

# curbside

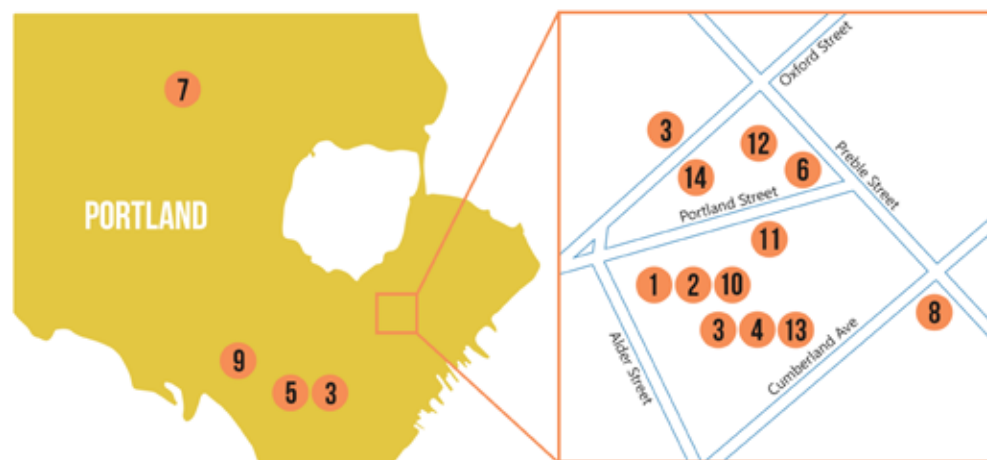
## NEWS FROM PREBLE STREET

### Preble Street Today

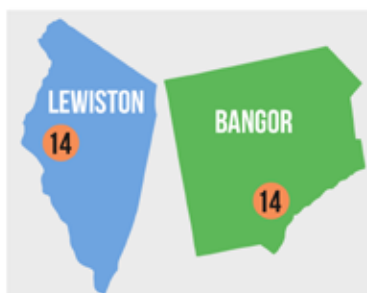
By Mark R. Swann, MSPA, Preble Street Executive Director

Driven by our mission, Preble Street has a 45-year history of filling service gaps, meeting urgent needs, and working collaboratively to provide opportunity and hope for our vulnerable neighbors.

Founded by social workers as a community center to identify and help solve problems experienced by people in low-income neighborhoods, today Preble Street is an acclaimed anti-poverty agency serving all of Maine with over a dozen programs — based in Portland, Lewiston, and Bangor — and more than 200 staff.



1. Advocacy\*
  2. Anti-Trafficking Services\*
  3. Food Programs
  4. First Place
  5. Florence House
  6. Homeless Voices for Justice
  7. Huston Commons
  8. Joe Kreisler Teen Shelter
  9. Logan Place
  10. Maine Hunger Initiative\*
  11. MMC-Preble Street Learning Collaborative
  12. Resource Center
  13. Teen Center
  14. Veterans Housing Services\*
- \* statewide reach



### Housing First

In January, tenants from Logan Place and Florence House and an advocate with Homeless Voices for Justice traveled to the statehouse to testify in support of developing more Housing First apartment buildings.

“When it comes to solving the problem of homelessness, we can either do something and act, or we can turn our backs,” said one tenant. “There’s no in between.”

Housing First is the most effective solution to chronic homelessness, offering support, building trust, and empowering tenants to live independently. When people no longer have to deal with the daily stress and danger of the streets, they begin the journey to stability and well-being.

Another tenant testified, “After I moved in ... and had a permanent place to call home I was able to start making changes.”

(continued on page 3)

# Anti-Trafficking Services

Ashani was pulled out of school in the second grade and was forced to begin working.

After she lost both her six-year-old son and her husband to a natural disaster and was coerced into working for a family as a domestic servant, she traveled with this family to the United States.

