

\$2
\$1.10 GOES TO VENDOR

STREETWISE

EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO WORK

FOR 25 YEARS

2016 ANNUAL REPORT



FROM THE BOARD CHAIR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear Friends,

As StreetWise reflects on the past 25 years – we are proud of what we have accomplished on behalf of thousands of Chicago’s homeless and economically marginalized individuals who need a hand up out of the crisis of poverty as they seek to improve their economic mobility and quality of life.

StreetWise was born out of compassion and innovation. We published our first newspaper on August 24, 1992 to give homeless men and women an alternative to begging. Over these past 25 years we have witnessed the growth and transformation of the lives of more than 12,000 men and women who have entered StreetWise with the goal of earning an income with dignity.

Since 1992 our vendors have purchased nearly 10 million copies of StreetWise magazines, earning a profit on the resale of each copy. For some, this is the first step toward reentering the labor force, for others this income supplements social security or disability benefits, but for many, selling StreetWise magazine is the primary way they support themselves. After 25 years, we remain committed to sustaining this social enterprise for decades to come.

Our Magazine is socially conscious and Chicago-centric. It raises awareness on the impact of poverty and homelessness, social justice, racial justice, and equality. StreetWise is a leading member of the International Network of Street Papers and has been recognized for the design and quality of the magazine, as well as the scope of programs for our vendors.

STREETWISE IS MORE THAN A MAGAZINE. We offer a community of support that is essential for vendors who face isolation and rejection as they sell magazines at their assigned locations. Each day we serve hot meals - with more than 12,000 meals served in 2016. Vendors can also access computers, phones, emergency clothing, seasonal items, hygiene kits, and life skills groups and a community of peers to offer social support.

For individuals interested in reentering the traditional labor market, we have the StreetWise Transitional Employment Program that offers soft skills training, resume writing and job search workshops along with coaching and mentoring to give these men and women the skills and confidence they need get and keep a job. Since the program launched in 2013 it has helped 200 individuals regain employment.

Some individuals need more support to overcome barriers to personal and economic stability. More than five years ago, StreetWise partnered with UIC-Jane Addams College of Social Work to provide essential services our vendors need to move from homelessness to being housed while also training the next generation of social workers. We have expanded and strengthened our partnerships resulting in more than 10,000 visits to social workers for housing, vital records, financial assistance, crisis counseling and support, and referrals for healthcare, dental, and legal assistance.

All of this is possible because of the generous support of our donors and customers. Last year StreetWise returned to profitability, posting a modest positive net income. This is the direct result of an increase in magazine sales for the first time in five years, as well as support from our grantors, individual contributors, and the success of our 2016 Hand Up Gala.

As you can see, there is a lot of positive momentum as we enter into our 25th year. The board and staff are committed to sustainability and vitality of this important resource for the most vulnerable in our city.

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR
CONTINUED SUPPORT AS WE
STRIVE TO GIVE MORE PEOPLE
A HAND UP IN THEIR JOURNEY
TOWARD STABILITY.**

PETE KADENS
BOARD CHAIR

JULIE YOUNGQUIST
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

StreetWise 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

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MISSION

To empower the entrepreneurial spirit through the dignity of self-employment by providing Chicagoans facing homelessness with a combination of supportive services, workforce development resources and immediate access to gainful employment.

ABOUT

StreetWise, Inc. is a dynamic and innovative employment agency that empowers people to work and provides access to the resources they need to bring dignity and self-sufficiency to their lives. The StreetWise model offers immediate access to employment through the Magazine Vendor Program. For those seeking traditional employment, the StreetWise Transitional Employment Program offers intensive job readiness and placement opportunities. These programs are strengthened by the Supportive Services program that provides direct assistance, referral and advocacy around housing, income stability, food and clothing, linkages to medical or mental health services, substance abuse or domestic violence services, as well as referrals for legal services.

VISION

The StreetWise vision is an economically just society where individuals gain self-sufficiency through the dignity of employment. StreetWise exists so panhandling doesn't have to!

GOALS

EMPOWER PEOPLE TO WORK through immediate access to employment through the Magazine Vendor Program and the StreetWise Transitional Employment Program.

PROVIDE ACCESS TO RESOURCES through supportive services to meet basic needs and to improve housing, income, and well-being.

ADVOCATE for a strengthened safety net, access to resources, and employment opportunities for individuals who want to improve their lives and the lives of their families.

