



Poverello News

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

FROM RESIDENT TO COORDINATOR



Gavin Larson,
Rehabilitation Coordinator

Gavin Larson was born in Los Angeles in 1991. When he was just seventeen (with his mother's signed permission) he joined the Marine Corps. He spent eight years in the Marines and had two deployments in Afghanistan. Gavin's field, dress, and service uniforms are now hanging at the Veterans Memorial Museum! When Gavin left the Marines in 2016, he quickly fell into the wrong crowd as he returned to L.A. He believed a change of scenery was the best option for him to get back on track and moved to Fresno in 2017. Gavin said, "I was trying to run from my problems when in reality, I was the problem, not my surroundings. I fell into a rough crowd in Fresno too." Unfortunately, he was arrested in Fresno and incarcerated for a year and a half. When his time was concluding, Gavin was enrolled in a program, the Men's Residential Rehabilitation Program at Poverello House.

From the beginning of his time at POV in 2019, Gavin knew he wanted to become staff after his six months in the rehab program. He worked hard to better his life and get on track for his two children. He spent six months on staff in different roles but knew he wanted to be a part of the rehabilitation program team! Gavin shared, "The beauty of Poverello House is that the staff will put their all in for you from day one. After depleting all resources, family, friends, etc. POV will believe in you and your recovery." He wanted to be a part of that on a deeper level. Gavin wanted to support men in recovery like he was. The rehab team designed a position to take some workloads off the residential case manager. The job developer's role is to assist in creating resumes, job searching, appropriate attire, and interview etiquette. This allows the men in the rehabilitation program to practice their skills and have gainful employment ready after their program graduation. Gavin has recently been promoted to Rehabilitation Coordinator! With this position, Gavin will be in charge of the rehab program and wants anyone needing rehabilitation, a change, or a support system to know that "Anything is possible. Poverello House will give those that want it the opportunity to restart their lives."

Marvin (Marv) Smith joined the Poverello House team as the Board President in 1984. He spent two years on the board, and Poverello House expanded its property during that time. Marv worked with fellow Board member, Mayo Ryan to secure funds for the facility's renovation in 1992. That renovation has dramatically impacted countless lives and he has remained connected to the work since those days.

As the new CEO began his tenure, Marv and Mayo made sure to introduce themselves to share the organization's history. They have remained in contact with Zack and were invited to assist the team with Poverello House's 50th Anniversary in 2023. Marv said that Poverello House is the place that changes your life and perspective. He stated, "It's hard to stay away from a place you have invested your time, blood, sweat, and tears into."

We are excited to announce that Marv Smith is now Poverello House's Recovery Coordinator! He will be hosting open Narcotics and Alcoholics Anonymous Meetings Friday through Monday evenings on campus. The first hour will be dedicated to the 12-Step Meeting and occasional presentations from those in recovery. The second hour will be a Big Book Study, and the third hour will be for one-on-ones with sponsors. All are welcome to join Marv and others to walk the journey of recovery together.



Marv Smith and Gavin Larson

IMPORTANCE OF REHABILITATION TRIPS



Rehabilitation Trip to Pismo Beach

Poverello House began taking the men in the Residential Rehabilitation Program on outings and trips in 2019. Alumni residents that are now on staff shared that during their time, outings were not feasible. Poverello House did not have the funds to provide special trips nor the team to chaperone. These trips began when former resident and staff member Shane Guthrey began taking the men to basketball games at the SaveMart Center. Shane started this through his experience in the program and said, "It is nice to see these macho men become giggling little kids again." With donations from the community, Poverello House has been blessed with the resources to take the men on off-campus outings. Many staff shared that they noticed a difference in men's behavior and work ethic when returning from trips. Staff member Mikey shared, "Providing trips that staff chaperone gives the men in the rehab a different perspective. It is not staff versus

residents; we are all here to help their transformations."

The men in the rehabilitation program work six days a week for six hours at a time to gain working experience. The men work in the kitchen, warehouse, security, and work on the grounds. About eighty percent of the day-to-day operations at Poverello House would not be possible without the residents. To share our appreciation and allow the men a break from their recovery work, they are taken on trips at least twice during their six-month stay. Charles McCall, a former resident and staff, shared that "the trips humanize their experience in rehabilitation and break down the barriers that prevented them from having fun sober." Some of these men have never traveled outside Fresno and have been isolated in their addictions or incarcerations. Now, Poverello House is demonstrating work-life balance and how to work on their sobriety in real-time circumstances. The men's work on themselves and the work they pour into Poverello House is valued, and the trips reinforce their efforts.

James, a current resident in the rehabilitation program, shared that his time in the Sequoias was surreal. He stated that it was peaceful and safe, and the brotherhood of recovery was reinforced. Having men from all different backgrounds and most never leaving Fresno County, James said, "It was amazing to be doing what most people do," and the trust staff put into them was deeply impactful.

If you would like to fund an off-campus outing for the men in our program, please contact our CEO, Zack Darrah at zdarrah@poverellohouse.org.



Poverello
House

**Open
Narcotics & Alcoholics
Anonymous Classes**

Friday - Monday

Poverello House
Multipurpose Room
412 F Street

Marv Smith
Recovery Coordinator
(559) 917-9263

ALL ARE WELCOME!



Recovery Program Meetings
12-Step Meeting at 5:30 PM
Big Book Study at 6:30 PM
Sponsor One-on-Ones at 7:30 PM

**If you are looking for hope and a listening ear
during your recovery, join us at Poverello House
every Friday through Monday evenings!**

**If you would like to participate as a sponsor
contact Gavin Larson at (559) 498-6988 Ext.102**

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Zack Darrah,
Chief Executive Officer

Recovery is a Journey, Not A Destination

Engaging with the men in our residential drug rehab program at Poverello House has been a tremendous blessing. This program was the first non-food-related program offered at the organization. Papa Mike himself planted the roots of the rehab program. He was in

recovery after suffering from the impacts of drugs and alcohol in his life for years. However, his life was transformed through his journey of faith and pursuit of a different way of life. Part of that transformation included a new life without drugs or alcohol. