Great News from the Kresge Foundation!

One of the many joys in my job at Preble Street is educating others about all we do here, how we do it, and why we do it. I talk about that all the time—with other agencies, funders, elected officials, policy-makers, media, community groups, etc. And sometimes they really get it.

The Kresge Foundation certainly does. Headquartered in Troy, Michigan, Kresge is a major private philanthropic foundation that works to expand opportunities in America’s cities through grants and investing in arts and culture, education, environment, health, human services, and community development efforts.

At our Board of Directors meeting in May, longtime Preble Street board member Elaine Rosen, who also serves on the Kresge Board of Trustees, surprised us all (me especially) with the news that the organization had awarded us a $750,000 grant, to be paid over three years. This is amazing news! The Board, and the staff present, were absolutely floored (me especially).

As wonderful as the news itself was, Elaine sweetened it even more by reading some comments about Preble Street from Kresge staff that I’d like to share with you:

Preble struck me as many things, all of which seemed to be quietly essential to Portland’s cultural fabric. It was at once an anchor amidst instability; a refuge for those who’ve lost most others; a source of warmth and love in a cold winter; a place of goodwill and cohesion; one of increasingly few common spaces in which folks from different walks of life truly become a community.

I was particularly struck by the story of one of Preble’s clients who spoke with us. She had grown up in Bloomfield Hills, a daughter of wealth and privilege with all of the advantages that come with it. At college, she developed a debilitating mental illness—which plagued her to such a degree that she was forced to drop out, was turned away by her family, and was chronically homeless, moving from one community to another to another, each associated with just gut-wrenching traumas. Preble and Portland, she said, were the first communities that truly took her in, that opened their arms and gave her a shot at beginning her life anew. Her journey from Bloomfield to Portland was sad and remarkable; it speaks to the uniqueness and importance of Preble even on a national scale. - Ari Simon, Chief Strategy Officer, Kresge Foundation.
(This grant) reflects our foundation's belief that Preble Street consistently operates at the highest order of excellence and impact. Kresge is honored - and I genuinely believe that - to be able to support work delivered with such skill and compassion to so very many people whose dire life circumstances shouldn't be permitted to obscure their need to be treated with respect and dignity. Bravo to Mark and his staff for their unfailing commitment to that principle. – Rip Rapson, President and CEO, Kresge Foundation.

The Kresge Foundation is one of the largest and most respected charitable foundations in the world. While it's great to get funds from them, it is also great to know that they really understand, honor, and respect the work we do here at Preble Street.

- Swannie

2014 Annual Meeting

The 2014 Preble Street Annual Meeting took place on Tuesday, June 17, at the Italian Heritage Center. Staff, board members, volunteers, and community partners gathered to celebrate the Preble Street mission and all the work that goes into meeting urgent needs, advocating for change, and empowering people.

Each year we recognize the people whose passion and hard work have helped us realize our mission. This year, several staff members were honored for their years of service.

- 5 years: Donna Bilodeau, Daniella Cameron, Charlotte DeTroy, Ben Graham, and Mary Beth Sullivan
- 10 years: Cindy Kamszik
- 15 years: Peter Adams and Jon Bradley.

In addition to the staff service awards, Edie White, LCSW, a hospice social worker, was recognized as Board Member of the Year, and Lin Lisberger, a Florence House volunteer and an art lecturer at the University of Southern Maine, was honored as Volunteer of the Year.

The 2014 Joseph D. Kreisler Community Impact Award was given to longtime ally Don Harden, director of elder services at Catholic Charities of Maine. Presenting the award with David Kreisler, Mark Swann said, “We wanted to honor Don for his values and for what he stands for. He cares deeply about social and economic justice, and he has spent his career doing something about it. Not just talking the talk, but walking the walk. Without fail we always have known we can count on Don to act, to advocate, to stand with us at Preble Street. Don always shows up, he’s always steady and reliable, always smart and strategic, always a believer.”

