

POVERELLO NEWS



Mike
McGarvin
Poverello House

JUNE 2016 (559) 498-6988
WWW.POVERELLOHOUSE.ORG



I'm at that age when I have more years behind me than years ahead. The way I've taken care of myself, I probably have a pretty short shelf life at this point. Then again, who knows? I'm a stubborn Irishman, and I may be around a whole lot longer than anyone expects.

Whatever the case, I tend to look backwards more than forwards these days. Although I'm closer to being done on this earth by virtue of my age and health problems, the truth is that I've always been a step away from death's door. With the raucous way I lived when I was young, I could have died from any number of things: drug overdoses, picking a fight with the wrong guy in the wrong bar, crashing my speeding motorcycle while high on LSD, suicide attempts, or countless other consequences of my dysfunctional life.

Then there was my bout with cancer back in the 1970s, all the violence that bypassed me at the Poverello in San Francisco and here in Fresno, and, more recently, heart surgery. I guess I'm either too stubborn to die, or God isn't through with me yet.

As I look back, it's a bit of a miracle that I'm not moldering in a grave somewhere. It's also a bit of a miracle that I found those specific Franciscans who helped me in specific ways at that specific time, when I was ready to stop trying to get myself killed.

I've spent many years describing in these pages the gifts of my mentor, Father Simon. He was the one whose gentle approach,

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John Frye Jr., President
A. Thomas Ferdinandi, Jr., 1st V.P.
Rob Veneski, 2nd V.P.
Robin Duke, Secretary
Patrick Bradley, Treasurer
Hank Bennett
Paula Capozzi
Sister Mary Clennon
James Connelly
Mark Delton
Jim Devaney
Charles Farnsworth

Robert Levine
Carol Maul
Joel Murillo
Jeff Negrete
Tim O'Neil
Ann Owen
John Pardini
Melvin Renge
Mayo P. Ryan
Victor Salazar

LIFETIME MEMBERS
Lynn Baker
Elizabeth Fillpot
Anthony Folcarelli
John "Nip" Gallagher
Linda Moradian
Tim Nibler
Sister Ruth Marie Nickerson, CSCD
D. Harvey Oh
Mayo Ryan
Robert H. Scribner
Marvin Smith
Jane Worsley

down-to-earth sermons, and unquenchable love for the poor first attracted me to the church. He had a great way of expressing his views, which was simple, easy to follow, and in the end something I could really wrap my head around.

Brother Kurt was a different case altogether. He was a stubborn man of German ancestry who drank far more alcohol than was good for him, but had a determined compassion for people in need. He was less overtly religious than Father Simon and some of the other Franciscans, and often pursued individual charity rather than participate with other brothers in group projects. I found him to be flawed, and thus very approachable, because my own flaws were at that time very obvious to me. He took me under his wing to minister to elderly people in a rest home, a vocation that he had taken upon himself with absolute dedication, and he became a great friend to me when I really needed one.



Mike and Fr. Simon

Brother Joe was a chef at the Franciscan retreat house, a place where I spent a lot of time in order to get out of the city and away from temptations. Brother Joe was very serious about his vocation, which was cooking good food for people at the retreat house. When he was cooking, it was solemn business. There was no goofing around in his kitchen, but the food he cooked was hearty, delicious, and you could tell that he put his all into it. One fond memory I have is the chocolate chip cookies he baked—they were as big as plates. For a foodie like me, those cookies were a little slice of heaven. Since I've always found comfort in good food, his cooking made the retreat house a place of security and solace at a time when I was going through a lot of emotional turmoil.

Then there was another priest that Mary really loved. I think his name was Father Pascal. Mary had no background in the Catholic Church, and I was pretty new to it when she met me. It probably wouldn't have taken much to turn her off at that point, so it was a blessing that the brothers and priests there around St. Boniface

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from previous page)

Church were exceptionally welcoming, talented, and bright. Father Pascal had a gift of making the Bible come alive when he preached, and his gift really attracted Mary to the Franciscan life.



Mike and Brother Kurt

I guess what I'm trying to say is that I couldn't have picked a more perfect group of spiritual mentors to shepherd me through the rough transition from brawler and drug-addled hippy to a Third Order Franciscan with a new hope, a new vision, and a new life. Each of them contributed a piece to my life puzzle, which helped me become a different man.