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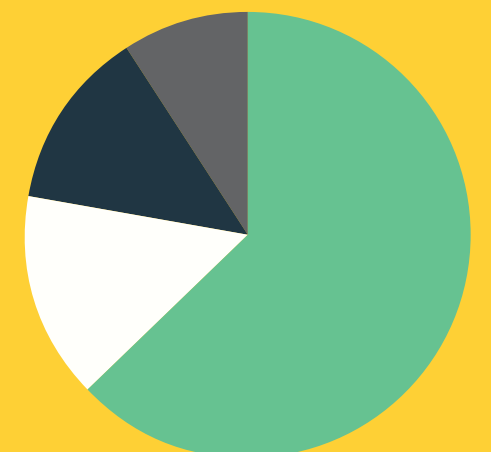
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EMERITUS

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StreetWise Founder

the Honorable
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U.S. Congressman



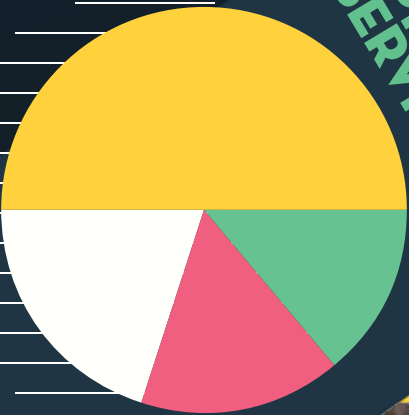
45 INDIVIDUALS DAILY

VISIT STREETWISE TO GET A MEAL, USE PHONES, USE COMPUTERS, AND BUILD COMMUNITY

1700 VISITS TO SOCIAL WORKERS

IMPACT

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES
50% HOUSING/SHELTER
14% HEALTH/MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
16% STATE IDENTIFICATION/DOCUMENTS
20% FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE/PUBLIC BENEFITS



128 PARTICIPANTS IN THE STREETWISE TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (STEP)

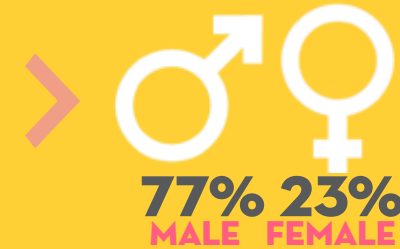
VENDORS SOLD 265,000+ MAGAZINES



12,000+ MEALS WERE SERVED IN THE STREETWISE CAFE

300 MAGAZINE VENDORS IN 2016

GENDER



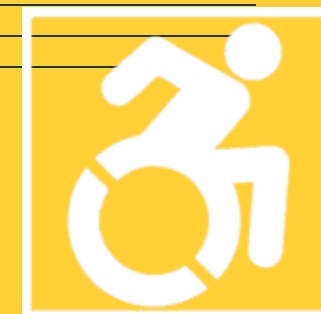
SNAPSHOT OF PARTICIPANTS

AGE
1% 18-24
3% 25-34
25% 35-44
45% 44-54
16% 55-61
10% 62+

1,700+ INDIVIDUALS ACCESSED THE STREETWISE COMPUTER RESOURCE CENTER

ETHNICITY

ASIAN 1%
BLACK/AFRICAN-AMERICAN 62%
HISPANIC/LATINO 4%
MULTIPLE RACES 10%
WHITE 23%



21% DISABLED

HOUSING



21% LIVING ON THE STREETS
26% SHELTER
27% LIVING WITH FAMILY OR FRIENDS
26% RENTER

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Custodian

A. ALLEN
Field Supervisor

JOHN HAGAN
Field Supervisor

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Director of Programs

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Pro-Ject



STREETWISE CAFÉ

The StreetWise Café provides open access for all individuals to have hot meals each day, as well as access to a phone, emergency clothing, and hygiene kits. It also provides a computer resource center for job searching, email, communications access, computer training, and research. Over 12,000 meals were served at the StreetWise Café in 2016 alone.

SYLVIA

I have been working for StreetWise and I love it. Prior to working for StreetWise I was unemployed with no source of income.

One day, I saw a StreetWise vendor selling in front of a Jewel, and I noticed she had a very outgoing personality while communicating to her customers and as a result, had a very profitable day. I became curious about the business itself and wanted to learn more about the company. She immediately encouraged me to join the StreetWise team, and inspired me to become a vendor. I really enjoy working for the organization. I feel that it has given me a great sense of responsibility and work ethic. I have made friends with the fellow vendors at StreetWise and together at the company it feels like we're all family. I love that I have a job that allows me to be social and that I actually look forward to doing every day. It feels great to wake up excited to go to work knowing that it will be a productive day.

