



'City of  
Roses'

# The OP

## HOUSING special edition



# The Portland Observer

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## A Foundation to Flourish, Build On

### Proud Ground and New Seasons equal new homeowners

"I can't believe this is my place." That was Michelle Holder's first thought as she walked in the front door of the home she now owns.

Tired of moving every time her rent increased, tired of asking for permission to paint or fix things up, tired of living without pets, and ready to have a place of her own, she was ready to become a homeowner.

Luckily for Holder, her employer—New Seasons Market—partners with the non-profit group Proud Ground to help spread the word about affordable homeownership to its employees.

Holder attended a Proud Ground homeownership information session hosted by New Seasons at one of its stores. Thanks to this partnership, she is now one of four New Seasons employees who are Proud Ground homeowners.

The Proud Ground-New Seasons Market partnership, ongoing since 2007, is simple, effective, and beneficial.

Proud Ground works with New Seasons Market's human resources team to arrange free, on-site homeownership information sessions at New Seasons stores. The out-

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Michelle Holder and her pet BiScotty stand outside the home she was able to purchase thanks to a partnership between the housing agency Proud Ground and her employer, New Seasons Market.

## A Foundation to Flourish, Build On

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reach is spread through pay-envelope inserts, posting flyers in break-rooms, and at employee meetings.

As many as 70 employees of the market have learned about the ins and outs of homeownership by attending the information sessions.

Employees learn about homeownership and gain access to homes they can afford to buy—with monthly payments not much more than (and often less than) what they were paying in rent.

The employer gains employees who are stable and rooted in our community. The community experiences economic growth and neighborhood stability when more families own their own homes.

"An important part of financial independence is home ownership. New Seasons Market is very happy with our partnership with Proud Ground," said New Seasons Market

Human Resource Director Rick Howell. "We're thrilled that we have been happy to connect so many of our staff with Proud Ground's homeownership program."

Holder also has great praise for Proud Ground and the support provided.

"It is a hand up, not a hand out," she explains. "I felt like I learned something in the process. Proud Ground was as interested in my success in becoming a homeowner as I was!" she said.

Stability and success are great, but one of Holder's favorite things about being in her home isn't inside at all.

"I love to garden," she says. "I like knowing I can plant a biannual and know I will be around to see it bloom."

For more information, visit the website, [proudground.org](http://proudground.org).