As I've diminished in my capability to be at the forefront of Poverello, Poverello itself has evolved and progressed to the point that there is a whirlwind of activity here, much of which I can't participate in. When things get overwhelming for me here, I find consolation in these memories. They help me to recall that I've never been in charge here; God has always been the boss. That relieves me of the burden of worrying about Poverello, and helps me accept that His work goes on,

whether I'm around or not. He was in control way back then, when He led me to a divinely-placed group of Franciscans, and He is now, as the ongoing story of Poverello House continues to unfold.



Fr. Simon & Brother Kurt at San Francisco Poverello

Mike



Granville Homes introduced the Home of Hope fundraiser in 2006 as a way of raising money to provide food, shelter, health care and education to those in need.

Granville Homes along with the help of many trade partners donates a beautiful new home as the grand prize. 100% of the proceeds are donated to local non-profit organizations.

“The Granville Home of Hope fundraiser has helped over 1 million Valley families by raising more than \$3.5 million for charities.”

Your support continues for:

Poverello House

Hinds Hospice

Assistance League

Community Food Bank

Renaissance Scholars (Fresno State)

Foundation for Central Schools

Foundation for Clovis Schools

Foundation for Sanger Schools

EPU Children's Center

Fresno Police Chaplaincy

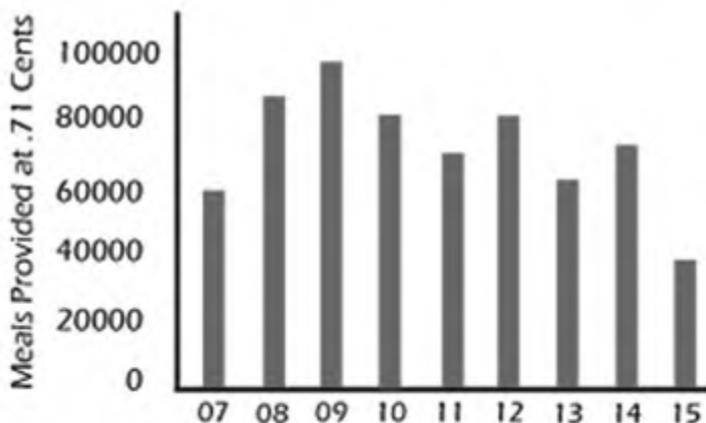
when you purchase a \$100 raffle ticket

for the Granville Home of Hope.

“Since 2007, Poverello House has received over \$469,345 from this wonderful and charitable fundraiser.”

Purchase Your Home of Hope Ticket Today

- 1 Ticket = 140 Meals to those in need
- 2 Tickets = 280 Meals to those in need
- * See multiple ticket buyer deal below



Meals Provided Through Home of Hope

*Buy a Granville Home of Hope two-ticket bundle for a chance to win a 24-month lease on a 2016 Lexus RX350. Only 1,500 bundles will be sold!

**Call today to purchase your ticket
559.498.6988**

A Fundraiser to Help Support Local Organizations.

Don't Delay!

✂ CUT HERE ✂

**Drawing
July 25, 2016**

GRANVILLE
HOME of HOPE
2016

HOH Entry Form \$100

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: () _____

Email*: _____

Quantity of tickets _____

No limit on the number of tickets purchased per person.

A maximum of 5,000 total tickets will be entered into the drawing.

Credit Card: VISA MasterCard

American Express

Credit Card # _____

Exp. Date: _____ CVC Code: _____

(Security code on credit card)

Billing address if different than mailing address:

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Make checks payable to **The Granville Foundation**

Checks must be postmarked by July 5, 2016

Mail to: Poverello House

PO Box 12225 Fresno, CA 93777-2225

For more information and to view rules and regulations
visit: **www.gvhomeofhope.com** or call **559.440.8388**





*“ Thank you . . .
for all your support . . . ”*



Poverello
House

New Transition Home

Since 1992, Poverello House has operated a transition home for graduates of our residential drug rehabilitation program, which came to be known as “Pico House,” because it was located on Pico Avenue in Fresno. It sheltered a small number of graduates who continued working at Poverello, were employed elsewhere, or were attending school.

Pico House is no longer Pico House. We had the opportunity to obtain a house much closer to Poverello, only .7 miles away, and after much thought, made the decision to move our transitional facility.

