

Director's Letter

Dear Street Sense Supporter,

Street Sense had big plans for 2008. We went into the year with a 55% increase in our budget, with plans to support 22% of this spending with a big push for advertising revenue. We had also hoped to get vendors involved in ad sales and do a little advertising of our own.

And then the "financial crisis" happened and Street Sense had its own staffing crisis. The financial crisis prompted businesses to cut back drastically on advertising, causing a severe strain on that revenue stream. Additionally, with much of their money in the stock market, foundations were extremely tight with funding. And our staffing crisis caused me to focus my attention on filling the vacant positions rather than fundraising, and also caused all staff and volunteers to spend extra time covering to make sure day-to-day operations continued smoothly.

Consequently, Street Sense ended 2008 in the red for the first time since we opened our doors.

However, while Street Sense's financial outcomes were disappointing for 2008, the programmatic outcomes were much better than expected. Our average number of monthly vendors soared from 60 to 91 and the biweekly circulation jumped 40% to 14,000 papers a month.

This caused income from paper sales to increase 42% and also spurred a record number of individual donations. Though year-end donations were down, throughout the year giving was consistent and general individual donations were up 20% from 2007.

Last year was also filled with a record number of vendor successes as well - from a handful of vendors reconnecting with long lost family to dozens of vendors finding housing through D.C.'s Housing First initiative. Additionally, several vendors discovered their talents for writing and performing, and became public figures in their own right.

And editorially, the articles were more thoughtful and revealing than ever, particularly with the addition of Mary Otto as editor in July. Several small news outlets even picked up a few of our stories, including articles about hate crimes against those living on the streets and the push to get homeless people registered to vote.

So despite the red in our bottom line at the end of 2008, Street Sense continued to make its mark - in all types of colors - in the Washington area and throughout its homeless community.

For 2009, we have taken a much more conservative approach to our finances and actually plan for a 0.2% decrease in our budget from 2008, and we are tightly monitoring these numbers on a month to month basis. Still, we hope to accomplish even more in 2009 when it comes to empowering the homeless and educating the public. And I hope individual donors and other funders will continue to support us through the next year, so we can see both our mission AND our finances on an upwards trajectory again in 2009.

Sincerely,

Laura Thompson Osuri
Executive Director

ANNUAL REPORT 2008

2008 Accomplishments

- Changed newspaper design
- Added Writer's Group newspaper page - created, designed and written by vendors
- Hired new editor, Mary Otto
- Changed vendor manager position from Americorps to paid staff
- Added new fundraiser: First Annual David Pike Excellence in Journalism Awards
- Joined the United Way giving campaign
- Formed partnership with YSOP to host more student "Vendors for a Day"
- Established professional computer network in office
- Added a second office at same location
- Expanded Board of Directors with three new members



The cover of our first redesigned issue on November 12.



Awardees and speakers at our first Excellence in Journalism Awards in June. Mary Otto (center), formerly with the Washington Post, ended up as our editor just a month later.



Our single office space became so crowded that we acquired an additional office at the end of the year.

Top 10 Articles

- Jan. 23: Hearing Voices: My Hour of Schizophrenia, Mandy McAnally (editorial)
- Feb. 6: Childless Couples Lack a Spot in Shelters, Brittany Aubin (news)
- March 5: Drugs Money and Women, Freddie Smith (editorial)
- April 30: Path to Recovery for Drug Addicts Littered with Obstacles in District, Brittany Aubin (news)
- Aug. 20: A New World, An Office, Maurice King (editorial)
- September 3: Life Lessons from Street Sense and the Poker Table, Jeffery McNeil (editorial)
- Oct. 1: Homeless Vote: Making It Count, Lisa Gillispie (news)
- Oct. 29: ANC Commissioner's Service Cut Short by Eviction, Mary Otto (news)
- Nov. 26: Kidnapped Carjacked and I Stole My Car Back!, Conrad Cheek Jr. (editorial)
- Dec. 25: Homeless Families Caught in Crunch, Mary Otto (news)

