



Poverello News

(559) 498-6988 • www.poverellohouse.org

FATHERHOOD: FROM FEAR TO HOPE

Richard did not think he was ever going to be a good husband, father, or grandfather. He first went to prison at 19 years of age and then spent the next 26 years going in and out of prison. His life was filled with drugs, gangs, and violence. During this time, he married and had four children. However, he mainly saw his family through photographs and prison visits. When he was home between prison stays, he was stuck in addiction and the consequences of putting his addiction before his family. Richard knew he hit rock bottom when his family no longer wanted to associate with him after a traumatic domestic incident. “I knew I had to start putting my family first and not my addiction.” After being released from prison, he committed himself to the Men’s Residential Rehabilitation program for six months at Poverello House. There, he began the slow process of healing himself and restoring his family relationships. “The program gave me my life back, gave me the tools and the drive to make the right choices.” Richard assumed a leadership role within the program and became a father figure to some of the residents. Once he completed the program, he was offered a job at Poverello

House, where he became part of the HOPE Outreach Team. As an Outreach Specialist, he offers hope to people as a result of his life experiences. “I get to give hope to the hopeless.” Richard has been able to restore and strengthen his family relationships. “My wife and I have become best friends because I get to know her outside prison and my addiction. I see my kids as a joy rather than a burden. People used to fear me, but now people see me as an example of hope.”



Richard and family



Richard and his wife Rachel



Richard, Rachel, and Grandchild

“PAPA” MIKE IS MORE THAN A NAME

As this newsletter is focusing on men and fatherhood, it is important to remember the foundation of Poverello House. Nearly five decades ago, a man named Mike McGarvin, began helping those on the streets of Fresno through providing peanut butter sandwiches to them out of the back of his car. However, he was giving those he served so much more than a sandwich. He was giving dignity, love, compassion, and genuine care. These were something that many on the streets were not used to receiving from anyone.

However, Mike, reflected the love of God to everyone he came into contact with. Sandwiches opened the door to coffee, chili, and more. The need for more help is how Mike began the rehab program. This program still operates today. He sought to meet all of the basic needs of those on the streets as an open door into the deeper needs of all he met; the need to be loved. The way he loved and the peace he brought to all he served led to him being known by everyone in the community as “Papa” Mike. “Papa” is a term of affection and endearment for a father who loves his children to the depths of his soul. Wherever he went, Mike brought the spirit of being a “Papa” to everyone he encountered. Those he served immediately felt the care and love of a “Papa”, even if they were just meeting for the very first time.

While “Papa” Mike has not been with us at Poverello House for nearly four years, this term still matters deeply. The organization continues to carry his spirit as a personifi-



Papa Mike with a volunteer

cation of how “Papa” Mike served, loved, and cared for “...all who [passed] his way”. For Poverello House, “Papa” Mike, is more than a name. It is an action and an example that we will continue to live out for the rest of our existence. The “Papa” Mike spirit, memory, and legacy will always be the greatest foundation and guide as we “enrich the lives and spirits of all who pass our way”.

POVERELLO HOUSE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAIR
Victor Salazar

SECRETARY
Paula Capozzi

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT
Curtis Davies

TREASURER
Hank Bennett

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT
Prashant Patel

PAST CHAIR
Stephanie Negin

Nick Amendola	Constance Jones	Andrew Slater
Charles Farnsworth	Adam Mendes	James Walls, Jr.
A. Thomas Ferdinandi	Tim O'Neill	Rob Veneski
Christopher Hansen	John Pardini	

JUNE WISH LIST

- Canned, Dry, and Frozen Foods
- Men’s and Women’s Flip Flops
- Reading Glasses
- Bottled Water
- Toilet Paper
- Twin Sheets
- Towels

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

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Zack Darrah, Chief Executive Officer, with his family

my “performance” as a Dad, I know one thing for sure; Dads matter.

At Poverello House, we serve Dads every day. We encounter the consequences of Dads not being in the home. We encounter Dads who have made mistakes along the way. However, I have yet to talk to a Dad on our campus that does not desperately want to heal their relationships with their children. I get the opportunity to regularly spend time with the men in our residential program. Every one of these men who has children, is desiring a sober life so that they can be the best Dad possible. Being a Dad matters and the men we serve are

I am incredibly blessed to be a Dad. I am the proud Dad of three children. Being a Dad is joyful, special, fun, hard, tiring, challenging, and amazing all at the same time! Much of the time, I am not exactly sure what I am doing. I make plenty of mistakes as a Dad and every so often, I get it right. Regardless of

intimately aware of that fact. Just like my own desire, they all want to be the best Dad they can be. Every Dad needs help to get there!

I love getting to see Dads reconnecting with their children. You have probably already read stories in this newsletter about this very moment. We work hard to reconnect Dads to their families. We do this because we know that Dads matter for their children. It matters so much that statistics show children in an absent-father household are four-times more likely to grow up in poverty, more likely to go to prison, seven-times more likely to have a teenage pregnancy, and twice as likely to not graduate high school.

Thank you for supporting our work at Poverello House. Your time, talents, and treasures are what allows us to continue investing into Dads. You are making generational impacts through your partnership with us. You are helping Dads be the Dads they want to be every day!

Humbly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zack Darrah'.

Zack

A SECOND CHANCE TO BE A GOOD DAD



Zack and Lorenzo

“I want to go home for my 12-year-old son,” said Lorenzo to staff. “I have lost several boys to the streets, but maybe there is still a chance for me to be a good dad. He still has faith in me, and I want to be home before Christmas.” After several months in the Community of Hope Shelter, this was the first time Lorenzo had expressed a desire to go home. Lorenzo had spent many years in prison, and after he was released, he had no place to go. The Community of Hope Shelter provided a haven from the streets and an opportunity for Lorenzo to think about his future. Poverello House wanted to give Lorenzo a second chance at fatherhood. After purchasing a bus ticket for him to Texas, we helped him pack several suitcases and prepare for the journey ahead. As one of our staff offered a heartfelt prayer, Lorenzo burst into tears. He shared stories of how he was not the father he needed to be for his other children, one of which was currently in prison. He hugged our staff, stepped on the bus, and was on his way home for the first time in a long time. He was to arrive home on Christmas morning to surprise his son. “I know I can make it right this time because I have to.” A second chance was all that Lorenzo needed and Poverello House was there for him every step of the way. We believe that there are second chances and a pathway to redemption not only for this Dad, but “...for all who pass our way”.



HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

"A father is neither an anchor to hold us back, nor a sail to take us there, but a guiding light whose love shows us the way." - Unknown