The Preble Street Community Partner Award was presented to the Maine Homeless Legal Clinic. David Soley of Bernstein Shur accepted the award on behalf of the clinic founders (American Bar Association, The Volunteer Lawyers Project, and Pine Tree Legal Assistance) and the volunteer lawyers from more than a dozen local firms involved, including:
In presenting the award, associated director Jon Bradley noted that, while this honor is usually reserved for longstanding Preble Street partners, the Maine Homeless Legal Clinic had already made a serious impact in the lives of homeless Mainers in just the few months it had been operating.

“Clients are being met with respect, with active listening. They’re really feeling like they have advocates and allies. Their legal needs are being met. They’re being taken seriously,” said Amy Russell, Resource Center Supervisor, of the project.

And the love goes both ways. According to Soley, “Preble Street’s staff are amazing people. They are there to help you in any way needed. They’re a well-oiled machine. As an attorney, you literally don’t have to bring anything but your skills and expertise.”

**Resource Center**

**Portland Job Alliance Helps Get Mainers to Work**

As part of the Portland Jobs Alliance, a new CDBG project, Employment Caseworker Michelle Boisvert will work with 25 homeless individuals to create an employment plan. Project partner agencies will provide programming, training, and education for participants, and Preble Street will provide follow-up case management. People enrolled in this program will be referred to, and ideally employed by, area businesses that have agreed to hire Jobs Alliance clients.

**Logan Place**

2nd Annual Logan Place Art Show a Success!

On June 20, Logan Place tenants held their 2nd Annual Art Show. Five artists participated, including a photographer, a sculptor, and three artists who submitted drawings and paintings. Tenants sold more than $140 dollars worth of artwork, with all proceeds going directly to the artists, two of whom had never participated in an art show or sold their work before. In addition to creating all the art on display, tenants prepared and served more than 60 plates of food. It was a huge success!

Block Party

Logan Place hosted a block party on a gray May 23 for the Frederic Street neighborhood. Avesta Housing provided the food, and Logan Place staff provided games and entertainment for tenants and neighbors. Though the weather was dreary and drizzly, smiles and bright spirits were in abundant supply.

**Teen Services**

Preble Street Anti-Trafficking Coalition

Operating only since May, the program has served 12 trafficking victims, seven of whom found housing.
**First Place Gives Homeless Teens a Fresh Start**
After searching long and hard to find landlords willing to work with the program, all but one of the program’s six youth have an apartment, are moving in, paying rent, learning to cook for themselves, and taking on all of the other responsibilities of independent, adult life.

**Teen Center Clients Apply for Scholarships**
With the help of Multicultural Caseworker Dieudonne Bizumuremyi, seven youth completed applications for the Maine Competitive Skills Scholarship Program, which helps workers learn new skills and succeed in a changing economy. Open to all qualified Maine residents, the program pays for education and training for high-wage jobs in demand in Maine, such as fire fighting, business, pharmacy, and nursing.

**Street Academy Primes Homeless Teens for Success**
In June Preble Street provided caps and gowns for 22 exceptionally proud and hardworking teens who earned their high school diploma or G.E.D. with the help of the Portland Adult Education Street Academy, which has been a Teen Services partner working at the Teen Center for 19 years to help homeless youth get the education and vocational skills they need to improve their lives.

Among this year’s graduates were Heather and Izzy, two young women who said they struggled to succeed in a traditional classroom.

“I had horrible grades in high school, and I really didn’t think I could do it at all, but this was a great alternative. Joline and Joel were just super supportive. They’re here five days a week and you can come in on your own schedule,” said Heather, adding that earning a degree through the High School Equivalency Test is not taking the easy way out. “No one can drag you through these doors and make you do it. You have to be the one to decide this is important enough to make the effort.”

For Izzy, it wasn’t academics, but constant bullying and harassment by other students that led her to leave school. It took the patient support of her Teen Center caseworker to help Izzy find the self-confidence to give Street Academy a try.

“Megan made me believe I could do it, so I tried and I succeeded. Street Academy gave me so much one-on-one time, and lots of encouragement and support. It definitely helps kids get on the right track,” said Izzy, who plans to enroll in Southern Maine Community College this fall to study social work.

