2015: The year Seattle recognized homelessness as a top priority

- The One Night Count found an alarming 21 percent increase in unsheltered homelessness, and Mayor Ed Murray went on TV to connect the dots between rising housing costs and inequality, failed drug policy and federal and state abandonment of the poor.

- The mayor declared a State of Emergency on homelessness, and the City and County put nearly $10 million on the table to expand services. City-sanctioned encampments and safe-parking programs found new support as alternatives to criminalizing homeless people.

- Seattle has joined the handful of U.S. cities whose response to the homeless crisis is leading the nation. And Real Change, along with our community of friends and allies, is bringing new energy to a growing movement for change.

Last summer, when we hosted the International Network of Street Papers conference, representatives from 43 papers from 32 countries came to Seattle to see what a successful grassroots activist paper looks like. Our Outsiders Campaign — a very visual push for expanded survival services — received the INSP’s international award for social justice organizing.

Our goal for that campaign, 1,000 people safer this year, has now been adopted by the City Council human services chair. We call that progress.

When our readers support our vendors, powerful things happen. Vendors find that they are not alone. They grow as leaders and activists. Their stories get told. New communities are brought into action. A different world becomes possible.

In 2015, Real Change celebrated 21 years of building for power by crafting a vision statement: “We envision a just, caring and inclusive community, where people are no longer marginalized by racism and classism and have the means to live with dignity.”

This is what our 2015-2018 strategic plan is ultimately about. We move toward this vision of possibility and inclusion by building on our strengths.

We are committed to growing our readership and investing in vendor success. We walk our talk on race and class and challenge ourselves on issues of racial equity. We build for power by bringing new voices into action. And we ensure that Real Change is here for the long haul by investing in leadership development and diversifying our financial support.

Here’s what each of those goals looked like in 2015, and how we will continue to grow our work

This year, we’ve seen that our vendors are doing better and sticking with the paper longer. Our challenge is to offer opportunity to more people and increase our readership and community support. Improvements this year included strengthening support for new vendors and launching a digital payment app for iPhone and Android to help us reach new readers.

The focus for 2016 is on new vendor recruitment, improved sales training and support and outreach to grow the community of readers that make everything we do possible.

An innovative workshop on recognizing the role of race and class in our organizations was pioneered by Managing Director Alan Preston in partnership with Class Action, and has attracted strong interest from allies in the human services sector. We have grown opportunities for vendor inclusion, and increased the diversity of our staff, board and volunteers. Our news team tightened its focus on racial equity and added new contributors to reflect a strengthened commitment to diverse voices.

Members of the Vendor Organizing Committee brought their testimony and passion to City Hall, County Council and the state House, and were frequently quoted in other media as they spoke their truth in public. This year, we will continue our focus on grassroots mobilization by bringing 1,000 new readers into action through the RC Allstars campaign.

Finally, we grew the grassroots support that makes our work possible by 9 percent. This year, the majority of Real Change donors increased their giving to Real Change, allowing us to invest in new strategies for long-term success like mobile payments and vendor leadership development.

We’re proud of our amazing vendors, and we are inspired by the incredible community that makes our work possible. Together, we’re making the vision of community real.
Real Change and staff sell their State Capitol House for Homelessness Advocacy Day with the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance.

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2015 Financial Report

**Revenue**

- Individual Donations: $512,385
- Circulation: $306,906
- Real Change Breakfast: $107,472
- Grants: $70,000
- Other Fundraising: $41,448
- Advertising and Subscriptions: $28,925
- Other Income: $21,861

Total Revenue: $1,088,997

**Expenses**

- Payroll and Benefits: $792,702
- Rent: $76,053
- Newspaper Printing: $51,193
- Events and Marketing: $36,636
- IT Equipment, Software and Service: $29,177
- International Network of Street Papers: $28,112
- Global Summit: $28,112
- Insurance, Taxes and Fees: $25,798
- Printing, Postage and Copier: $23,838
- Other Expenses: $19,719
- Supplies: $17,345
- Consultants: $9,859
- Travel, Transportation and Parking: $5,911

