

# MORE THAN A NEWSPAPER

**STREETSENSE MEDIA**  
Real Stories | Real People | Real Change

**MEDIA GUIDE**







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Spring 2019 | Prepared by Jeff Gray

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**Laticia Brock**  
VENDOR-ARTIST

# ABOUT STREET SENSE MEDIA

Our mission is to end homelessness in the Washington, D.C. area by empowering people in need with the skills, tools and confidence to succeed. Together we use a range of media platforms to raise awareness and spotlight solutions to homelessness in our community.

## WHAT WE DO

Street Sense Media creates content in print, film, theater, photography, audio, illustration and more, all for the purpose of providing economic opportunity for and elevating the voices of people experiencing homelessness. The content of our media center aims to challenge perceptions of homelessness and those it affects while creating common ground upon which we can build a stronger community.

Our innovative approach harnesses the abilities, aspirations and hard work of men and women experiencing homelessness. We have long known that while housing and economic opportunity are distributed unevenly, talent and creativity are distributed equally, without regard to income or housing status.

In addition to the economic opportunities provided by our newspaper vendor program, Street Sense Media provides case management services to help the men and women we work with navigate the often complex bureaucracies toward permanent housing, employment and physical and mental health care.

At Street Sense Media, we define ourselves through our work, talents and character, not through our housing situation.

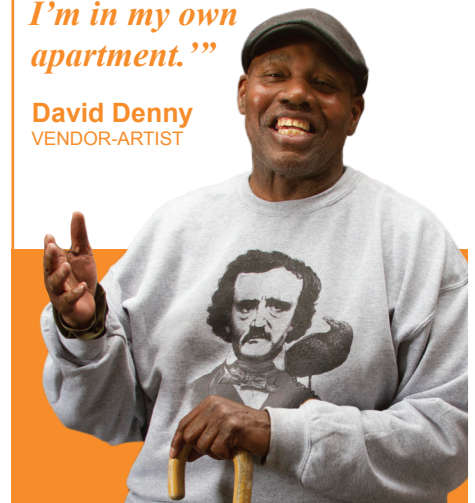
Standing at the bedroom window of his new apartment, David doesn't have to look far to remember how much his life has changed since finding Street Sense Media. Just across the alley sits an abandoned red-brick building in which he used to squat.

*"When I look out there, it keeps me grounded,"* David says as he peers out the window. *"I can be over here or over there. It depends on how I live right now."*

After suffering through three decades of prison stints and homelessness, David teamed up with the Street Sense Media case management team. Within weeks, he received a government-subsidized housing voucher.

*"The first morning I slept here, I jerked from it because I didn't remember where I was at,"* David says. *"Then I realized, 'Hey, I'm in my own apartment.'"*

**David Denny**  
VENDOR-ARTIST



# OUR HISTORY

In August of 2003, two volunteers approached the National Coalition for the Homeless about starting a street newspaper in Washington, D.C. Recognizing the talent and determination of the people they saw living unsheltered in the nation's capital, Laura Thompson-Osuri and Ted Henson wanted to empower them to share their stories and change their lives.

After bringing together a core of dedicated volunteers and vendors, Street Sense published its first issue in November 2003 with a print run of 5,000 copies. The newspaper has published consistently on a monthly and now biweekly basis and remains the flagship channel of our expanding media center.

By 2017, the organization had expanded beyond the print newspaper and was sharing the stories of its homeless vendors through film, photography, theatre, illustration and more. To more accurately describe the varied and vibrant multimedia center into which it had evolved, Street Sense formally rebranded as Street Sense Media in September of 2017.

## A GLOBAL MOVEMENT

The street paper model we recognize today began in New York City in 1989 and has since expanded to cities across the globe.



International  
Network of  
Street Papers

Street Sense Media is a proud member of the International Network of Street Papers, which boasts 100 independently operated street papers in over 34 countries worldwide. Learn more at [insp.ngo](https://insp.ngo).

### A HISTORY

#### AUGUST 2003

Laura Thompson-Osuri and Ted Henson approach the National Coalition for the Homeless about starting a street newspaper in Washington, D.C.



