

A year of many gains and emotional losses

Welcome to the Street Roots' 2018 annual report. I am honored to have completed my inaugural year as executive director of an organization valued by people across our region.

More than 700 people struggling with homelessness and poverty earned an income selling Street Roots this past year. We've welcomed several committed and talented new staff members while benefiting from the constancy and leadership of long-term staff and board members. We've worked with extraordinary freelance journalists and



Kaia Sand

photographers. Volunteers logged hundreds of hours. And people all over this city bought 10,000 copies of our newspaper each week, forging relationships with our vendors. Throughout our state and even farther, supporters read our news online and follow our social media. In a year of transition, Street Roots is remarkably stable and strong, rooted deeply in our community.

The newspaper is the enterprise that joins us together, and Street Roots plays an increasingly large role in our local media landscape. Executive Editor Joanne Zuhl outlines some of the year's reporting highlights in her letter. This year, Jobs with Justice honored Street Roots with the Lucinda Tate Award for reporting that consistently breaks new ground.

We were also honored by Janus Youth Programs with the John P. Zuercher Award for "transforming the lives of people experiencing homelessness and poverty." Our vendors earn an income selling Street Roots by buying the paper for a quarter and selling it for a dollar, a low-barrier way to support their lives. Street Roots vendors sell on street corners around the city, as well in Washington and Clackamas counties. We've expanded partnerships to get vendors to new posts, including with a number of faith communities. Some customers support vendors in additional ways, providing bus tickets, coffee, sandwiches and even assistance finding housing. Not only are vendors earning an income with dignity, selling a newspaper they can be proud of, but they are also interacting with people for whom their lives matter. These relationships make our



Art Garcia received Street Roots inaugural Keystone Award for outstanding service to the mission of the organization.



Sandra Hahn, a vendor and board member, received the 2018 Vendor of the Year Award.

community stronger.

We provide additional support to vendors through community partnerships. More people have transportation to posts, thanks to our partnerships with Biketown, Uber and Trimet through Ride Connection. We've engaged in a pilot program with Mercy Corps Northwest where a handful of vendors set up Individual Development Accounts that match fivefold their savings toward housing expenses. Care Oregon hosts Go Mobile Clinics in our office, signing up vendors for healthcare. Foot care, a pop-up library, voter registration – it all happens in our office.

Community partnerships helped make our annual family breakfast in October the most successful to date. We honored Sandra Hahn as vendor of the year and awarded Art Garcia for his enduring and essential volunteerism at Street Roots. Home Forward executive director Michael Buonocore gave a moving keynote address, "Learn to See Each Other."

Our vendor emergency health fund helps vendors dealing with crises, and our monthly health and wellness events connect vendors to the community, such as theater and zoo outings, a movie at Hollywood Theater, and a summer barbecue hosted by the Pearl District Rotary. Our vendors marched in the Veterans Day and Pride parades. Partnerships with the Portland Art Museum, PICA and Gather: Make: Shelter expanded creative opportunities for our vendors to make and show art. Business for a Better Portland transformed holiday parties of its members as opportunities to gather supplies for Street Roots vendors while also supporting our advocacy for deeply affordable and stable

housing.

We've maintained a steady, high-profile public presence across media, advocating at events and forums – including the Lund Report Oregon Health Forum – for the poorest of our neighbors be centered in public policy. Our ongoing work with the Welcome Home Coalition was met with an extraordinary success – the passage of the \$652.8 million Metro housing bond that will fund deeply affordable housing in the region. Some vendors took a prominent role in this advocacy, testifying before Metro council, handing out lawn signs and speaking to the media.

For the seventh year, we collaborated with Multnomah County, publishing the annual Domicile Unknown report to account for those who died homeless on the streets, insisting that those lost lives be remembered as we fight for housing as a health urgency. This year, Street Roots suffered a number of deaths among our community – we lost eight vendors as well as some of our Old Town neighbors decades before their time. At one point in late summer, we were holding memorials weekly in our office, grieving and supporting each other as a community.

People experiencing poverty continue to depend on the Rose City Resource guide for services. We printed more than ever before. More than 200,000 copies were distributed to neighbors in poverty. This year, we've expanded the guide to include Clackamas as well as Multnomah and Washington counties.

We are now moving into our 20th anniversary year, and will mark this milestone throughout the year, including a summertime community celebration. Looking forward, we will strive for increasing vendor sales and newspaper distribution, pursue important investigative journalism, dig deep as an organization into our equity work, cast our advocacy regionally and statewide, and pursue ways to expand our office space – now bustling and packed with vendors, staff and volunteers. There is much ahead.

Street Roots is beloved by so many in the community, and I love it, too. Onward we go!

Kaia Sand
Executive Director

"Street Roots has provided me with a safe place to be, a place that welcomes me. I'm wanted. There's a sense of family."

Heather Harrington,
Street Roots vendor

