



CONNECTING *the Dots*

The following is an excerpt from Preble Street Executive Director Mark Swann's remarks at the 21st Annual Homeless Person's Memorial Vigil, held on December 21, 2015. Read his entire speech at preblestreet.org

As the Executive Director of Preble Street, I have found myself the past couple of years spending more time defending the work we do. Defending the people we serve. Defending good public policies. I spend more time on defense than I do creating and developing new programs that we know work.

I spend more time on defense than I do advocating for new and better public policies that can help people.

And I spend more time explaining over and over and over again that Portland is not too generous. That Portland is not giving handouts to those who don't deserve it, that alcoholism and heroin addiction is not a choice. That being poor is not an indicator of bad character.

Those in our community who are without homes, who are trying to survive on the streets and in shelters, are not getting away with something. They are not abusing the system.

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curbside

NEWS FROM PREBLE STREET

HOMELESS PERSONS MEMORIAL VIGIL

Last year, Portland lost 43 of its most vulnerable residents, the highest number in two decades since the city began keeping track. Their average age was just 48 years old.

On December 21, a crowd, hundreds strong, led by a bagpiper walked by candlelight from the Preble Street Resource Center to Monument Square for the 21st Annual Homeless Persons Memorial Vigil.

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43 candles. One for each precious life lost in 2015

CONNECTING *the Dots*

CONTINUED FROM COVER

*You know what they are doing?
They are dying.*

43 people this year have died. Some more suddenly than others. And much much younger than those of us with homes. People are dying, right in front of our eyes. A client standing in line to get coffee recently gestured around the dining room and asked me, "Who's next?"

Until we stop blaming people for being poor and shaming people with illnesses, including addictions, we will have more and more candles to light next year.

We need to connect the dots between the numbers of people dying, and the manner in which they've died to public policy. All of us need to do that.

When a shelter closes because of funding cuts, people will die. When addiction treatment services close, people will die. When mental health services are dictated by bureaucracy-driven 15-minute billable units for only those with insurance, people will die. When one of the few remaining apartment buildings in Portland open to poor people is sold to someone who immediately increases the rent above the general assistance limits, people will die. When an out-of-state business can turn 54 units of housing for poor people into upscale hotel rooms because of a loophole in city ordinances, people will die. When wheelchair-bound senior citizens languish in our shelters because there are no nursing home beds available to them, people will die.

*All of these things are happening. All
of these things are real.*

I've come to learn that public policy arises from personal values. Our public policy can never, and will never, be any better than we are as human beings.

Rather than play defense, let's insist on a livable wage. Let's insist on expanding MaineCare. Let's insist on overhauling a mental health system that is almost entirely driven by insurance. Let's demand accessible treatment for addiction disorders.

We must insist that policies in our city, in our state, and in Washington must change. It means we each must pay attention. And we have to let our policy-makers know that we're paying attention. And that the policies they craft and create must be a reflection of what we care about.

*Our public policy must reflect the love
that is in our hearts.*

I urge you all to show up—and speak up—when good public policies are threatened. And show up—and speak up—when bad public policies are being promoted. Keep showing the love. We need that now more than ever.

GOODBYE FRIENDS

IN ADDITION TO THE DOZENS OF HOMELESS MAINERS WHO DIED FROM THE RAVAGES OF HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY, PREBLE STREET LOST SOME OTHER IMPORTANT FRIENDS IN 2015

LEON GORMAN



All of us at Preble Street were deeply saddened by the loss of Leon Gorman, grandson of L.L. Bean, longtime President and CEO of the beloved Maine company, and faithful friend to Preble Street.

A supporter, cheerleader, advisor, and soup kitchen grill master extraordinaire, Leon was a humble, self-effacing man whose deepest desire was to be of use to others. He loved to work hard, and for 12 years he volunteered at the Resource Center soup kitchen, feeding 400 hungry souls every Wednesday morning.

Leon was the real deal. He used his remarkable depth of insight to offer strategic advice and support to dozens of nonprofit organizations.

