

FALL
2019

curbside

NEWS FROM PREBLE STREET

Advocating for Change

By Mark R. Swann, MSPA, Executive Director

During my first day on the job I remember talking with Preble Street founder Joe Kreisler, and among the many pieces of advice he shared was to never forget the critical role we play as advocates in the public policy arena. I was so happy to hear that because I had experienced the reluctance of social service agencies to speak up and lend their voice to issues of social and economic justice. That reluctance is understandable — there are far too many examples of agencies losing funding when they speak truth to power. And with those funding cuts, programs are at serious risk of closing.

This does happen and has happened to Preble Street more than a few times. No one is immune to these pressures and realities that need to be considered when we speak up. *But we've got to stand for something.* That's what makes nonprofits different and adds a layer of profound responsibility to our mission and our role as advocates.

Preble Street embraces advocacy for three reasons:

1. As a nonprofit organization, it is our obligation to provide our expertise and opinions.
2. As an agency that defines itself proudly as a *social work* agency, we embrace the National Association of Social Workers Social Work Code of Ethics principle to “challenge social injustice.”
3. The Preble Street mission statement specifically and intentionally includes “advocate for solutions” to always guide and direct us in our anti-poverty work.

When we stand together for social justice, everyone wins. Subscribe to Preble Street Action Alert emails and help end hunger, homelessness, and poverty in Maine: preblestreet.org/your-voice-matters



44th Class of Preble Street Interns



The prestigious Preble Street internship program has trained over 500 social workers and has been key to meeting the Preble Street mission since the agency was founded in 1975 by Joe Kreisler, then chair of the University of Southern Maine social work department. Above are students of the 2019-20 class, representing University of Maine, University of Southern Maine, and University of New England.

On the cover: Neighbors reach for the stars. At Preble Street Housing First program Huston Commons, a donated telescope is the star of the show at a weekly morning pancakes group.

Creating Impact



In June, Erin Kelly from Preble Street Veterans Housing Services (fourth from left) and representatives from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, and Easterseals Maine gathered at Portland City Hall to formalize their shared commitment to end veteran homelessness in Maine.

Preble Street Veterans Housing Services is a leading member of the Maine Homeless Veteran Action Committee (HVAC), an alliance existing to ensure veteran homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

HVAC is completing the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness application to declare a systematic end to veteran homelessness in Maine. While acknowledging some veterans may continue to fall into homelessness in Maine, there will be a system in place to help connect them to permanent housing within 90 days of identification.

As a part of this effort, HVAC is coordinating The Mayor's Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness, a call for civic leaders to make sure every veteran in Maine has a home. Supporters of the challenge include Congressman Jared Golden; Auburn Mayor Jason Levesque; Westbrook Mayor Mike Sanphy; Portland Mayor Ethan Strimling (pictured); Brewer Mayor Bev Uhlenhake; Augusta Mayor David Rollins; and Bangor City Council Chair Sarah Nichols.

Just in time for school to start, a veteran and his family are home.

Jim, a veteran, his wife, and their five children were homeless and living in a hotel when they connected with Preble Street Veterans Housing Services (VHS).

While assisting the family with their housing search, VHS paid for several weeks at the hotel and provided them with food and school supplies. After months of searching, VHS found a landlord with a property large enough and affordable for this veteran's family of seven.

Jim and his family moved in just in time for the start of the school year, relieved that the children have a safe, stable place to come home to.



Getting Involved



"This is the best thing
I've done this year —
or maybe ever!"

*Client who testified in front of
the Health and Human
Services Committee*

Youth from Preble Street
Teen Services joined their
peers at the Young People's
Caucus at the State House
to share their stories and
create a collective voice for
young people experiencing
homelessness in Maine.



Preble Street clients and staff
joined other community members
to clean the neighborhood streets.



Mark, a tenant at Preble Street
Housing First program Logan
Place, hosted his third annual
cookout for his neighbors.