**Food Programs**

**Annual Client Picnic: Sun, Fun, and Delicious Food**

With an estimated 200 hamburgers, hot dogs, and LOBSTER ROLLS served (thanks to a generous donation from Calendar Island Seafood), clients and staff enjoyed a summer feast at Fort Williams, playing football, hacky sack, Frisbee, and cards, and taking in a beautiful July day on the shore, accompanied by Homeless Voices for Justice Advocate Jim Devine.
Advocacy

Maine Equal Justice Partners, Preble Street, the American Psychological Association, the Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Medical Association have signed onto an amicus brief to protect MaineCare for 19- and 20-year-olds, an age group the state has historically committed to covering.

From mid-June to mid-July, MHI staff and HVJ advocates collected more than 550 surveys as part of the “Solutions to Poverty Project,” in partnership with Maine Equal Justice Partners and the University of Maine. Surveys were completed by clients of all Preble Street programs, as well as at HVJ chapters in Augusta, Brunswick, and Lewiston, and at other social service agencies in Portland. It offered people experiencing poverty an opportunity to share their thoughts about solutions and results will be used to support efforts to combat negative rhetoric about people living in poverty.

Maine Hunger Initiative

- The Summer Food Service Program is running at full speed, opening 12 new summer meals sites—six in Hancock County and six in Cumberland County—and working with Summer Meals sponsors in Androscoggin, Cumberland, Hancock, and Oxford Counties to support a total of 67 summer meal sites.
- With 1,200 donated books from Volunteers of America and Scholastic, MHI launched a book distribution at the Moore Park Summer Meal Site in South Paris, where 200 kids picked free books to feed their minds, promoting the Summer Meal Site goals to make sure children head back to school ready to learn.
- MHI was a lead proponent and is participating in the Task Force to End Student Hunger, a statewide public/private effort to reach the 83% of eligible Maine children who are not participating in USDA Child Nutrition Programs (school breakfast, lunch, after school meals, or summer meals).
- Working with a lobbyist from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland, MHI is advocating for a time limit waiver for SNAP benefits. If the governor doesn’t approve the waiver, Maine will lose $193 million in benefits over the next three years that will impact more than 25,000 households with an average annual income of only $2,500 and result in $328 million in lost state revenue. Soup kitchens and food pantries will not be able to absorb the increased demand that will result from these cuts.
- As of July 1st, the Maine DHHS started putting photos on EBT cards statewide, a program MHI opposes because it shames people, criminalizes poverty, is confusing for EBT recipients and for retailers, will make it harder to use benefits, and will cost the state more money.
- At a Maine State Housing Authority public hearing, MHI testified on behalf of mitigating a Federal cut to Low Income Heating Assistance Program (LIHEAP) “Heat and Eat” program, which provides additional supplemental nutrition benefits to households receiving home heating assistance. Previously, households were eligible for increased food aid if they had received $1 in home heating assistance. The Agriculture Act of 2014 changed that threshold to $20. If Maine committed to providing an additional $100,000 in state funding, it would leverage more than $7 million in Federal LIHEAP “Heat and Eat” funds to help Mainers in need.

Farewell, Bowdoin Fellow!
In early August, Preble Street Maine Hunger Initiative said goodbye Bowdoin Fellow Tenzin Tsagong. Tenzin is junior, majoring in government and legal studies with a minor in sociology. She’s been a committed Preble Street volunteer, spending her Bowdoin Alternative Winter Break with us for the past two years.

This summer, as part of her Community Matters in Maine Summer Fellowship project, she worked on supporting and implementing the USDA Summer Food Service Program Summer Meals for kids in underserved communities across nine Maine counties, identifying eligible sites and finding potential community partners and site locations.

Preble Street is proud of the many young people, like Tenzin, who use their energy and intelligence to empower people experiencing homelessness, hunger, and poverty, and to advocate for solutions to these problems.
HVJ is gearing up for the 20th annual You Don’t Need a Home to Vote campaign with the 2014 election right around the corner. In addition to voter registration efforts to get people experiencing homelessness to the polls on November 4th, HVJ will host 11 candidates’ forums at shelters in Portland, Brunswick, Lewiston, Augusta, and Bangor, including forums for Governor, U.S. Senate, U.S. Congress (both Districts 1 and 2), Maine State House, and Maine State Senate in Portland, Augusta, Brunswick and Lewiston, as well as City/Town Council races in Portland, Augusta, and Brunswick.