Preble Street is a better agency for Leon's involvement, and Maine, too, is a better place because of him. All of that is why Preble Street named Leon Volunteer of the Year in 2009, and why the agency is renaming its Volunteer of the Year Award the Leon Gorman Volunteer Service Award.

DAVID ZYSK



The community at Preble Street—staff, clients, advocates, volunteers, collaborative partners, friends—were shocked and heartbroken over the loss of beloved staff member David Zysk.

David had many roles here. He was a caseworker with the Preble Street Clinical Intervention Program and, before that, a peer support navigator. In addition to his direct work with clients, he was a University of Southern Maine social work intern in our advocacy programs, using his insight to empower others to work for justice.

More important than any specific job title, though, David possessed incredible positive energy and the rare ability to be as comfortable sitting on the curb with a client as he was leading a training on harm reduction. David loved his clients and truly believed that anyone could be successful, given the right environment.

He was kind, a sensitive listener, and a tireless advocate. We miss him.

HOMELESS PERSONS MEMORIAL VIGIL

CONTINUED FROM COVER



Cosponsored by Preble Street, Mercy Hospital, Maine Medical Center, and the City of Portland, the event, held on the longest night of the year, is a time to name and light a candle for those who have died and to recommit to the task of ending homelessness.

Among those gathered were people who are or have been homeless, who work with people who are homeless, and who are simply thankful they are not homeless.

Denise Parham, a Preble Street client and one of the speakers, said, "I cried so bad thinking of all the people at Preble Street and Oxford Street who are no longer with us. I wonder, 'Do they have family? Who will bury them? Does anyone care?'"

The human toll of allowing even one of our vulnerable neighbors to slip through the cracks is devastating, not only to those of us who knew and loved the people lost but to the community as a whole.

It's not enough to cry for the dead. True compassion requires taking a stand on behalf of the living. That's what Preble Street does every day as it meets urgent needs, empowers people, advocates for change, and creates solutions to homelessness.



ENDING HUNGER IN MAINE

This summer, 13 Maine Hunger Initiative (MHI) Americorps VISTA volunteers spread out across Androscoggin, Cumberland, Hancock, Lincoln, Oxford, Somerset, and Washington Counties to support summer meal programs for kids, training volunteers, developing programs, and getting the word out about the free meals for the 86,473 (47%) students in Maine who experience hunger.

They are kids who are eligible for free or reduced-priced meals at school, but during vacation months, their families, like Pam's, struggle.

"I'm a single Mom with two kids and I've worked three jobs and managed to make ends meet. But when I was diagnosed with lupus, I just couldn't figure out how to make my budget cover the cost of food any more. During the school year, at least I know the girls can get two good meals every day, but in the summer finding the money to provide extra meals is devastating."

Hand-in-hand with efforts to increase participating in school meals throughout Maine, MHI works to fill the gap during summer vacation, when the nutritional safety net of school meals disappears for almost three months. Summer meals programs offer kids nutritious meals as well as stimulating social, academic, and physical activities.

Children who participate in school meal programs attend more days of school, are more likely to graduate, and ultimately have higher employment rates and better wages. Suffering from growling stomachs, foggy eyes, and aching heads, hungry kids are too distracted to focus or to learn.

MHI is committed to increasing access to USDA meals year round for all Maine students by playing a leadership role in the Task Force to End Student Hunger and bringing a diverse collective voice to support anti-hunger legislation.

We celebrated three major anniversaries in 2015. The agency turned 40, and two important Preble Street programs—HOMELESS VOICES FOR JUSTICE and LOGAN PLACE—also celebrated significant milestones.

A TOP-RATED CHARITY FOR ELEVEN YEARS RUNNING!

