



For Immediate Release
June 24, 2022

Contact: Rod Harmon, Communications Manager
cell: 207-272-3986; email: rharmon@avestahousing.org

Avesta Housing presents Mike Yandell Award to STRIVE U

PORTLAND, ME — STRIVE U of South Portland has been awarded the Avesta Housing Mike Yandell Award for its extraordinary work in the field of affordable housing. Avesta Housing President & CEO Dana Totman presented the award on June 22 to Pete Brown, associate director of PSL Services/STRIVE, during Avesta's grand opening celebration of Deering Place, a 75-unit affordable housing development in downtown Portland.

Named for the late Mike Yandell, a former Avesta Housing board chair and the former president of Gorham Savings Bank who is remembered for his commitment to improving the community, the award is presented to an individual or organization that helps provide safe, quality, affordable housing to people in Maine or New Hampshire.

STRIVE U teaches adults ages 18 to 25 with emotional and intellectual disabilities the skills needed to live independently. Avesta Housing partners with PSL Services/STRIVE to provide affordable housing and services to STRIVE U graduates.

"At Avesta, we respect independence, and we also want to ensure that help and guidance are provided to residents as needed," Totman said. "There's a very difficult balance between allowing people to live on their own and providing help when needed. STRIVE U provides that level of service and support to residents so that they can succeed. Quite simply, they get it right."

Lucas Boniva, a STRIVE U graduate and Deering Place resident, said Avesta and STRIVE U have given him the means to live independently.

"It's just been such a good opportunity to find a place that will actually make me feel like I can live a life alone," Boniva said.

Brown said the award exemplifies the partnership and shared belief between Avesta and PSL Services/STRIVE that everyone deserves a place to call home.

"We have been longtime partners in placing our alumni in Avesta properties throughout greater Portland and hope to be able to continue to build on this relationship," Brown said. "Our agency is honored to be the recipient of this award, and to receive it at the opening of Deering Place was very special."

###



307 Cumberland Avenue | Portland, Maine 04101 | 207-553-7777 | 1-800-339-6516 VOICE/TTY

www.AvestaHousing.org





About Avesta Housing

Avesta Housing is a nonprofit affordable housing provider with 50 years of experience as a leader in affordable housing development and property management in Maine and New Hampshire. The organization is headquartered in Portland, Maine, and currently operates 109 affordable properties and two assisted-living facilities, providing safe, affordable homes for more than 4,600 people every day. Avesta's mission is to improve lives and strengthen communities by promoting and providing quality affordable homes for people in need. Its five areas of focus are advocacy, housing development, property management, senior/assisted living, and homeownership.

www.AvestaHousing.org

About PSL/STRIVE

PSL Services/STRIVE provides people with intellectual and developmental disabilities or mental health diagnoses a community of support and assistance in finding greater independence. www.pslstrive.org

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

- 1) Avesta Housing President & CEO Dana Totman, left, presents the Mike Yandell Award to PSL Services/STRIVE Associate Director Pete Brown during the June 22 grand opening of Deering Place in downtown Portland. *(Photo courtesy Avesta Housing)*
- 2) STRIVE U graduate and Deering place resident Lucas Boniva speaks during Avesta Housing's grand opening of Deering Place in downtown Portland on June 22. *(Photo courtesy Avesta Housing)*