One day at five o'clock in the morning, Daniella Cameron of Preble Street Anti-Trafficking Services (ATS) received a call from a victim witness advocate reporting a raid on a townhouse in a wealthy suburb. Just two days prior a woman had escaped from a domestic servitude situation in the middle of the night, flagging down a car. The driver helped get the victim to an attorney, who contacted law enforcement after it became clear there was a second victim in the house. The second victim was Ashani.

During her servitude, she was forced to work from 5am to 1am, was never paid, suffered verbal abuse, had no access to her passport or documents, and was never allowed out of the house.

When Ashani came to Preble Street with only a few belongings, no English, and no support system, the work began to rebuild her life.

While staying at Florence House, ATS connected Ashani with legal representation to help navigate her visa needs and provide support during the prosecution of her trafficker. Within a month, she found an apartment of her own furnished with the help of Blessing Boxes and Furniture Friends. To build social supports, she was connected to a trafficking survivor of the same nationality who experienced similar abuses, and Ashani learned how to navigate the city of Portland through integration classes at Catholic Charities. She is building a community through a cultural competency intensive at Portland Adult Education and has started English classes. While she had no literacy in any of the four languages she speaks when she arrived, now as she learns to speak English, she is also learning to read and write.

Today, Ashani is focused on starting work and seeking justice. When asked what justice means to her, she said she just wants to get paid for her work.

ATS works to achieve justice for individuals — like the reparations for Ashani — as well as justice on a more universal scale by conducting rigorous public awareness and education, promoting systemic solutions, and advocating for public policies that will eliminate exploitation.



## Anti-Trafficking Services in Action

- First in the country to receive a U.S. Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime grant to provide Medication Assisted Treatment to survivors of trafficking who also have a substance use disorder.
- Trained University of Chicago Law School students on trauma-informed legal advocacy.
- Hosted a cross-continental Skype-based training for Fundación Tierra de Esperanza via Bryn Mawr College's Global Classroom, supporting international anti-trafficking work in Chile.
- Partnered with the FBI and U.S. District Attorney's Office on a training for the Maine Department of Corrections.
- Served on a Maine Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers panel.
- Hosted the first Health Care Response to Human Trafficking conference in Maine in partnership with the New England Coalition Against Trafficking, the Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner, and the University of New England Advanced Nursing Education programs. Attended by 200 healthcare, law enforcement, and social service professionals.
- Presented at the 2019 Freedom Network USA (FNUSA) national conference on Housing First for Trafficked Youth. ATS is now a subcontractor for FNUSA's Training and Technical Assistance grant, providing expertise on housing for survivors of trafficking.
- Strengthened partnerships with the Maine Farmworker Resource Network, and met with directors of the Wabanaki Women's Coalition Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Centers and tribal council members to address human trafficking on and off reservations.

I've always felt extremely lucky to work at Preble Street, but perhaps now more than ever. In addition to existing programs, partnerships, and the advocacy work we do each and every day these are just a few of our current goals:

- Fight the opioid epidemic. With United Way support, Health Services staff at the Maine Medical Center-Preble Street Learning Collaborative provide support and referrals to clients who need medication assisted treatment, detox, and sober living options. In addition, a pilot collaboration with Greater Portland Health provides clients who are homeless and at high risk for overdose with daily medication, case management, and wraparound support. And Maine legislation passed that will save lives by providing a system of low-barrier treatment, case management, and housing.
- Provide greater support to survivors of human trafficking by placing a caseworker from Anti-Trafficking Services at the Preble Street office in Bangor.
- End veteran homelessness in Maine by creating a system to connect veterans to housing within 90 days of being identified.
- Expand our cross-disciplinary approach to low-barrier health care for individuals experiencing homelessness, in partnership with Maine Medical Center and Tufts University School of Medicine at the MMC-Preble Street Learning Collaborative.
- Build our fourth Housing First program with Avesta Housing to provide permanent, supported efficiency apartments for people experiencing chronic homelessness.
- Continue to battle hunger by working with the Maine Community College System to assess hunger on community college campuses and advocate for anti-hunger programs at the state and federal level.
- Create a much-needed and long-sought respite program with our partners at Maine Medical Center and Greater Portland Health (for people experiencing homelessness who have medical issues).