Community Leaders Join the Board

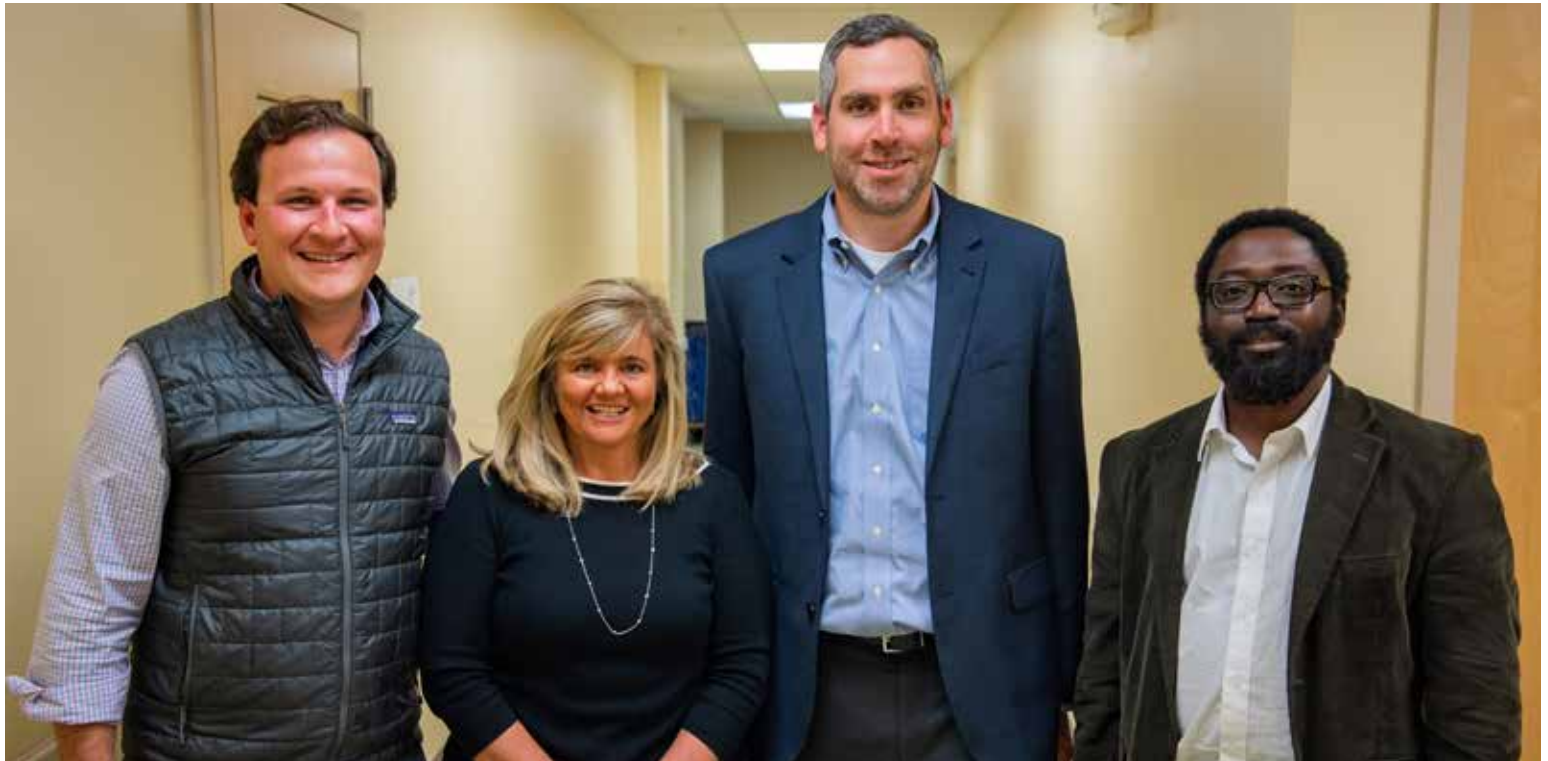
The Preble Street Board of Directors welcomed four new volunteer members with a deep and strong commitment to community service. Each reflects below on what brought them to Preble Street.

Reuben Addo, Ph.D., MSSA, Assistant Professor of Social Work, University of Southern Maine

I was drawn to Preble Street because of its mission of providing barrier-free services to those experiencing homelessness and the emphasis on removing barriers to services to vulnerable groups in our community. I believe it is a moral obligation to assist people who are less fortunate.

Chip Leighton, Vice President of Strategy and Planning, Hannaford Supermarkets

I started volunteering in the Preble Street Resource Center Soup Kitchen 10 years ago. It's been such a good opportunity and great reminder that there are simple things we can do to help others in our own communities. Preble Street often fills a need when no one else can. Whether it's a meal, housing, or connecting a client with services they couldn't otherwise access, I know the support I give Preble Street will make a tangible difference.



From left: Jay Tansey, Lori Whynot, Chip Leighton, Reuben Addo

Jay Tansey, Executive Director, Covetrus and Black Point Group

Last summer, my best friend, Chris, passed away tragically from an overdose. He had not used any substances for more than four years. An incredibly smart, kind, and funny person, Chris was the co-host of a popular podcast and a Doctor of Psychology candidate. He was determined to use his education and life experience to help others in recovery. A month before he died, he got badly injured, was prescribed painkillers, and quickly relapsed. He told me that when he was using, he often turned to shelters and soup kitchens to get off the street. These community resources helped Chris stay safe and begin his path to recovery, just as Preble Street does for hundreds of Mainers every day. I am humbled to have been elected to the Board of Directors and look forward to honoring Chris's legacy through Preble Street's important and impactful work.