#### NOVEMBER 2003

Street Sense publishes its first issue with a print run of 5,000 copies



#### JANUARY 2007

Street Sense moves from monthly to biweekly production.



#### SEPTEMBER 2017

Street Sense rebrands as Street Sense Media, completing its evolution into a multimedia center.



#### AUGUST 2018

The newspaper garners an INSP award for *best breakthrough* publication for the newspaper rebrand



# THE MEDIA CENTER

We are a non-profit that provides economic opportunities and creative programs for men and women who want to earn their way out of homelessness and create positive changes in their lives. We started as a newspaper and have expanded into film, photography, theatre, illustration, podcasts and other media in recent years.

## MEDIA CHANNELS



### FILM

Street Sense Media is home to the country's first and only homeless filmmakers cooperative, which brings together homeless and formerly homeless people to write, shoot and produce their own documentaries. The group, which believes the stories of homelessness are best told by those who have lived through it, has had its work screened at film festivals across the country.



### PHOTOGRAPHY

Our photographers share stories of homelessness from their own perspectives, capturing moments that underscore the personality and individuality of those living without housing.



### WRITING

Our longest running workshop, the writers group is led by local writing professionals, who work with vendor-artists to develop ideas and collaborate on the next great issue of Street Sense.



### THEATRE

Our theatre groups have performed across the D.C. metro area, often partnering with high school drama classes for original performances that explore not only the topic of homelessness, but of universal human struggles.



### ILLUSTRATION

Led by a professional graphic designer, our weekly illustration workshop creates artwork used for our newspaper, website and promotional materials—all while fostering self-expression and creativity.

***“Life is really about creating your own story,”*** Sasha says.

She would know. The victim of a rape at gunpoint and years of homelessness, Sasha began changing her story when she joined the Street Sense Media Homeless Filmmakers Cooperative. Working with her peers, she directed and produced a documentary that explored her and her young daughter's time in a notorious family shelter.

***“For a long time, I didn't love my life. I just had so much hate for a lot of things that happened to me. My documentary allowed me to express things and deal with my past.”***

After debuting her documentary in front of a 250-person audience and conducting interviews with the Washington Post and news outlets across the District, Sasha, now housed, feels like she's regained control of her life story.

***“It took courage to show everything so raw, to put my personal experience up on the big screen. I became more confident as a person. I feel like I'm in control of my life. I'm not a victim now.”***

**Sasha Williams**  
VENDOR-ARTIST





# THE VENDOR PROGRAM

As Street Sense Media continues to develop new and creative ways to share the stories of our vendor-artists, a 14-page, biweekly newspaper remains our flagship channel. By selling the Street Sense newspaper in our community, our vendors obtain financial independence while making their voices heard on the issues that affect them most.