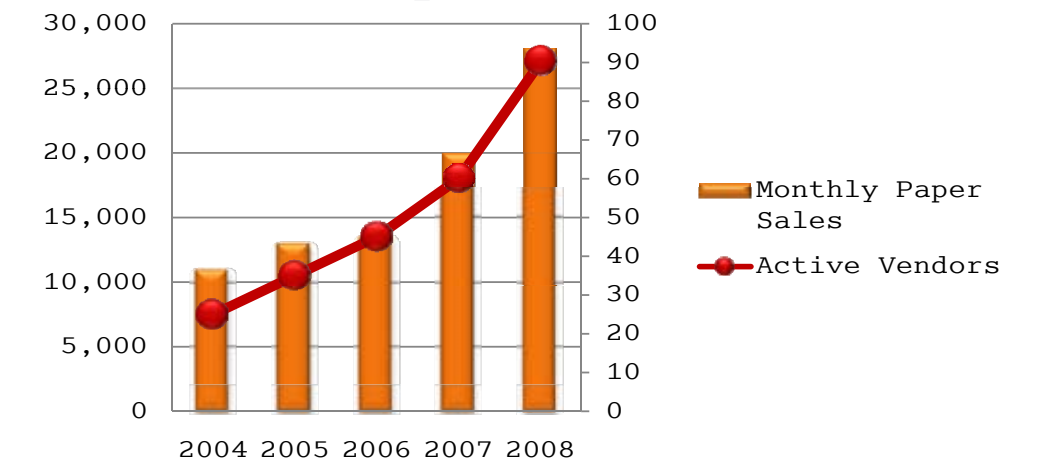
Top Five Vendor Success-



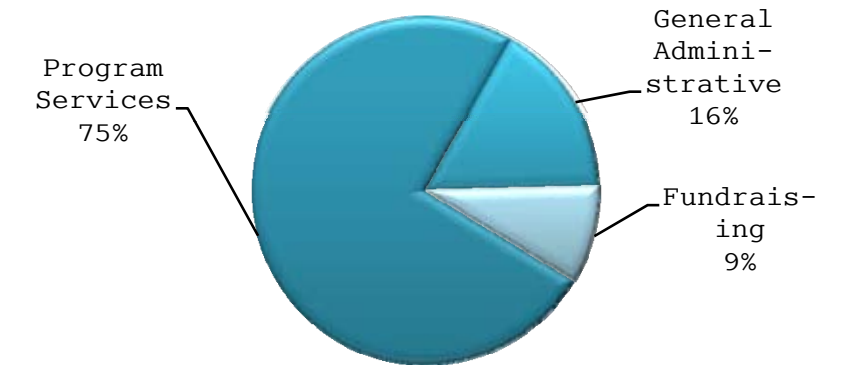
Phillip Howard

- April: **Ivory Wilson** connected with his daughter after 31 years and now visits with her regularly.
- May: **Lee Mayse** graduated from Streetwise Partners corporate executive mentoring program.
- September: Vendors **Don Johnson**, **Phillip Howard**, and **Allen Jones** move into their own apartments through the Housing First initiative.
- November: **Mark Jones**, who started working at Safeway in May, moved into his own place. He sells Street Sense on the side as is still one of our top vendors.
- December 2008: **Jeffery McNeill** reconnected with his father and extended family after more than 10 years of no contact.

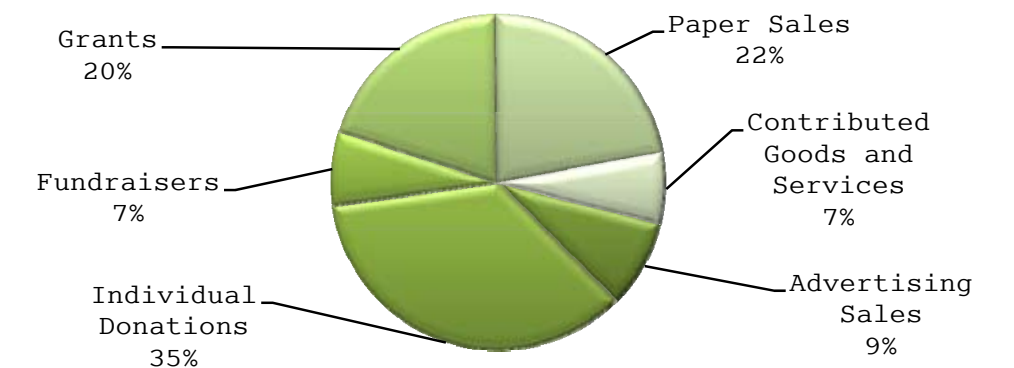
Vendors and Paper Sales



Expense: \$203,727



Revenue: \$181,531



Annual Income