The proximity of the new transition house makes it much easier for our Director of Rehabilitation, David Knoy, to keep an eye on things and ensure that the transitioning residents are remaining focused and putting their sobriety first. David will eventually have an office at the transition home. The house is primarily for men in what we call the “Work-Out Program,” where they are working and slowly rebuilding their lives before launching out on their own. However, it will also be used for men who have completed the program, but whose home environments are not conducive to sustained sobriety.

The hope is that after remodeling the property, we will be able to house up to twenty men there. More transitional services translate into a better chance for success outside of Poverello House, and this property fits the bill nicely. By the way, traditions die hard, so the new transition home is called “New Pico,” even though it is nowhere near Pico Avenue.

Because the property is located in a bit of a rough neighborhood, there was some apprehension. In fact, a few of the Poverello residents were initially questioned by some neighborhood “characters,” and not in a nice way. However, David said that once the Poverello signs were placed on the outside of the house, all the problems disappeared. Such is the reputation of Poverello that people felt at ease once they knew who it was that was occupying the house.

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from previous page)

The old Pico residence in northwest Fresno was in a very nice, quiet area, and we were blessed with neighbors there who not only welcomed us when we acquired the house, but also helped us to keep tabs on the men in there. It is safe to say that without the cooperation of the neighbors, Pico House never would have been successful, so for their decades of kindness and forbearance, we are very grateful.



We are excited about the possibilities that the new transition home offers to our men. Addiction recovery is exceedingly difficult, and fraught with setbacks, temptations and frustrations, so having a safe place from which to begin life anew is a huge help to our graduates, giving them a much better chance at leading a responsible, drug-free life.

Shelter for the Invisible Homeless

He was young, frail, and seemed very naïve about the dangers facing him on the streets. We started talking to him because he stood out as someone who might soon become a victim of a mugger or a sexual predator. He had been in foster care, but had “aged out”—he had turned 18, and thus his foster parents would no longer receive payment for his care. His only alternative was trying to live on the streets.

We’ve seen this scenario replicated again and again. It is one of those systemic problems that has created a whole new homeless demographic—foster care children cast adrift when they are no longer financially viable for their caretakers.

In the 1980s, it was a shock to see families with children beginning to be a regular fact of life at Poverello. The shock has long since worn off, and we are left with nagging questions about how best to help them.

Homeless military veterans have often been neglected by organizations that help the homeless. In spite of programs such as Operation Stand Down, veterans nevertheless remain largely invisible. Post traumatic stress disorder and a host of other issues often lead these men and women into homeless despair.

Poverello House has begun a multi-agency response to these three demographic areas of homelessness. We have started an emergency shelter voucher program to provide temporary overnight shelter to these people, who may have difficulty finding safe housing through traditional services. The City of Fresno and matching fund donors are financially supporting this program. Poverello works in partnership with the Fresno Police Department Homeless Task Force, the Fresno Rescue Mission, Map Point at Pov (a program that we will describe in detail next month), and any other homeless shelter program to identify and refer families, youths, and veterans that qualify.

The program provides vouchers for motels for up to seven days. Any referring agency must have a housing plan for those they refer, and if they don't, they work with Poverello staff to create a housing plan.

In the past, Poverello House used Mike McGarvin's homeless fund to house people in hotels. The need eventually overwhelmed that fund. Now, networking with the City of Fresno, Fresno Police, and other agencies, we are able to address this shelter problem more effectively and with better longitudinal outcomes. We are grateful for these partnerships, and also excited about the new possibilities they bring.

June Wish List

Men's underwear * Toilet paper * Bath towels * Olive oil

To donate online, visit our website at www.poverellohouse.org

Remember, we now take credit card donations. Please see the enclosed envelope for instructions.

Poverello House

412 F Street
P.O. Box 12225
Fresno, CA 93777-2225
(559) 498-6988

NON PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
FRESNO, CA 93706
PERMIT #2440

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

Who Are We? A nonprofit, nondenominational organization.

Our Mission: Believing in the dignity of every person, at Poverello House we work to enrich the lives and spirits of all who pass our way by stewarding the resources made available to us through Providential and community support.

Governance: We have been operating since 1973 and are governed by a Board of Directors, consisting of local volunteer men and women.

Future Goals? To provide additional facilities for increased services.

How Are We Funded? Primarily through private donations from individuals, churches, businesses, and community organizations. Rules for acceptance and participation in the programs of Poverello House are the same for everyone, without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability.