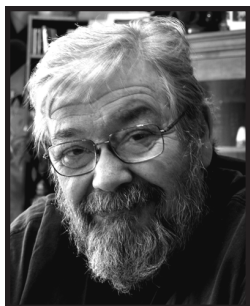


POVERELLO NEWS

AUGUST 2016 (559) 498-6988

WWW.POVERELLOHOUSE.ORG





Some people believe in miracles, others in coincidences. I'm right up the middle on this one. If there are no such things as miracles, then there sure have been many unexplainable coincidences I've witnessed over the decades at Poverello House. On the other hand, I'm skeptical when people are far too willing to attribute something mundane to divine intervention, such as foods that re-

semble saints.

Here's a story that I will tell, and let you decide: miracle or happy coincidence? A man I'll call Joe was released into our a drug rehabilitation program after being incarcerated for twenty-seven years. His offenses were directly related to addiction. He came to intake eager to start a new life, and ultimately was accepted into the residential rehab program.

Our rehabilitation program is also a work program, and every participant has job duties. One of his assigned tasks was carrying ice across the street to Holy Cross Women's Center. A young woman using the services at Holy Cross saw him and did a double take. She recognized him from pictures; it was her brother. When he was incarcerated, she was a baby, and in the intervening years, the family had lost contact due to their own problems.

So there was a tearful reunion, and now possibly one more reason for Joe to stay clean and sober. Coincidence? Or the hand

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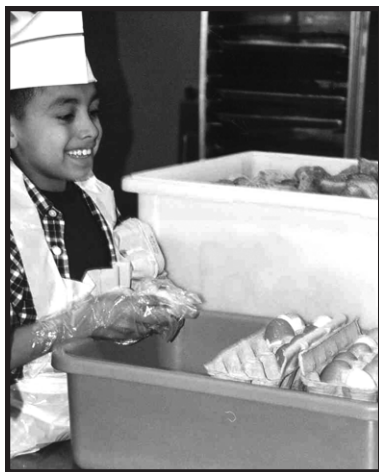
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of a loving God, gently directing two of His lost children toward each other?

Whatever the case, such “miraculous coincidences” simply wouldn’t happen if Poverello was not here. Over four decades ago, I had no idea what I was getting into when I threw together some peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and started handing them out in Chinatown. Through the years of difficulty, struggle, and growth, stories as poignant, and, if you will, as “miraculous” as the one I just shared have convinced me that the good Lord, working through good people, has guided our efforts, resulting in very real help for hopeless people who encounter Poverello.

So how is it that people like Joe and his sister, or any number of others, come to experience some of those “miraculous coincidences” at Poverello House? It all begins with desperate need, and Poverello House being available to fill those needs.

It starts with a meal, served with love, to a hungry, broken person. That meal is now multiplied 1,600 times a day, every day of the year. From there, a shivering man in wintertime can get a warm coat and shoes to fit his swollen feet; a single mom in desperation can get enough groceries to tide her family over until a check comes; a married couple, frightened at the prospect of being newly homeless



and facing the crime-ridden streets, can find temporary shelter in the Village of Hope; a homeless farm worker with an infected cut and a rotting tooth can get medical and dental care through Holy Cross Clinic at Poverello; a desperate addict on the verge of suicide can enter our residential drug program and find the keys to a drug-free and fulfilling life; a chronically homeless person can have at his or her disposal a multitude of agencies, all focused upon providing services tailored to the individual through the MAP Point at Pov collaborative program; and

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single women with nowhere to go can find warm beds, case management services, and tangible help through Naomi's House. Everything we do is free of charge to the homeless and poor.

None of this grew in a vacuum. These services came about because the need has always been there, and, by miracle or coincidence, the right people have come at the right times to volunteer their labor, fill staff positions, or donate money, food, and all manner of in-kind goods that have enabled these services to exist. Behind the heart-warming story of Joe's reunion with his sister are decades of work, devotion and love that have made Poverello House the place of second chances and unlimited opportunities.

Every year, August is our lean month, when the bounty from the previous holiday season is stretched thin. If you have been a part of the Poverello miracle, thank you so much; all of us at Pov are more grateful than you can know. If you have never had the chance to visit, volunteer or donate, maybe the slow "dog days" of August would be a good time to start. Our mission is "to enrich the lives and spirits of all who pass our way," and we can do that only through your generous support.



The Missing Piece, Part Two

(Last month, we introduced an innovative program that is now an essential connecting point for homeless people, MAP Point at Pov. As we wrote in the previous article, MAP Point (Multi-Agency Access Program) at Pov is a very successful effort to provide the homeless with appropriate linkages to services through partnered agencies. This is the second and final part of the series describing this program.)