**DID YOU KNOW?** Although we have partnered with the City of Portland to address the needs of people who are poor and homeless since the 1990s, Preble Street is a private nonprofit that wholly owns its programs, and **City funding represents significantly less than 1% of agency revenues.**

Equally high among our priorities is responding to the shelter crisis in Portland. As part of the solution, Preble Street is in planning stages to build a Healing Center for women experiencing homelessness who are also survivors of trauma, mental illness, substance use disorder, trafficking, torture, and violence.

When the City is able to build and operate a 24-hour homeless services center to replace the City's Oxford Street Shelter, we will consider winding down services at the Resource Center — one of 13 Preble Street programs — if the services provided at the new city shelter duplicate what the Resource Center does. But not until then.

The Resource Center is not closing, and the building is not for sale. Regardless of any changes at the Resource Center we would continue operating all other Preble Street programs from eight offices in Portland and throughout the state.

Supported and encouraged by volunteers, advocates, and friends and the resolve and determination we see in the eyes of the people we serve, Preble Street will continue to follow its mission and relentlessly pursue social and economic justice for our community.

## WE CAN END VETERAN HOMELESSNESS IN MAINE

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

In 2018, 294 veterans experiencing homelessness were housed.

### Goals for 2019

- End chronic and long-term homelessness among veterans in Maine
- Create a system to house veterans experiencing homelessness in 90 days or less
- *To cross the finish line we need 20 new landlords across the state*

Contact Robert Marcroft, VHS Statewide Housing Liaison:  
207-775-0026 ext. 1295 / [rmarcroft@preblestreet.org](mailto:rmarcroft@preblestreet.org)





# Signs of Hope

## Resource Center

"If I'm going to live long, I need access to decent medical care ... I've had almost no access to the mental health or medical services I need. Having MaineCare is going to change that completely — it's going to be a whole new set of opportunities. It changes my life."

With support from Preble Street caseworkers, Kelly reapplied for MaineCare and received her card. Since Medicaid expansion was signed into law in January, thousands of Mainers like Kelly have been approved for coverage.



## Residential Services

"I still remember when Preble Street staff told me I had an apartment at Florence House ... it was like seeing the stars come out in the sky at night." *Florence House tenant*

"A big part of me getting sober was the support I have here. Staff here are a big help ... the structure of Huston Commons was huge." *Huston Commons tenant*

"Thank you for helping me get an apartment at Florence House. Your kindness will never be forgotten ... I want to turn it into growth, learning, and love for all my brothers and sisters out there dealing with similar life challenges." *Florence House tenant*

"Staff here keep me safe. I wouldn't have survived without the staff." *Logan Place tenant*

"Every time there is an anniversary here I cannot believe that I have been able to overcome my addictions ... for 9 years now ... When it rains and snows I know I don't have to worry about finding a safe place to stay for the night. I have an apartment that I can call home." *Florence House tenant*

## Health Services

"The peak of Sawyer Mountain. This was so awesome. A nice sober day on the sleds with my bro, all thanks to you guys and recovery."

Kevin recently saw the beauty of recovery and shared this photo and message with his Preble Street caseworker following a day spent snowmobiling with a friend.

The Medication Assisted Recovery Program (MARP) run in collaboration between Preble Street and Greater Portland Health provides clients who are homeless and uninsured with daily medication, case management, and wraparound support. After experiencing homelessness and substance use disorder for years, Kevin has been in recovery throughout his involvement with the program.



## Board Profile: Becca Asen

### How did you get involved with Preble Street?

Having grown up in Maine, I have been aware of the important work done by Preble Street for a long time. When my husband and I moved back to Maine, I was struck by how many members of my community were struggling with homelessness and hunger. I wanted to put my legal and finance background to use for Preble Street and reached out to (Executive Director) Mark Swann to see how I could best do that.

### What do you do when you're not at Preble Street?

I like to spend time with my two young kids, my husband, and our extended family here in Maine, especially my newest niece. By day, I am Associate General Counsel at IDEXX and in my spare time I love to get outside when I can. I also am training to run in the New York City marathon, so if you ever see me (slowly) running, give a wave!