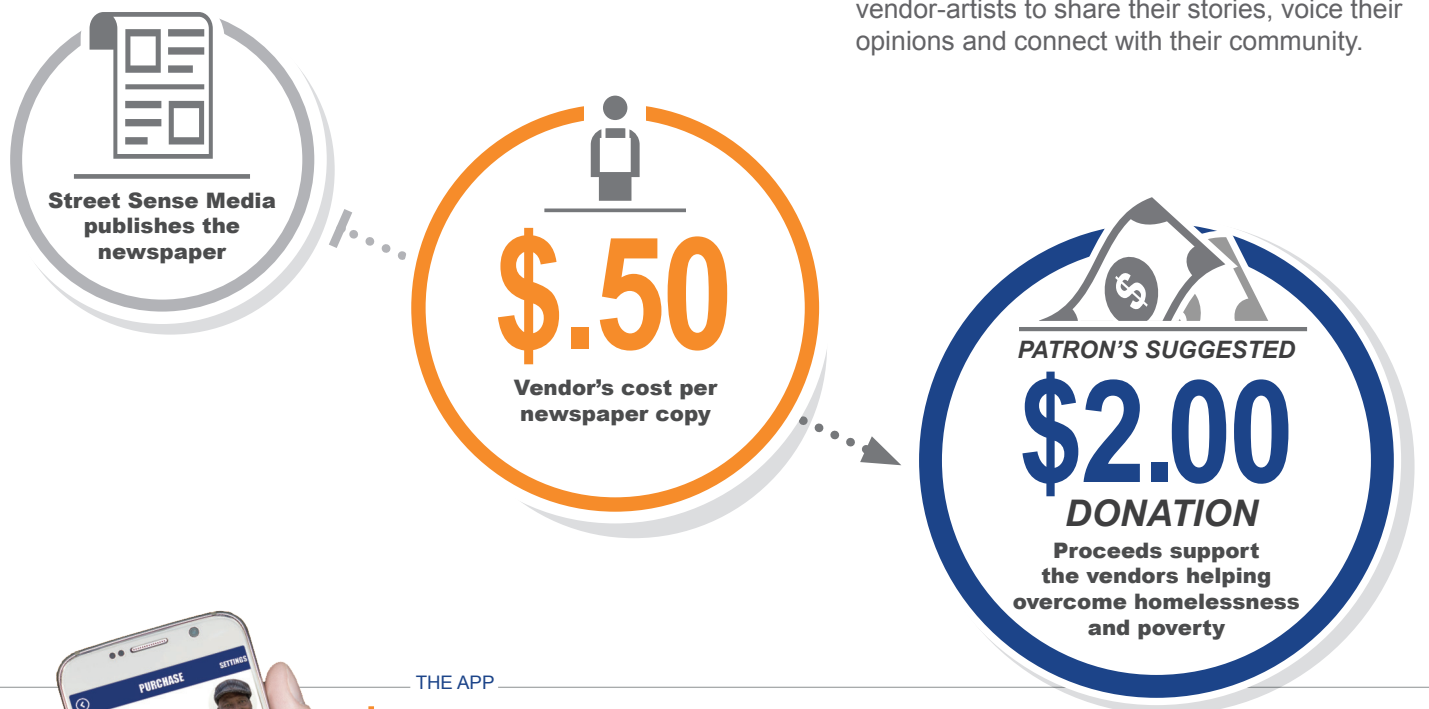
## HOW IT WORKS

### A LOW-BARRIER EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

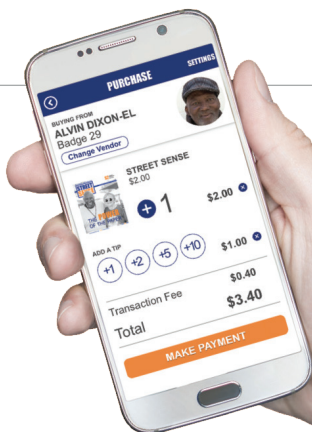
Street Sense Media offers immediate financial opportunity without job interviews, background checks and other barriers that can prevent a person experiencing homelessness from obtaining traditional employment. As independent contractors, Street Sense Media vendors set their own hours, pick their own distribution spots and effectively operate their own small business.

### A PLATFORM FOR CHANGE

Roughly half of the content in each issue of Street Sense is created by the homeless and formerly homeless vendors who sell it, with the rest coming from journalism interns and volunteer writers. The newspaper allows a platform for vendor-artists to share their stories, voice their opinions and connect with their community.



## THE APP



### NO CASH? NO PROBLEM?

The Street Sense Media App was developed to allow patrons to purchase print newspapers directly from our vendors even when they don't have cash. The app can be downloaded, connected to a payment option and allows for the user to find their favorite vendor.



The app can be downloaded on Google Play and the Apple App Store or visit [Street Sense Media mobile app](#)

# CONNECT WITH STREET SENSE MEDIA

This style guide is designed as a tool that provides consistency and supports the Street Sense Media brand — its goal is not to impose unnecessary restrictions on creativity. However, to ensure Street Sense Media has a consistent and appropriate brand, please exercise good judgment in all creative executions.

If you have any questions, please contact Street Sense Media:

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**TO ALL OF OUR  
SUPPORTERS,  
THANK  
YOU**

**STREETSENSEMEDIA**  
Real Stories | Real People | Real Change