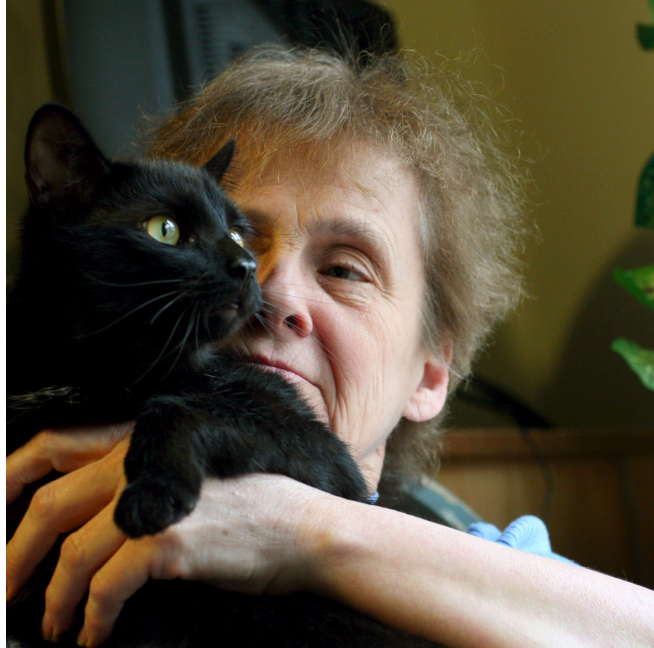
For an eleventh straight year, Preble Street earned a four-star rating—the highest possible—in a 2015 fiscal-year analysis performed by Charity Navigator, the country's largest and most-utilized evaluator of charities. The premier rating is awarded to nonprofits exceeding industry standards and outperforming most charities in their cause category.

"Fewer than one percent of the charities we rate have received at least ten consecutive four-star evaluations," said Ken Berger, President and CEO of Charity Navigator.

Charity Navigator's evaluation covers two broad areas of performance: "financial health" and "accountability and transparency."

The ratings provide donors with information on how efficiently a charity uses philanthropic support, how well it has sustained its programs and services over time, and the level of its commitment

Preble Street's complete Charity Navigator profile can be viewed at charitynavigator.org



10 YEARS OF "HOUSING FIRST" IN MAINE

The night Logan Place opened in 2005 was one of the most wonderful nights in Preble Street history. On that night city shelter numbers in Portland went down for the first time in 20 years.

For 20 years homelessness had been rising and rising. Then one night it plummeted. We have the census from the shelter, and can pinpoint the exact date: March 24, 2005.

That was the night we opened Logan Place; the night we realized we could, in fact, end chronic homelessness. It was a big risk. Not many people thought we could pull it off. But we knew we were onto something, and worked diligently for five years with our partners at Avesta Housing and the Portland Housing Authority to find the right location, the financing to build it, and the funding to pay for the support services there.

Logan Place is a 30-unit apartment building a short walk from downtown Portland. Avesta owns the building and Preble Street runs the round-the-clock social work programming. Residents, on average, lived on the streets or in shelters for over six years. All were fixtures in downtown Portland, panhandling and surviving on street corners and in doorways. Day after day. Month after month. Year after year.

National, state, and local studies all show that 15-20% of people who are homeless use 60-80% of the shelter and homeless services. They are a subset of the homeless population—called chronically homeless—that cannot move on. They languish in shelters, surviving hand-to-mouth in dangerous and tragic circumstances. The vast majority are struggling with chronic mental illness and/or addictions but have given up.

Despite these challenges, we were inspired by Joe Kreisler's words—"I am a human being. Part of my job, part of being alive, is making sure other people are, too." We were weary of hosting dozens of memorial services in our soup kitchen for those we care about who had died on the streets. People who needed homes. Housing is where healing begins.

With our low-barrier, solutions-oriented approach we joined the fledgling "housing first" movement. Being at the forefront of the most effective model ever designed to end chronic homelessness is one of our proudest achievements. People's lives were changed, shelter numbers went down in Portland for the first time ever, and we were able to prove—beyond a doubt—that there are solutions to homelessness.

We need shelters and soup kitchens, but for lasting, permanent change we need housing, housing, housing. For everyone. Logan place did that.



KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON FOR PEOPLE IN NEED FOR 40 YEARS

Preble Street

20 YEARS OF HOMELSS VOICES FOR JUSTICE

Created as the Consumer Advocacy Project, Homeless Voices for Justice is a statewide social change movement, organized and led by people who have struggled with homelessness. It is a grassroots effort based on the belief that true change occurs only when those affected by an unjust system are directly involved in addressing the injustices and in which disenfranchised people become empowered and gain leadership skills to organize and advocate for systemic change.