Becca Asen, Preble Street Board of Directors, at the Joe Kreisler Teen Shelter

### There are a lot of nonprofit organizations in Maine. What makes Preble Street special?

I believe there are two factors that make Preble Street such an extraordinary organization. The first is historic — as founded by Joe Kreisler, Preble Street began with an ambitious yet simple mission: to provide accessible barrier-free services to empower people in need. This mission flows through all aspects of the work of Preble Street today and remains just as inspiring as it was 40 some years ago. The second is, without a doubt, the staff and volunteers who dedicate their time and their hearts to the work being done to further the Preble Street mission. I am so inspired by the commitment of these individuals to improving the lives of our neighbors.

### Why do you believe others should support Preble Street?

I firmly believe that we all have a duty to help those in our community. By sheer chance we were born into our own families and circumstances and if, by good fortune, we have the time and resources to help others, we are all better off by doing so.

## Today, Preble Street is a strong anti-poverty agency that has many doorways — more than a dozen programs throughout the state.

**ADVOCACY:** Solutions to social, economic, and political systems that do not respond adequately to the needs of people in our communities.

**ANTI-TRAFFICKING SERVICES:** Support for survivors of all forms of human trafficking in Maine.

**FOOD PROGRAMS:** Nutritious meals 3 times a day every day at 3 soup kitchens — and emergency grocery meals at the Food Pantry.

**FIRST PLACE:** Transitional apartments with support services to help homeless youth as they develop skills to establish independent living.

**FLORENCE HOUSE:** Permanent efficiency apartments, semi-private units, and emergency shelter for women experiencing homelessness.

**HOMELESS VOICES FOR JUSTICE:** Advocating with and for people who struggle with homelessness, poverty, and oppression statewide.

**HUSTON COMMONS:** Permanent efficiency apartments with support for adults who have experienced homelessness.

**JOE KREISLER TEEN SHELTER:** Emergency overnight shelter 365 days for youth experiencing homelessness, ages 12-20.

**LOGAN PLACE:** Permanent efficiency apartments with support for adults who have experienced homelessness.

**MAINE HUNGER INITIATIVE:** Strengthening the emergency food system and providing input into state and national policy to end hunger.

**MMC-PREBLE STREET LEARNING COLLABORATIVE:** Health services for patients experiencing homelessness.

**RESOURCE CENTER:** Essential services and support for adults experiencing homelessness and poverty.

**TEEN CENTER:** 365-day access to safety and services for youth experiencing homelessness, ages 12-20.

**VETERANS HOUSING SERVICES:** Homelessness prevention and residential stability for Maine veterans and their families throughout Maine.



## Volunteer Spotlight

On the second Saturday of every month, members of St. Alban's Episcopal Church in Cape Elizabeth and their local community prepare and serve lunch for their fellow Mainers at the Preble Street Resource Center Soup Kitchen. Ranging in age from 15 to 82, group members enjoy the warmth, friendliness, and sense of teamwork the experience brings along with the chance to help meet an important need.

"The closeness of our team, the kind welcome we receive from the Preble Street kitchen staff, the beautiful meal they plan for us to make, and the friendly interactions I have in the dining room are all very powerful incentives to volunteer," says Louise Sullivan, the group's coordinator. "Part of the St. Alban's parish mission is to be the hands and heart of a loving God in the world... I value this opportunity to become a little closer to a part of our community who I normally do not meet."

One Preble Street kitchen staff observed that when St. Alban's is on duty it's like "taking a shift off." With years of experience under their belts, this crew runs like a well-oiled machine — they know exactly what to do and they do it well.

"Every person in the St. Alban's group goes above and beyond the call of duty," says Preble Street Volunteer Manager Ali Brauner. "One volunteer sharpens the knives each visit. Another started coming regularly on his own and was named the February Volunteer of the Month. Their intrepid coordinator, Louise, rallies the troops every month and ensures a smooth operation. This dedicated group of people is a joy to have, doing incredible work and spreading compassion whenever they join."

