“We can no longer shuffle our homeless neighbors around. We need to end their homelessness.”

PHILIP MANGANO
FORMER DIRECTOR UNITED STATES INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS
WITH A DRAMATIC LOSS OF BOARDING HOMES AND OTHER AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS, HOMELESSNESS IN PORTLAND HAS INCREASED 100% SINCE 1993. AND AS SHELTER COUNTS ROSE, WOMEN REPRESENTED THE FASTEST GROWING GROUP.

By 2005 the Oxford Street Shelter—the only emergency overnight shelter for adults—was overflowing; and women there were outnumbered by men 4:1.

Then in 2006, when the YWCA closed its doors, crisis turned into a catastrophe as the city lost 25 shelter beds and 35 single room housing units for homeless and poor women.

From 2007 to 2010, Preble Street stepped in to provide an overnight shelter for homeless women whose troubled lives are awash with domestic violence, illness, trauma, and educational and vocational deficits.

- No one wants to be homeless
- Supportive housing helps people live more stable and productive lives
- Supportive housing is cost-effective

Leanne had been homeless for half her life. Mentally and physically abused she turned to the streets and shelters....
no one's mother should have to live here.
The women at Florence House are as young as 18, as old as 85. They are women who have lost everything including their families and their homes. Some of them stayed with friends temporarily. Some slept in the woods, others in a bus station or a car. Some spent every hour of every day for months and years trying to survive on the streets, alone.

Women who live in shelters and on the streets are more vulnerable to assault, have a higher rate of active psychosis, are more fearful of service providers, and are more negatively affected by shelter and street survival than men.

Frequently victims of abusive relationships, 70% of the women report that they have stayed in domestic violence situations in the past because they had no other place to go and 44% have been sexually assaulted while homeless.

Often possessing limited life skills and struggling with low self-esteem, they are women who need housing that offers opportunities for supports and reduces requirements that present barriers to safe housing.

Our vision is that no woman will ever again have to sleep on a mat on the floor of a shelter in Maine.

“My heart was broken. I slept in fear for years, forced to keep company with people I knew I’d be better without.”
She dreamt of a place where she wouldn’t have to guard her shoes. Where she wouldn’t feel “dead inside.”

bringing Maine women home for good.
She dreamt of a place where she wouldn’t have to guard her shoes. Where she wouldn’t feel “dead inside.”

WHILE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ARE HOMELESS HAS GROWN IN PORTLAND AND OTHER URBAN AREAS, THE COLLABORATIVE SAFETY NET THAT EXISTS IN PORTLAND HAS PROVIDED AN EXCELLENT FOUNDATION ON WHICH TO BUILD MODEL PROGRAMS TO CREATE PERMANENT, SUPPORTED HOUSING, ONE THAT CAN BE REPLICATED IN OTHER CITIES AND HOMELESS CONTINUUMS ACROSS THE NATION.

Florence House was inspired by the success of Logan Place, the original “housing first” model created by an Avesta Housing and Preble Street partnership that has focused on creating stable, accessible housing for those who are the most vulnerable and underserved.

Housing first works because it removes barriers, builds trust, and creates community.

Since 2005, Logan Place has provided apartments and 24-hour supportive services to chronically homeless people in Portland for whom there had been no appropriate housing options. Tenants volunteer in the community. Some go back to work. Others volunteer in the community. Their health improves; they reconnect to families; they work on mental health and substance abuse problems.

In addition “housing first” has a dramatic affect on the shelter system. Three years after Logan Place opened the City of Portland reported the percentage of chronically homeless people down from 37% to 19%.

At Florence House we will continue to end homelessness. Not manage it, not deal with it, but end it.

Once people have a home and are off the street and no longer worried about day-to-day survival, they...work on improving their lives. The stability of having a home is the key.

PORTLAND PRESS HERALD
“SOLUTIONS FOR HOMELESSNESS: HOMES”
removing barriers, building trust, and creating community.
Florence House is named after Florence Young, a social worker, who played many roles at Preble Street for over 20 years: Intern, staff, and board member. Florence helped create and continues to embody the agency’s philosophy and values, bringing incredible compassion and commitment to her work.

Florence House provides permanent, supported housing to chronically homeless women in Portland, Maine. It is based on approaches to homelessness and chronic mental illness that have emerged nationally as successful strategies for ending homelessness and on experience at the Preble Street Day Shelter and Logan Place.

Florence House includes three types of housing:

**Apartments**—25 furnished apartments that include a kitchen, bathroom, and living/sleeping area.

**Safe Haven**—15 semi-private living spaces for women who are not yet ready to manage a household. This setting offers shared areas and helps women feel safe and begin to develop trust, self-assurance, and the skills to become more independent.

**Emergency Beds**—10-25 emergency beds provide immediate, short-term housing for temporarily homeless women.

Avesta Housing owns, maintains, and manages the building.

Preble Street provides 24-hour support services, including food programs, basic needs, and social work services.

“Now I can make friends, cook, share with my neighbors. . . and begin to further my education.”
At Florence House, Leanne's dreams are coming true.
The mission of Avesta is to promote and provide housing opportunities primarily for Southern Maine people in need. Avesta advocates for affordable housing, develops and manages high quality rental housing, and helps residents access other supportive services.

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.