



Poverello News

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MARY MCGARVIN: MOM, CAREGIVER, AND LEADER



When Mike “Papa Mike” McGarvin started Poverello House in 1973, he had a strong, silent partner who supported him and made it successful: his wife, Mary McGarvin. At the young age of eighteen, Mary married a man who had drive and passion for serving others. Mary moved from Fresno, California, to San Francisco to be with and support Mike’s mission to assist those in need in the Tenderloin District of San Francisco. Mary missed her family and small-town life so they moved back to Fresno. Once in Fresno, Papa Mike began his mission by serving peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to people experiencing homelessness living in the Chinatown area.

Mary was instrumental in the development of Poverello House. Mary was the first volunteer, first bookkeeper and started the monthly newsletter. Being an artist, she designed the Poverello House logo too. Every night she made peanut butter and jelly sandwiches with her husband to pass out to the community. Mary was a full-time mom, housekeeper, and employee. She raised her children at Poverello House, and her daughter was even baptized in the first location. For 43 years, Mary supported and worked alongside Mike to build a thriving organization that assists people experiencing homelessness. Mary did these tasks while battling her own health issues.

When asked what women should know, Mary stated, “Women take on all different roles such as caregiver, mother, employee, and supporter; we must take care of ourselves.” She said she is very proud of where women are now in society. Mary said, “when I first worked at Poverello House with Mike, I was not paid much. Now women can earn a decent wage and become leaders.” “We can do what we love, such as caring for others and care for ourselves.”



ADVERSITY AND OBSTACLES = EMPOWERMENT



"You should never view your challenges as a disadvantage. Instead, it's important for you to understand that your experience facing and overcoming adversity is actually one of your biggest advantages." Michelle Obama, Former First Lady of the United States. Many of Poverello House's female employees have overcome significant adversity to become leaders to the people they serve. People's life experiences, even if negative, enable them to show empathy and compassion to those who are experiencing homelessness. Crystal, for example, the outreach coordinator for the HOPE Team, overcame addiction and homelessness to become a mother, pet rescuer, and a supervisor of 18 employees. When explaining her experiences, Crystal would tell her daughter that "It's going to be okay, always have faith and trust in the process, and to believe in yourself, trust in yourself, even if it seems hard." Crystal wants to break the cycle of instability that she experienced as a child.

Not being able to diagnose an illness and being unable to accept yourself can lead to homelessness. Gordie, client services specialist for the Village of Hope, overcame her addiction and mental illness by living her authentic self. She and her family struggled with accepting her sexual orientation. She also had behaviors that she could not identify. These factors lead to many years of addiction. After overcoming addiction and diagnosis of Bipolar and ADHD, she feels that she fully understands herself. Gordie says, "it is never too late to live to your full potential and experience happiness." She is married to her wife and has a 6-month-old son. Gordie's hope for the future is to continue her work and "be able to make a difference in the world that my son can be his authentic self."



A HOPE Outreach Specialist, Stacie is 10 months sober after a decade of addictions. "I was just tired of being tired," said Stacie. "I want to improve my life for my family." Stacie feels like she has found her home. "I want to stay at Poverello House and grow with the company." Stacie, whose mother recently passed away, stated, "I know my mom is watching me and proud of the woman I am becoming." Crystal, Gordie, and Stacie are examples of women overcoming substantial obstacles in their lives to improve the lives of others. As Maya Angelou once said, "You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them."

WOMEN'S GROUP THERAPY



The Enrichment Center does Women's Group Therapy for the unsheltered clients every Thursday.

Most of the women that participate in group have been a victim of trauma related incidents, emotional and physical. Group therapy is their way to connect with others while finding some healing and support. The session that day was to capture important goals, short or long term, and how they will achieve them, who can support them, and how long will it take.

Mother's Day Brunch
 May 8th at 11:30 AM
all are welcome
Salads Breakfast
Lunch Desserts
VOLUNTEER OR DONATE
FLOWERS FOR THIS SPECIAL
EVENT
 for more information, call Cierra at 559.498.6988

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Zack Darrah,
Chief Executive Officer

Hope for Women from Women at Poverello House

This month we celebrate the women that we serve daily and the women who provide those services on our team. Since becoming CEO, I have learned much about the trauma suffered by women experiencing homelessness in our community. Physical assault, sexual assault, trafficking, emotional abuse,

and much more are regular traumatic experiences that women on the street experience daily in our community. Loving, serving, and helping women has been at the core of our organization from the very beginning. There must be a place for women to be safe and have a respite from the streets. Poverello House is such a place.

Later this year, we will celebrate 20 years of Naomi's House. This incredible program is designed around the belief that women require specialized care from staff who understand their needs. A women-specific shelter is a place where healing can begin from the trauma of the streets. Through the Enrichment Center, we have women-specific therapy and a weekly clinical therapy group. As I look at the special

women who provide these services, 40 members of our staff work daily to ensure that women receive services they need. Women serve on our Executive team, Director team, and the entire Coordinator team consists of women. Women are leaders here at Poverello House!

We believe deeply here that hope is at the core of how anyone's life can change. You may see this on the naming of some of our programs; the HOPE Outreach Team, the Michael McGarvin Jr. Village of Hope, the Community of HOPE (temporary men's shelter during the height of COVID-19). We plan to name our family shelter the Family Hope Shelter. Two of our fundraising events are the "Call for Hope" Telethon (see the insert in this newsletter!) and the "Gala of Hope." Hope can be found by women and through women. At Poverello House, we are a place where that can occur, and we know that many lives of women are and will be transformed by it. Thank you for ensuring that the lives and spirits of all [women] who pass our way are enriched through hope.

Humbly,

Zack

MARCH WISH LIST

- Easter Candy • Toilet Paper
- 55-Gallon Trash Bags • Men's and Women's Underwear
- Hairbrushes • Nail Polish

Donations are Accepted

Monday - Friday
8 am - 5 pm

Saturday - Sunday
8 am - 1 pm

412 F Street, Fresno

Donation lane located on
G Street between
Ventura and San Benito

SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY, JUNE 4, 2022
7:30 AM

VISIT RUNSIGNUP.COM
FIND RACE: POVERELLO HOUSE
RUN FOR MEALS
OR VISIT
WWW.POVERELLOHOUSE.ORG

