



## **FOCUS ON/Sept. 22: Homelessness can be ended**

I would like to applaud Neale Mansfield's commitment to raising awareness about homelessness.

However, his claim that permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals takes resources away from "those who are homeless for reasons beyond their control" fails to consider two important issues. (See: "Homeless figures need explaining," Aug. 26)

First, by the HUD federal definition, to be considered chronically homeless, a person must have a disabling condition and be homeless for more than a year — often the most vulnerable of our neighbors.

Second, innovative programs, such as Home & Healthy for Good, the statewide Housing First pilot program overseen by the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance, have proven that permanent supportive housing for the chronically homeless actually frees up financial resources.

These resources can be directed toward other homeless populations as we strive to find homes for all of our neighbors.

The wisdom of many different faith traditions calls us not to distinguish between those we deem worthy of help and those we deem unworthy, but to encounter all those in need with compassion and a commitment to changing our society into one in which everyone has a place to call home.

*Caitlin Golden*

*Social Action Ministries Coordinator*

*Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance, Boston*