Since 1995, HVJ has held more than 50 candidate forums engaging candidates for local, state, and national offices; registered more than 2,500 people to vote; spoken out, organized, raised awareness, and informed policy around countless local and statewide issues, including a campaign to prevent illegal evictions from lodging houses and a law, signed by Gov. John Baldacci, to protect people experiencing homelessness from hate crimes.

During the last legislative session alone, HVJ testified on 34 bills—a record number—on a range of issues that impact the most marginalized people in our communities. The bills included support for MaineCare expansion, raising the minimum wage, increasing funding to homeless shelters, increasing access to the life-saving drug Naloxone, and improving access to monthly bus passes. HVJ opposed the Governor's budget proposal and bills that would have cut General Assistance, SNAP, and TANF benefits, and a bill that would have created significant barriers to the voting process.

Advocates also educate the community about the realities of homelessness and to erase the stigma surrounding those living in poverty.

Twice a year HVJ presents a training to cadets at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy on issues around homelessness, providing insight on reducing barriers in responding to crimes and reporting crimes against people who are homeless.



Nursing students from USM's Bayside Community Partnership visit the Resource Center weekly to provide free medical care.

Celebrating Our Birthplace 40 YEARS LATER

Preble Street principles and practices are rooted in partnerships, a constant hallmark throughout our 40-year history. One agency alone cannot meet all community needs. Organizations and institutions can do great work on their own, but working together they can do even more. So much more.

Among our countless public and private collaborative partners are Avesta Housing, the City of Portland, Day One, Portland Housing Authority, Pine Tree Legal Assistance, Maine Medical Center, Goodwill, dozens of law firms, and scores of businesses, faith communities, and schools. We depend on and are indebted to all of them. As we celebrate our 40th anniversary, though, we're especially conscious of the partnership that launched the agency.

Preble Street was founded at the University of Southern Maine when Joe Kreisler—then head of the social work department—decided to incorporate street-level experience into social work training. USM social work students developed the philosophy, the social work approach, and the mission of the first Resource Center, and ran it for 15 years.

Social work interns remain integral to Preble Street, and last year we hosted 15 interns, nine from USM. Well over 400 social work students have worked with Preble Street, the vast majority from USM.

Student interns learn to do social work in a setting that presents the distinct complexities of working with extremely disadvantaged and disempowered people.

Joe believed that learning and teaching are interdependent, and while we are now staffed by professional social workers, we learn from each and every intern.

We're also involved with the University of Southern Maine in a number of other ways:

- Students from the Bayside Community Nursing Partnership visit the Resource Center once a week, doing first aid, blood pressure checks, and foot clinics.
- Preble Street staff are often guest lecturers for USM programs; we are a community service placement site for students in multiple disciplines; and we field inquiries from students doing research on homelessness, hunger, housing, planning and urban development, and community organizing.

Joe Kreisler said that the university needs to be part of the community, not just in the community, walled off and separate. Recent conversations about USM as a metropolitan university echo that mandate; and the partnerships needed to accomplish it—and the mutuality of those partnerships—remind us of our beginnings at Preble Street.

We are grateful to the University of Southern Maine for giving us our start 40 years ago and look forward to many more decades of collaborating to strengthen our community.



Preble Street Associate Director Jon Bradley and Jasmine Hayes, Policy Director for the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness.

FEDERAL AGENCIES TAP PREBLE STREET FOR EXPERTISE ON ENDING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

For years, Preble Street has been on the leading edge of best-practice programs and been asked to share findings with national audiences, and in August, Jon Bradley, Associate Director of Preble Street, presented an expert brief on ending youth homelessness to leadership of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), which consists of 19 federal cabinet secretaries and executive branch agency heads.

Bradley discussed efforts and recommendations for a comprehensive, coordinated response to youth homelessness, based on Preble Street's widely recognized harm-reduction approach and broad spectrum of services to engage youth and support their treatment goals and housing stability. In addition to its distinct collaborations and inclusion of several diverse populations, such as immigrants and LGBTQ youth, two recent Preble Street initiatives—Maine's first statewide homeless youth count, and First Place, a transition in-place housing program for homeless youth—were of particular interest to USICH.