My location is the Whole Foods on Broadway and Thorndale. I love the neighborhood that I sell in, it's great! There's so much to do in the area as well as great restaurants to eat at. Everyone that I meet is really nice and polite. The neighborhood demographic is predominantly composed of college students who love to keep up with current events; this really helps me with my sales because I am able to provide my customers with a product that is informative and creative. My strategy when selling is being friendly and direct. I often start with a greeting and a smile, followed by a small pitch of the magazine and the mission behind the magazine. I try not to be pushy or too blunt. I find that people will respond more when they see the sincerity of your character and that's what I project to my customers. I will chat with them and have small talk about social and current issues as well about the current events that are listed in the magazine. People receive me with kindness and will often purchase some magazines.

One of the things that I love about this job is that I am able to work out in the community of Chicago and socialize. I moved here with my family from Mississippi with the hopes of living a better, more comfortable life. Since I started working for StreetWise I have learned that anything is possible when you're determined to achieve your goals and that being persistent enables me to grow while I am trying to reach my goals.



THE MAGAZINE VENDOR PROGRAM

The StreetWise vendors are entrepreneurs. They earn their money! The StreetWise badge has more than their picture or identification number. The badge gives a vendor the right to sell the magazine on public property. But it is so much more than a badge - it is a symbol of pride, human dignity, and making an honest living. The badge distinguishes a vendor from a panhandler. The badge also is a symbol of community as vendors assist, support and advocate for their fellow vendors.



LOOK FOR THE BADGE!

Behind the badge is a trained, recognized, and legitimate entrepreneur looking for a hand up, not a hand-out. For more information about the magazine sales program contact Amanda Jones at ajones@streetwise.org or call (773) 334-6600.

DON



Back in 1995, Chicago-born Don Smith says he was “hopeless.” Drinking too much and struggling to find work, his children “couldn’t stand” him. Now the 56-year-old is an asset to his community, a proud grandfather, and a beacon of hope to people facing the problems he has battled through. “Instead of doing 100% better, I think I’m doing 200% better,” says Don. “It just turned my whole life around.”

The moment Don’s life started to change was when he walked into the offices of StreetWise and was given vendor badge number 2475.

“It was a perfect fit,” he explains. “It was good for me because I could work my own hours. I was my own boss. And I earned money every day.”

That was the first step on Don’s long journey. After almost two decades selling the award-winning magazine and finding some stability, he was one of the first to go through the StreetWise Transitional Employment Program (STEP) and land a full time job.

The jobs program was recognized at the 2016 INSP Awards as a finalist in the Best Project category, where judges were impressed by its comprehensive approach to helping street paper vendors and other at-risk groups into mainstream jobs.

For people experiencing homelessness, employment can be critical in obtaining and maintaining stable housing. For people like Don, facing long-term unemployment and substance abuse issues, it can offer a new lease on life.

“After I started selling StreetWise, I had a social worker that was working with me,” says Don. “They started helping me with my reading and writing. They helped me get my skillsets together. Then they had the jobs program coming up and they asked me if I wanted to be part of it. I took a chance and said yes. “When I first started at my job, I was a groundsman. Right now, my skills are one up to handyman. So instead of just keeping the grounds clean, I fix windows, put in screens, fix the locks on doors. All the maintenance work.”

Thanks to his regular wage, Don has been able to buy his wife of 27 years a new car. “I’m doing a lot of things. I dress real nice, now. I’ve sharpened my attitude. I just thank God for giving me a chance to sort myself out – for giving me the knowledge that I built on from the mistakes I made.”

And his new mentality had a profound impact on his relationship with his kids too.

“My children couldn’t stand me because I was drinking too much and they smelled alcohol on me all the time,” he admits. “Now they like to get up on me: ‘Hey, pops! Will you take me here?’ They constantly want me around now. I have four granddaughters.”

He’s even become a mentor, and sometime counselor, to new StreetWise vendors. “I say to new vendors – this paper is going to sell, because StreetWise is a known paper. It’s up to them to apply themselves, to look better, to dress themselves according to their role. And to not get discouraged. Or if they get discouraged to come and talk to me, because I’ve been discouraged a lot of times.”