Homeless Voices for Justice Protests DHHS Move
HVJ continues to organize ongoing monthly demonstrations at the DHHS offices, 161 Marginal Way—in support of keeping DHHS local and accessible in downtown Portland. The move from the downtown Portland service hub to South Portland will present a significant hardship to people unable to afford to travel to the new site. Participating in the demonstration with HVJ on June 18 was Senate President Justin Alfond, who decried this move that “represents a war on the poor.”

HVJ Marks the Longest Day of Homelessness
On June 20, HVJ staged the 7th annual daylong “sit-out” in Post Office Park to increase community awareness of homelessness. From sunrise to sunset, HVJ advocates and members of the larger community sat in solidarity with homeless Mainers to bring attention to the tragedy of homelessness in Portland and the time people who are homeless wait in lines to access meals, showers, a bathroom, shelter, and other necessities.

HVJ at Maine Criminal Justice Academy
HVJ presents twice each year to the cadets at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy and recently received excellent ratings and feedback on their training on issues of homelessness in “Reducing Barriers in Responding to Crimes” from the cadets. The following was a typical evaluation response (5 being “Superior”):

1. The instructor(s) met class goals and objectives. 5 4 3 2 1
2. The instructor(s) were well prepared for class. 5 4 3 2 1
3. The quality of the material presented was: 5 4 3 2 1
4. The professionalism of instructor(s) was: 5 4 3 2 1
5. The instructor(s) methodology of instruction was: 4 3 2 1
6. Class support material (handouts, power point, etc.) were: 4 3 2 1

Specific comments related to class and/or instructors:

All of the instructors were very knowledgeable about the topic. It was interesting to have a first-hand experience instructor who had been homeless before. This class helped us shed some of the stigma that goes along with the homeless.
**Veteran Healthcare Outreach**

With a two-year grant from Maine Health Access Foundation, we have hired longtime Homeless Voices for Justice advocate Thomas Ptacek as Veterans Healthcare Outreach Organizer to educate and enroll veterans statewide in health insurance plans through the Affordable Care Act. Thomas has done outreach to 35 organizations and gatherings from Scarborough to Bangor to Standish, to engage veterans in the ACA.

**In the Works**

**New Residential Support Program**
Starting October 1, Preble Street will implement a new program to provide case management and support to move people who are chronically homeless to permanent scattered site housing. Partnering with Shalom House, Inc., which administers the Shelter Plus Care program, the RSP team will find housing for 60 individuals during the two-year initial phase that is funded by a HUD Continuum of Care grant.

**Planning Priorities**

**Women’s Recovery House**
The Cathedral Church of St. Luke and Preble Street are exploring a partnership for a peer-supported women’s recovery house in cooperation with Mercy Hospital McAuley Residence.

**Housing First Apartments for Medically Compromised**
Avesta Housing is hoping to build 30 supported apartments based on the successful partnership with Preble Street at Logan Place and Florence House. The project is dependent upon finding service funding, a medical partner and planning board and city council review.

**Affordable Housing Options**
Preble Street is also discussing with private developers the alternative options for affordable independent permanent housing to reduce Portland’s shelter overflow.

**Board of Directors**

**Farewell, Charlie Roscoe!**
In June, the Preble Street Board of Directors said goodbye to outgoing board member Charlie Roscoe, who has served on the Board since 2008. Charlie not only was a committed Board member and treasurer but also has been a dedicated volunteer at Logan Place for many years. During our Annual Meeting in June, Mark Swann presented him with a plaque commemorating his service and a handmade African shirt in honor of his work as president of Schools for Refugees, an education nonprofit that supports primary schools in Africa.

**Board of Directors Welcomes Two New Members**
Preble Street recently welcomed two new members to its Board of Directors:

- **Jane Bradley**, of Freeport, is a retired Maine District Court Judge, a position she held for 26 years, presiding in the Portland District Court for most of that time. In addition to Preble Street, she serves on the board of the Freeport Players, a nonprofit community theater, and plays keyboard for the band Not Too Shaap.