MAP Point at Pov operates out of a modular unit situated between our Village of Hope and our warehouse. It is open to G Street, so many people are walk-ins. However, the majority of clients are referred by the city's Homeless Task Force, the Fresno

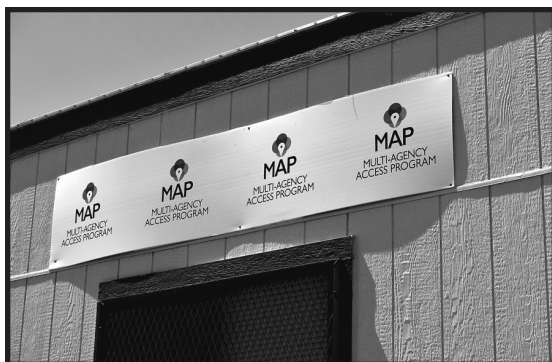
Police Department, the Fresno Rescue Mission, or other social service agencies.

When people come in, they are assessed by a screening tool called VI-SPDAT. Suffice it to say that this is a survey that determines the “level” of their homelessness. It helps rate their vulnerability and determine the housing and service path best suited for each individual. Based on the information gleaned from the survey, they will be rated as high-functioning (in need of limited assistance), modestly functioning (needing more intensive but short-term intervention), or low-functioning and chronically homeless (needing the most intervention on a long-term basis).

Depending on the level of assistance required, Poverello House and Naomi’s House work with them to do whatever we can here, and then we network with other organizations to make *linkages*. Sara and Robert both emphasized that this is a different mindset than past efforts, which amounted to a system based on *referrals*. The word “linkage”

denotes a much more active role on the part of service providers. For example, a major problem for many homeless people is that they lack the documents necessary to even begin to find housing, services or employment: driver’s

license or California I. D., birth certificate, Social Security card, etc. These vital documents often are lost in the transition from being housed to becoming homeless, and the clients lack the money or sometimes even the initiative to try to recover them. Now, thanks to the networking system of agencies, we have the manpower to not only transport each individual, but to also walk him or her through the process of reclaiming documentation, which is the first step in applying for housing, receiving mental health services, investigating



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employment opportunities, or applying for any other kind of aid that will help break the homeless cycle. Once documentation is obtained, the homeless person is assisted with every succeeding step.

However, it doesn't end there. Sara noted that somewhere close to seventy percent of MAP Point clients are follow-ups. They are not left to fend for themselves. There is comprehensive case management that follows them through the entire process, and continues monitoring their progress, their stumbles, and their successes.

Although Poverello House is the hub, there are many other agencies involved. One of the ways they are involved is that they send caseworkers to MAP Point at Pov for four-hour shifts on a rotating basis. Sara Rios, a Westcare employee, works full-time at MAP Point and serves as the coordinator for all these organizations. On the day we visited the MAP Point office, Kings View workers were there, seeing homeless clients. These agencies offer everything from drug rehabilitation and mental health services to housing and social services, all channeled through that hub, the modular unit abutting G Street.

One of the most significant statements Sara Mirhadi made about MAP Point at Pov was the following: "Poverello now means a new beginning, not the end of the road." That is indeed a transformation. While Poverello was always glad to be the "last house on the block," a place to go when there was nowhere else to turn, MAP Point at Pov has taken the refugees from the streets, who came here out of desperation, and given them new hope through concrete linkages and incredible support throughout the process. MAP Point is the piece of the puzzle we've sought for many, many years. It is an enormous undertaking, supported by public and private funding, and sustained by dozens of community partners. It is innovative, exciting and important work that goes hand-in-hand with the vital basic services Poverello House provides.

Poverello House, while staying true to our original mission, is moving toward new frontiers. MAP Point at Pov is a frontline pioneer in the expansion of our services, and we are greatly indebted to many, many partners that are making this innovative enterprise work.

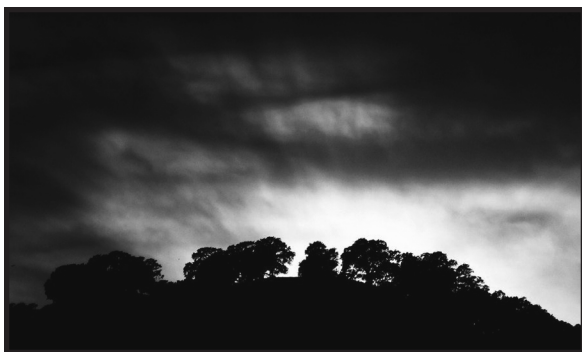
Poverello Ponderings...

*Is this not the fast which I chose,
To loosen the bonds of wickedness,
To undo the bands of the yoke,
And to let the oppressed go free,
And break every yoke?*

*Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry,
And bring the homeless poor into the house;
When you see the naked, to cover him,
And not to hide yourself from your own flesh?*

*Then your light will break out like the dawn,
And your recovery will speedily spring forth.*

—Isaiah 58:6-8



August Wish List

Books * Toilet paper * 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

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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.