“I come here [the StreetWise office] every day on my lunch break to volunteer my time,” He says. “I want to let others see what I have created for myself and they can do the same if they apply themselves to what’s going on around here.”



STREETWISE TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (STEP)

StreetWise's Transitional Employment Program is aimed at assisting hard-to-employ job seekers in gaining sustainable employment in the formal labor market. This program emphasizes communication, problem-solving, workplace behavior and other life skills aimed at eliminating personal barriers to employment. Employment Specialists assist with resume development, interview skills, job search techniques, and job placement. All participants have access to ongoing support from a job coach to maintain employment with our partners in the hospitality, home healthcare, event security and light manufacturing sectors.

JAMES & HEATHER

James: As a native Chicagoan, I have lived in the city of Chicago my whole life. Most of my family, including my wife, children, and parents also live in or near Chicago.

I decided to come to StreetWise because when I first got here, I was having trouble with jobs. I was actually referred to StreetWise by Don Smith, a longtime vendor for StreetWise. He gave me a couple flyers and invited me to come check it out. StreetWise is unique because it allows vendors to work their own hours, make money, manage their own funds and it supports them along the way. I enjoy StreetWise and I am proud to say that I have been here for almost a year. Even though some people have doubted me, I have kept my motivation going... I couldn't ask for anything better. I enjoy it and it's awesome!

There are many things I love about working for StreetWise. I love the people that I work with. Dave, and everyone else, are all awesome. I'm able to meet new people, as far as the vendors, customers, and helping people out - I enjoy it. When I first started I was quite nervous, but now I'm more open-minded and feel more comfortable here. I'm now able to pay my bills, save money, and take care of my kids.

Because vendors work individually, StreetWise helps vendors find the best places to sell the magazines, which is great. Sometimes StreetWise vendors run into the problem of panhandlers who will take up vacant spots if a vendor doesn't show. Even though I don't run into this problem very often, in the case that I do, I'll just work through it.

For those who have never read StreetWise or don't know what it is, I encourage you to approach and ask! Many people will ask what the magazine is all about. So what I do is I'll open up a magazine and show them something that they might like (including articles, events, restaurants, and much more). I'll always read the contents first so that way I know what to tell others. All I have to say is that I enjoy working my spot and I enjoy working with the people.

Heather: Even with all the adversity I face, I do it for my children. If I make my selling goal, if I have a little left over, it goes towards my children for what they need. If they wanted something at the store, I could get it for them. It's important to stay positive through all that we do, to get our kids to realize that life is hard and you just have to pull through it and fight through. And if you get stuck, ask along the way for help. All you can do is be safe, keep your eyes open, and do the best you can.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Supportive Services provide additional support breaking down barriers to personal stability and employment. Supportive Services provide access to hot meals on-site each day through StreetWise Café, access to a phone, emergency clothing, and hygiene kits. Supportive Services also provide direct support and linkages to an array of social service programs, including housing and shelter placement, public benefits assistance, medical referral, legal assistance, and financial literacy.



StreetWise is proud to be part of the **INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF STREET PAPERS (INSP)**. INSP provides support, advice, and resources to 100+ street papers in 35 countries, bringing content to 5.6 million readers and supporting 11,000 vendors worldwide.



International
Network of
Street Papers

STREETWISE MAGAZINE

StreetWise magazine is among the largest "street papers" in the United States and serves as a model for street papers across North America. The editorial staff work hard to provide intriguing articles about today's important issues as well as entertaining articles to enhance the reader's daily life. By engaging the unemployed and underemployed as vendors, StreetWise is able to personalize the face of Chicago's poor, while providing each person with a viable income opportunity.

2016 COVER STORY JOURNALISTS

- CARRIE BENSFIELD**
- MICAELA BERZ**
- DAVID BOE**
- KYLA BREWER**
- MADELINE COHEN**
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Anonymous

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Amanda Lee Anderson
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Maxxine Arctander
Atomatic
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For any additions or corrections to this list, please contact Chief Executive Officer Julie Youngquist at jyoungquist@streetwise.org

STREETWISE ANNUAL REPORT 2016

Compiled by Julie Youngquist and Dave Hamilton.

Profiles by Jasmine Stewart, Laura Kelly, Nina Dong and Dave Hamilton.

Photography by Alexandria Spillman and Dave Hamilton.

Design by Dave Hamilton.





STREETWISE
Since 1992