- **Yemaya St. Clair**, of Portland, is a writer and development professional. She serves on the boards of the Quimby Family Foundation and SPACE Gallery, in addition to Preble Street, is a graduate of the University of Washington and is pursuing a master of science in counseling at the University of Southern Maine.
Volunteers

Volunteer Appreciation Event

“Volunteering is part of who I am. It’s what I do. Preble Street is like family!” declared a long-time volunteer at this spring’s Volunteer Appreciation event hosted by Gelato Fiasco in Portland. Gelato Fiasco not only donated gelato for volunteers but also donated the proceeds from paying customers!

In addition to volunteering, youth have also stepped up to help their neighbors in need through donations and fundraisers including a Girl Scout teen clothing drive, the Lyman Moore Middle School Hunger Awareness group at First Friday Art Walks and local lemonade stands. It’s great to see young people connect with the greater needs in their community. No donation is too small, especially when their hearts are so big!

New volunteer works like a dog!

One of the newest Preble Street volunteers is Woody, a certified therapy dog who drops in weekly at the Teen Center. We have already seen Woody bring many smiles to the teens’ faces. One young woman even taught Woody to shake.

Student Volunteers

Students from Cheverus, Cape Elizabeth High, Gorham High, and North Yarmouth Academy did their senior projects at Preble Street, and students from Yarmouth High, King Middle School, Falmouth Middle School, and Highview Christian Academy all helped at Preble Street on school-wide days of service—working in the kitchen, the clothing closet, and the Resource Center mailroom, and cleaning the neighborhood.

Development

Power to Help Fund Benefits Preble Street Teen Center

In April, Electricity Maine presented Preble Street with a generous gift of $20,000 from the Power to Help Fund, which was created to support communities served by Electricity Maine.

Power to Help supports non-profit organizations whose work focuses on one of four categories—homelessness prevention, access to education, healthy living, or hunger prevention—to help residents obtain the skills and resources they need to create better lives for themselves and their families.

“A Heartfelt Gift

In July, the Development department received a $64,000 bequest from the estate of a former client. A letter from the man’s sister, the executor of his estate, explained that he had been a regular at the Preble Street food pantry. She described him as a “troubled soul” suffering from manic depression, and said he had found an open and welcoming community at Preble Street, where he fit in and was accepted. She expressed deep appreciation that we welcomed her brother and cared about him at a time in his life when few others did.
Diversified Communications Staff Fight Hunger
On Monday, July 21st, employees from Diversified Communications, a leading international media company, delivered 6,841 pounds of food to the Preble Street Food Pantry.

Four Diversified employees issued a challenge to their 200 colleagues to collect 2,000 pounds of food in support of their “Help Stop Summer Hunger! Food Drive & Competition. Their colleagues met the challenge three times over and loaded a delivery truck loaned by W.B. Mason with more than 6,000 pounds of food, a $10,000 equivalent, because we “know that families’ need for food increases when children are out of school,” said Janice Rogers, Diversified’s Vice President of Human Resources.

Community Events to Support Preble Street
ASAP Taxi, hosted a benefit for Preble Street at Geno's Rock Club; Dyer Elementary donated proceeds from their annual Arty Party art show and sale; Eight Great Plates, hosted by Allagash Brewing, featured dishes from eight local chefs, all to benefit Preble Street; Flatbread hosted a Tuesday Benefit Night for Preble Street in May; Maine YogaFest 2014, a diverse two-day program featuring talented Maine yoga practitioners, instructors, artists, musicians, and businesses; Taste of the Nation, created a sellout event to end childhood hunger with 100% of ticket sales directly supporting Share our Strength efforts to end childhood hunger in Maine; Otto Pizza, in celebration of their fifth year in Portland, brought 50 of their signature pies to Florence House and the Teen Center on June 17th, in exchange for posting an “Eat Otto” message on the landmark Time and Temperature Building, owned by the Law Offices of Joe Bornstein.