Lori Whynot, Senior Vice President, Benefit Operations, Unum

My grandparents were passionate about helping people who are less fortunate and my grandfather was instrumental in starting a soup kitchen. Many years we would have additional guests at our Thanksgiving table because they had no way of providing a meal for themselves. I have been so impressed by how passionate everyone is about all the good work that happens here at Preble Street. Providing meals and a safe place to sleep for everyone while maintaining their dignity and even putting a smile on their faces is so exciting to see. Preble Street is always in the forefront, trying to solve the problems of homelessness for everyone in our community.

Empowering New Neighbors



Preble Street serves 1,200 meals every day in our soup kitchens.

Responding to the influx of New Mainers over the summer, we increased capacity by 50% to provide 600 extra meals daily at the Portland Expo for the 150-plus asylum-seeking families arriving after a perilous journey from Africa.

Scores of businesses, farmers, supermarkets, partner organizations, and community members pitched in to meet the need — including some other new neighbors who volunteered in the Resource Center Soup Kitchen to help prepare culturally appropriate food.

And everyone got fed.



Because it can be challenging to understand the laws and systems of a new country, immigrants can be especially vulnerable to human trafficking inside the United States.

With additional support in the Preble Street Bangor and Lewiston offices, Preble Street Anti-Trafficking Services (ATS) increased outreach and identification of human trafficking survivors in the northern region of Maine and within the asylee and refugee community.

Human trafficking victims are forced or coerced — through sexual, physical, psychological violence, and torture — to perform a variety of labor including sex work, domestic services, childcare, agricultural labor, and restaurant work. While people served by Preble Street may not have experienced trafficking in the U.S., they may have been trafficked inside their home country, forcing them to flee for asylum, inside a refugee camp, or during migration.

ATS works with survivors of all forms of human trafficking to ensure they are empowered to make their own choices and take power over their own lives.



Stepping Stones

**At Preble Street,
we meet people
where they are
and we don't
leave them there.**

The first time Matthew experienced homelessness was when he was 14. He was living in the woods of rural Maine in a tent by himself. Depression about his situation led to substance use, which led to more depression, and he went a decade without seeing or speaking with his family.

When he finally connected to the Preble Street Resource Center, staff helped him realize that a lot of his problems came from untreated health issues and referred Matthew to Preble Street Health Services, which works with our partners at Maine Medical Center to ensure vulnerable people have access to quality, barrier-free healthcare.

The life expectancy of people who endure chronic homelessness is 28 years shorter, on average, than that of people who are housed. And people struggling with homelessness and opioid use disorder are nine times more likely to die from an overdose than those who are stably housed.

Through Preble Street Health Services, Matthew had access to providers and transportation so he wouldn't miss appointments. A psychiatrist got him on the right medication; our partners at Greater Portland Health gave him a voucher to fix his broken teeth; and Preble Street helped Matthew find housing.

"Staff at Preble Street would call me to make sure I was going to appointments, check up on me to make sure I went, and ask what happened there. I had trouble accepting that I needed that kind of help. But I did need it. It felt good to be cared about."

Matthew now resides in a sober living community and has not used any substances for three years. He speaks with his mother every day and spent Christmas with her.

"This is all due to recovery, and Preble Street played a huge part in that," says Matthew. "They provided me with little different stepping stones, which made me want to change."

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**The biggest thing for me
has been reconnecting
with my mother. When I
spoke to my mom for the
first time in 10 years, I
apologized for being gone.
She said, don't apologize
— you're home.**

**"I get to go home tonight.
That's the first time I've
been able to say that in a
long time."**

— Health Services &
Resource Center client

**"I finally have a safe place
to live with my young son.
I am so excited to be able to
put roots down."**

— Anti-Trafficking Services client

**"A friend told me I look
wonderful! I told them no
wonder — I can sleep when
I want, get up when I want,
take a shower when I want."**

— Logan Place tenant

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Preble Street

Turning Hunger and Homelessness into Opportunity and Hope

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NEWS FROM PREBLE STREET

TO:



YOUR GIFTS MOVE PEOPLE FORWARD

FOOD: Coffee, tea, cereal, juice, cooking oil, rice, pasta, beans, soup, tuna, sauce.

CLOTHING: (for men, women, and teens). Jeans, hooded sweatshirts, underwear, boots, sneakers, socks, T-shirts, gloves (large and durable). Towels, backpacks, duffel bags, laundry detergent.

TOILETRIES: Deodorant, razors, shaving cream, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, combs, sunscreen.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT: Cash, checks, credit cards, stocks, securities, fundraisers, tribute gifts, planned giving.

VOLUNTEERING: Cook, serve, and clean up at three meals a day. Sort and distribute emergency groceries and clothing donations.

For more info:

preblestreet.org/you-can-help