Jasmine Hayes, policy director for USICH, said Preble Street "epitomizes the ideal of 'keeping youth at the center of this work' ... thinking about the kind of response we'd expect if it was our own child or family member trying to access services, the expectations we would have for their long-term success as they transition to adulthood, and the kinds of resources that should be available to them. They demonstrate that while public systems remain fragmented and resources remain inadequate, they can and must press forward to improve the lives of youth, navigating challenges and problem-solving issues as they go."

VOLUNTEER PROFILE: BILL GOODYKOONTZ

For 12 years Bill Goodykoontz of Cape Elizabeth has been a uniquely valuable presence at Preble Street, volunteering three mornings each week since 2004, first at the Resource Center and then at Florence House.

Answering the phone, greeting clients at the desk, folding laundry, opening showers, listening to and advocating on behalf of clients, or using humor to diffuse tension, Bill continuously demonstrates what it means to be a kind, open-minded, insightful, and helpful human being. And Bill has also facilitated writing groups for clients, a profound process that opens a window on their life experiences.

His gentle, calm approach makes clients feel secure, and he also adds a grounding presence among staff and volunteers. He works hard, he honors the work of caseworkers, he invokes the spirit of loving-kindness that is at the center of our social work. Those of us who are fortunate enough to work beside him are better social workers because of him. Bill makes a positive difference not just through his words and actions, but simply through his being.

Because of his skills, dependability, positive attitude, and alignment with the Preble Street mission and values, Bill's contributions quickly exceeded expectations, and he was recognized as Volunteer of the Year in 2006.

An excerpt from a letter Bill recently wrote expresses his exceptional commitment:

"Preble Street is the place I go to meet God in various disguises. It is the place I go to deepen my compassion, to grow in my caring for one another, and to pursue right action."

"Cornel West writes that love is a steadfast commitment to the well-being of others, especially the least of these, and justice is what love looks like in public. Preble Street epitomizes justice and what love looks like in public. I hope I can find ways to help you continue to work tomorrow, and next week, and next month, and next year until your fine care-taking and advocacy put you out of business." - Bill Goodykoontz



Longtime volunteer, Bill Goodykoontz



HOW YOU CAN HELP

WHETHER IT'S A BAG OF GROCERIES, A \$5 BILL, OR A PORTION OF AN ESTATE, YOUR GIFTS ARE VITAL TO OUR WORK.

BY VOLUNTEERING

- SOUP KITCHENS:** Cook, serve, and clean up at three meals a day.
- FOOD PANTRY:** Sort and distribute emergency groceries on Thursdays.
- CLOTHING CLOSETS:** Help sort and distribute clothing donations.
- OFFICE SUPPORT:** Help in the offices with filing, phones, and mailings on a one-time or ongoing basis.
- LOGAN PLACE AND FLORENCE HOUSE:** Help tenants build community through game nights, clubs, and events.

WITH IN-KIND DONATIONS

- SOUP KITCHEN.** Coffee, tea, cereal, juice, cooking oil, rice, pasta, and salad dressing.
- FOOD PANTRY.** Pasta, rice, beans, soup, tuna, canned tomatoes, and spaghetti sauce.
- CLOTHING.** Year round: Socks, new underwear (for men, women, and teens), jeans, boots, sneakers, and hooded sweatshirts. Winter: Jackets, hats, gloves (large and durable), and thermal underwear.
- SHELTER ESSENTIALS.** Towels, backpacks, duffle bags, and laundry detergent.
- PERSONAL HYGIENE PRODUCTS.** Deodorant, razors, shaving cream, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, combs, and sunscreen.
- TEEN NEEDS.** Sports equipment (footballs, basketballs, soccer balls, frisbees), art supplies, movie tickets, bus tickets.
- GROUP SUPPLIES.** Playing cards, art and craft supplies, Scrabble, chess, checkers, date books, ESL books, knitting needles, yarn, books and magazines.

WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- CASH, CHECKS, OR CREDIT CARDS**
- STOCKS OR SECURITIES**
- FUNDRAISERS:** Proceeds from concerts, house parties, bottle drives, empty bowl dinners, casual dress days—at your church, school, business, neighborhood—will help.
- TRIBUTE GIFTS:** Honor a special friend or family member. Sending a tribute card to someone will make your congratulations, love, or sympathy more meaningful. When you make a donation to Preble Street, we can send a card announcing your gift.
- PLANNED GIVING:** Talk to your financial advisor about methods you can use that can provide tax benefits, meet your financial needs, fulfill your charitable intentions, and further our mission. We will be happy to work with your estate planning professional.

Every hour and every dollar that you invest helps those most in need. You can donate in person, by mail, or online: 38 Preble Street, Portland, Maine 04101, or preblestreet.org For more information, call 775.0026 or e-mail development@preblestreet.org.

BOARD PROFILE: JUDY BERTRAM

How did you get involved with Preble Street?

I learned about Preble Street through the Greater Portland United Way and my introduction to the agency was as a breakfast volunteer. One of my most gratifying experiences has been the opportunity to serve breakfast to clients.

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

I have a concierge service, Consider It Done. I help retired folks and busy executives manage their lives.

What is most distinctive about Preble Street?

I have witnessed Preble Street flourish from a small grassroots effort to the incredible highly-regarded nonprofit it is today. Executive Director Mark Swann and the other staff have made Preble Street the premier social service agency in Greater Portland

Why is that important to you?

I am always very proud to say I am a longtime board member, and I always experience an enthusiastic reaction from new friends and business acquaintances when I share that.

What are the biggest challenges Preble Street faces?

So many folks depend on the wide array of services at Preble Street that I do worry about keeping pace with the growing need.

Being a nonprofit board member can be very time consuming. What makes it worthwhile?

I know the staff are always doing as much as they can to help improve clients' lives. Everyone at Preble Street is so capable and caring, and I think clients feel fortunate that these professionals are looking out for them.

curbside

NEWS FROM PREBLE STREET

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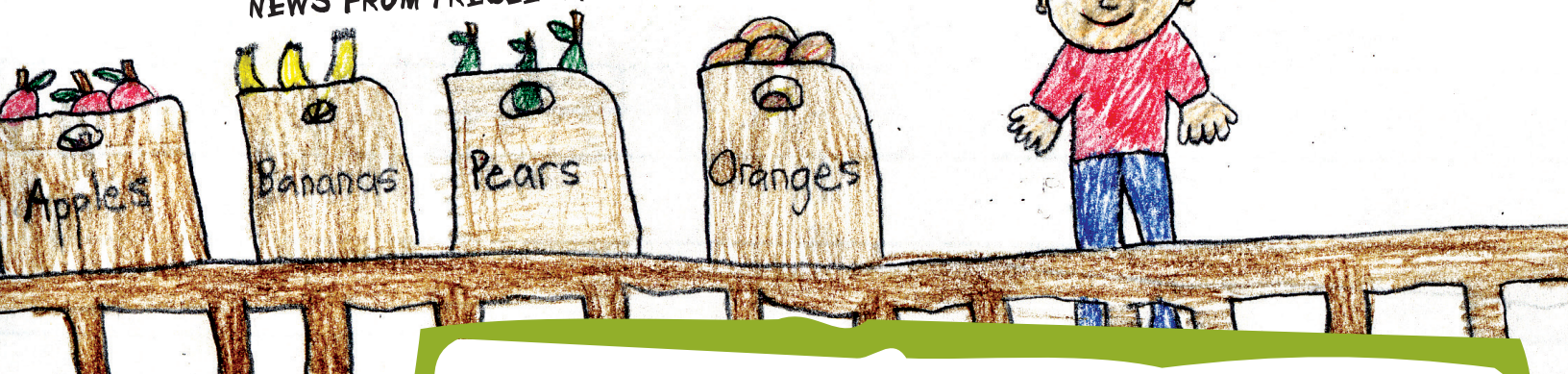


Illustration By: **Jackson B.**
Field Trip to Preble Street Resource Center

TO:

OUR MISSION

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.

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