Total Expenses: $1,088,997

Vendor Survey Results

**Race/ethnicity**

- American Indian or Alaskan Native: 18
- Asian, Asian American: 69
- Black or African American: 69
- Latino or Hispanic: 6
- Pacific Islander or Hawaiian Native: 1
- White or Caucasian: 148
- Other: 25

**Gender**

- Male: 191
- Female: 68

**Age**

- 18-29: 68
- 30-39: 14
- 40-49: 52
- 50-59: 16
- 60+: 3

**Homeless history**

- Currently homeless: 47.6%
- Previously homeless: 45.4%
- Never homeless: 7%

**Homeless by race/ethnicity**

- American Indian or Alaskan Native: 100%
- Asian, Asian American: 100%
- Black or African American: 100%
- Latino or Hispanic: 100%
- Pacific Islander or Hawaiian Native: 100%
- White or Caucasian: 100%
- Other: 100%

**Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project**

Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Real Change works because every week, thousands of readers stop what they’re doing to help someone who needs a friend. It’s a small thing, but when it happens week after week, a few dollars and a few moments at a time, that support has a powerful impact.

Consistency matters. When vendors put in regular hours at the same spot, their success grows. They start seeing the same people every week, and that regular support creates consistency and stability.

We’d like to see that same buy-in and consistency in our grassroots support. Your generous donations are the foundation of Real Change’s long-term success. Just as you make the Real Change community possible with your regular support of our vendors, we’d like you to consider a monthly gift to sustain our mission: providing opportunity and a voice for homeless and low-income people while taking action for economic, social and racial justice.

**NEW FACES AT REAL CHANGE**

**Ashley Archibald, Staff Reporter**

Ashley Archibald joined Real Change as its reporter in February 2016. She came to the position with four years’ experience writing for daily newspapers in California with beats that included economic development, local government, education and law enforcement. Ashley has bachelor’s degrees in journalism and international relations from the University of Southern California and was recently awarded her master’s degree in local economic development from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Ashley’s curiosity matches with her understanding of policy and economics to create compelling and educational stories in the paper.

**Tsukina Blessing, Advocacy Program Manager**

Tsukina comes to us with more than 30 years organizing experience in the areas of interfaith coalition building, food security, racial equity, economic justice and homelessness. Most recently she has worked with the Lake City Task Force on Homelessness and was a founder of Occupy Chaplains. Tsukina received her master’s in Transformational Leadership at Seattle University in 2015. Tsukina will use her experience to magnify the voice of our Vendor Organizing Committee to demand much-needed change in our community for homeless and low-income people.

**Aaron Burkhalter, Editor**

Aaron has been an award-winning reporter with us since 2011. Previously, he worked at the Siskiyou County Model and as a reporting intern for the City County News in Junction City, Oregon. Aaron got his B.A. in psychology from the University of Washington and earned a master’s degree in journalism from the University of Oregon. As a Real Change reporter, Aaron often reported on stories well before other news outlets. In January 2016, Aaron was selected to lead the newsroom as Editor of Real Change News. Aaron is deeply committed to ensuring that our paper stays true to our values and vision.

**Martha Tesema, Multimedia Reporter**

Martha joined Real Change as the Communication Specialist in April 2015. She graduated with a B.A. in Journalism from Seattle University where she developed a passion for media representation and the usage of new media for social and racial justice. Martha is originally from the Northwest, with roots in Ethiopia. In late 2015, Martha fulfilled her lifelong dream of becoming a journalist when we selected her to become our full-time Multimedia Reporter. Martha’s critical writing on current events in Seattle and knowledge of the online world are vital to spreading the word about our groundbreaking reporting.

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**Make checks payable to Real Change and mail to: 219 1st Ave. S. Suite 220 Seattle, WA 98104 or use our secure online giving option at realchangeweb.org.**

**Name:**

**Address:**

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**I pledge $_________ per month, beginning _________ for ________ months.**

**Credit card #:**

**Expiration Date:**

**Signature: ____________________________**

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