than paper sales. With your support, the vendor program has grown – along with the number of vendors – into a more complete initiative to help people stabilize their lives. Our office is busy seven days a week, from vendors picking up their ballots to signing up for health insurance. Vendors gather each Wednesday for creative writing, and a vendor editorial committee worked all fall to produce a creative writing and art zine. Watch for it in the coming weeks.

More people have transportation to sales posts, thanks to our partnerships with BikeTown, Trimet and Uber. This year we've engaged in a pilot program with Mercy Corps Northwest to help a few of vendors save money to qualify for a small grant to help them get into housing.

All of this connects Street Roots vendors to community – with each other and with all of you who buy the newspaper.

"Most of my customers, they've become friends," said vendor Paul West. "Just the way we talk with each other, the way we treat each other. We're equals out here."

You can help support our mission through the Willamette Week Give!Guide, mailing a check to Street Roots, 211 NW Davis St., Portland, Oregon 97209, or donating at www.streetroots.org/donate

DIRECTOR'S DESK

By Kaia Sand



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Submissions

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.

Advertising

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

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