For up-to-date listings of Preble Street events, visit www.preblestreet.org/events AND follow us on Facebook!

Spreading the Word
Preble Street is committed to developing and sharing innovative approaches based on its experience, research, and success in addressing the problems of homelessness and hunger and effecting change on the local, state, national, and even international level. During recent months staff have represented Preble Street near and far:

Associate Director Jon Bradley was at the White House for First Lady Michelle Obama’s announcement of the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness.

Resource Center Coordinator Bill Burns conducted a staff training for the CAP Quality Care methadone clinic in Westbrook.

Robbie Jones, Debra Hook, and Kerri Dunton from the Veterans Housing Services office in Bangor, trained Pine Tree Legal Assistance statewide on working with difficult clients.

Advocacy Coordinator Amy Gallant, Development Coordinator Melanie McKean, and Maine Hunger Initiative Program Manager Michelle Lamm were on the Advisory Council, planning performances of Portland Ovations Who’s Hungry, a multimedia puppet show to generate discussion and action that can reduce poverty and hunger. Partly due to dozens of postcards sent from the viewers, LD 1819 was enacted to create a Task Force to expand school breakfast, lunch, after-school snacks, and summer meals to schools and communities across the state.
In the News

The following is a partial listing of Preble Street media mentions over the last few months. For a more complete list, visit our website: www.preblestreet.org/news AND follow us on Facebook!

- August 21: Portland Mayor Michael Brennan and Cullen Ryan, executive director of Community Housing of Maine joined Homeless Voices for Justice in a march to protest the Portland DHHS move: Critics call DHHS Move a No-Win.
- August 20: Preble Street staffers were among the loudest voices at a recent public hearing about the governor’s plan to cut food benefits: Plan to Restrict SNAP Benefits in Maine Meets Strong Resistance.
- August 18: Maine Hunger Initiative gets a mention in Our View: Food Programs for Children Advance Slowly, an editorial about Maine’s growing hunger crisis.
- July 30: In Filling the Void, the Current’s editor also mention’s MHI’s work in connection with childhood hunger in Maine.
- July 25: Longtime volunteers Joe Conroy and Dick Yerxa were featured in a WCSH report about the South Portland-Cape Elizabeth Rotary.
- July 19: Bill Nemitz featured former Teen Center client Danyelle Carson in All you really need is heart to advocate for Maine kids, a column about the Court Appointed Special Advocate program.
- July 17: Amy Gallant and dee Clarke were featured in a Down East Magazine article, Panhandling on the Rise.
- July 13: The Portland Press Herald published Permanent housing best way to help homeless, an editorial promoting Housing First as the solution to homelessness.
- July 10: In Portland’s Oxford Street Shelter director departs for job in Boston, Mark Swann and Jim Devine offered a warm send-off for Oxford Street Shelter Director Josh O’Brien.
- July 7: Maine Hunger Initiative got national attention in an Associated Press story, Maine task force aims to feed hungry students.
- July 6: The Windham Eagle featured one of Maine Hunger Initiative’s summer meal sites, Nutritious, fun lunches for children and teens.
- July 4: Mark Swann and Phil Allen penned Maine Voices: Homeless veterans have an ally, an op-ed in honor of Independence Day.
- June 20: 77 chronically homeless people find permanent housing thanks to Housing First
- June 20: 7th annual Homeless Voices for Justice Solstice Sit-Out, marks the year’s longest day of homelessness.
- June 18: Homeless Voices for Justice joined by Senator Justin Alfond at monthly demonstration outside the Portland DHHS office, protesting the department’s proposed move to South Portland.
- May 29: Nutrition is focus of kids’ Summer Food Program meals supported by Maine Hunger Initiative
- June 9: Associate Director Jon Bradley and Chief Program Officer Donna Yellen appeared on WMPG’s Blunt Youth Radio to discuss human trafficking.
- May 5: Advocacy Coordinator Amy Gallant and Homeless Voices for Justice Advocates dee Clarke and Judy Newell appeared on MPBN’s Maine Calling to discuss panhandling.
- April 23: The Portland Daily Sun published a feature about the drama therapy group at the Resource Center.