



Poverello News

(559) 498-6988

www.poverellohouse.org

HELPING DRIVE AWAY HUNGER AND HEARTACHE

It takes a huge amount of work to serve 1,000 to 1,500 meals a day, and there are many unsung heroes who make this feat possible. Prominent among these backstage workers are the Poverello drivers. And thanks to the generosity of individuals, foundations and groups, we have enough vehicles to take care of business.

Poverello House now has a whole fleet of vehicles, consisting of three bobtail trucks for picking up food donations, the Poverello Mobile Café (a catering truck), several cars and vans for transporting people to recovery meetings, clinics, hospitals, court, and other appointments, and a handful of pickup trucks to fill in the gaps. Additionally, with our Raise the Roof campaign, we were able to incorporate an auto shop with a massive



vehicle lift in the new warehouse, to maintain the many cars and trucks that keep Poverello rolling.

Our primary drivers are men who graduated from our residential drug program. For Rocky and Chris, who daily drive to businesses and pick up in-kind donations, the job is a framework upon which they reinforce their sobriety and give back to others.

Rocky had to travel a long and depressing road to become one of our drivers. Addicted to meth at an early age, his life experience consisted of failure, homelessness, and jail. He got a chance to change his life when he entered our program, and after Poverello assisted him in obtaining his driver's license and eyeglasses, he was given a shot at driving. After completing the program, he was offered the driving job as an employee. He wants to continue doing this for a long time to come: "I love this place, man," he said. "They've given me my life back."

Chris entered the rehab program in 2015, and has been driving as an employee for Poverello House about two years. While he primarily picks up food and goods from businesses, he also pitches in when we need a client taken to an appointment, some furniture delivered to a family in crisis, or when the Poverello Mobile Café provides meals to rural communities. What does driving for Poverello House mean to Chris? "When I come here, I am very happy." He never forgets to thank our donors. Chris strives for excellence on the job because of his deep gratitude to Poverello. He sees the connection between the generosity of these businesses and the Poverello mission statement: "I thank them, and I shake their hands, and I let them know that I appreciate (their donation)... When I walk away from there, I think about the mission statement, 'Enriching the lives and spirits of all who pass our way.' These folks are helping us do that."

A WORD FROM MARY McGARVIN

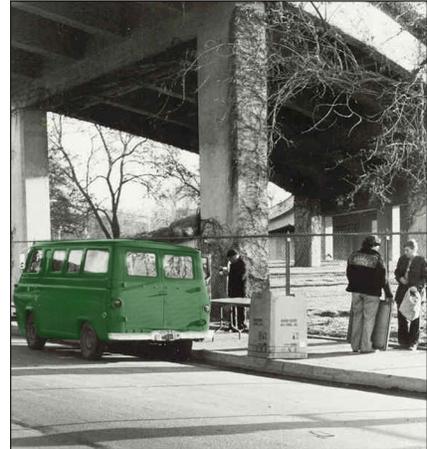


Back in the 70s, when Mike was first starting out, someone donated a green van to us to help with feeding on the streets. Although we were thankful for the kindness that prompted the donation, we grew to hate that van. It was always breaking down on us, usually at the worst possible times, and it was a great relief when a newer, less high-maintenance van was later given to Pov.

There was one incident with the green van that I remember well. A man donated \$100 to Mike's fledgling ministry, and it seemed like a godsend, because we were strapped for cash, and it would take care of one of the many van repairs needed. So we took it into the shop, and got the problem fixed. We told the donor how grateful we were, and what we did with the money he gave. We were surprised at his response.

The man was upset with us, because he thought his contribution should go directly toward food or clothing, although he didn't make that clear to us when he donated. Anyway, we were a little frustrated with the situation, because his contribution actually did a lot to help us continue feeding the homeless.

When people give to a charity, they are understandably concerned about how the donation will be used, but sometimes, they have a hard time seeing how those behind-the-scenes details such as transportation, utility bills, and insurance are a big part of what keep a nonprofit organization running. One of the reasons I'm proud to be associated with Poverello House is because contributions of money, food, clothing, or any other items are used wisely and efficiently. When you give, your dollar may go directly toward feeding a homeless person. On the other hand, that dollar may also go toward filling the gas tank of a vehicle that transports people to A.A. meetings or the hospital; or perhaps it is spent buying a needed utensil for the kitchen, which will make preparing the food easier; or even keeping the utilities on, so that the homeless have a warm shelter in winter and a cool place in summer. The point is, every dollar spent here, even if it isn't directly spent on food, is used for the ultimate goal of providing critical services to the poorest people in our city.



POVERELLO PONDERINGS...

We must not drift away from humble works, because these are the works nobody else will do. It is never too small.

—Mother Teresa

There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as if everything is.

—Albert Einstein

FROM THE DESK OF CEO CRUZ AVILA

Even though I had a background in social services prior to working at Poverello House, my time here has been a journey of discovery. One of my discoveries has been that simple things we take for granted often can be unattainable for homeless people.

Since I was 18 years old, I have driven myself everywhere I needed to go. My previous job required me to drive up and down the State of California, sometimes up to 600 miles per day. So when I became CEO of Poverello House, it was somewhat of a shock for me to realize that the majority people to whom we provide services do not have access to reliable transportation. In both urban and rural areas, this lack of transportation makes it almost impossible for people to travel even short distances to a doctor, social service office, mental health facility, or even a grocery store. In essence, they find the simplest task difficult because they are stranded.



WAYS YOU CAN HELP THIS MONTH

- Donate olive oil, sugar, eggs, men's underwear, socks & disposable razors
- Schedule a tour of Poverello House by calling (559) 498-6988
- Become a sponsor for our 3rd annual Gift of Hope Gala, celebrating 45 years of transforming lives. For more information, visit: poverellohouse.org/gift-of-hope
- Include Poverello House in your estate plan

We would like to take a moment to thank all the volunteers who help us all year long, and a special thanks to those of you who worked over the long, hot months of summer. Your contribution is precious to us, and we appreciate you more than you can ever know!

To address this need, many of our programs at Poverello House provide transportation for clients and residents to obtain identification and other important documents, attend mental health and medical appointments, get to emergency shelters, go to recovery meetings, and link up with social services. During the month of April 2018, one of our programs, MAP Point, provided over 230 urban transports, as well as 228 transports within rural Fresno County. Transportation can also save a life: on several occasions, Poverello staff drivers have had to hide victims of domestic violence on the floor of a van while taking them to safe place away from their abusers. Poverello House, by providing reliable and accesible transportation, removes one the main barriers homeless and poor people face in their everyday lives. Getting an ID, making it to appointments, and escaping terrible situations are all part of the hope that Poverello House bestows upon the homeless and hurting people we encounter every day.

Cruz Avila, CEO