"By working with St. Alban's at Preble Street we can help in a small way to renew and restore the world," says Louise. "I value being a little wheel in the great work that Preble Street is doing in our community."



*"There are people on this earth who can benefit physically, mentally, and spiritually from fellow human beings who genuinely care about their health and happiness."*

*Louise Sullivan*



### **A BAG OF GROCERIES, A \$5 BILL, YOUR VOICE, OR A PORTION OF AN ESTATE — YOUR GIFTS ARE VITAL TO OUR WORK.**

**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 information visit  
[www.preblestreet.org/you-can-help](http://www.preblestreet.org/you-can-help)**

*Pictured: Resource Development Assistant Ray Hepler poses with a mountain of new socks donated by Sky Footwear.*

## In Honor of Friends

My name is Koral Mitchell. I have experienced homelessness for 10 years throughout my life. Due to one of the Preble Street Housing First Programs, Logan Place, I am happy to say I am currently housed going on five years.

There have been many people who haven't been so lucky. Much more than people would like to realize. One of those people was my partner of over 12 years, Keith Gamache. He passed away last year.

It makes me think about how many other people have been lost due to homelessness. When Keith and I were in the struggle of life on the streets, I imagine it felt a lot like what being institutionalized feels like.

"Our task as a community is not to define people by their situations and experiences — but instead to look at individuals, regardless of their housing status, as people who matter. These people we've lost were mothers and fathers, daughters and sons, sisters and brothers, neighbors and friends."

*Bonnie, advocate*

You never know when you are going to eat, where you are going to sleep, how much violence the day will bring, and with that, losing what little resources we had. All while trying our best to take care of one another. The feeling of no real choices.

Back when I was 12 years old I began my life on the streets. I was an abused child from a broken home. The streets were a rough and dangerous place to be, especially being a young teenager. As I grew older I had to rely on the support of staff, soup kitchens, and shelters. I became entangled in the street life.

I ended up shutting down. Stress gets overwhelming. Mental illness, death, accidents all become an insurmountable demon to face. People have this misconception that it is only limited to one thing. I wish it was that simple.

I am proud to say I am able to be accountable now for my own well-being and work hard every day in honor of those lost.

*Every day, the indignities and trauma of homelessness are experienced in communities throughout Maine. Koral Mitchell, a tenant at Logan Place, shared her story — excerpt shared above — as we gathered on the first day of winter at Portland's Annual Homeless Persons' Memorial Vigil, to remember the lives cut short and recommit ourselves to the task of ending homelessness.*



Koral Mitchell signs "I love you" to her partner, Keith, who passed away in 2018.



### Hope for H.O.U.S.E.

**People struggling with homelessness and opioid use disorder are nine times more likely to die from an overdose than those who are stably housed.**

As hundreds more Mainers are killed by the opioid epidemic, Preble Street is proud that LD 1337: An Act To Save Lives by Establishing a Homeless Opioid Users Service Engagement Program (H.O.U.S.E.) was passed by the Maine Legislature. This critical legislation will support recovery and stability for Maine's vulnerable community members who are struggling with homelessness and opiate use disorder by creating a model of care that brings together low-barrier Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), intensive case management, and flexible housing assistance.

In April, dozens of people including advocates with lived experience (pictured), medical providers, and faith leaders gathered to deliver testimony in support of H.O.U.S.E.



The wind blows

The snow falls

But, you keep going

Pushing and struggling

Through the endless night

# curbside

NEWS FROM PREBLE STREET

Hoping and believing

That the sun will rise

And the warmth return

TO:

## THE MISSION OF PREBLE STREET IS

**TO PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE BARRIER-FREE SERVICES TO EMPOWER PEOPLE EXPERIENCING PROBLEMS WITH HOMELESSNESS, HOUSING, HUNGER, AND POVERTY, AND TO ADVOCATE FOR SOLUTIONS TO THESE PROBLEMS.**

*Pictured: Excerpt of poetry by a youth receiving services at Preble Street*

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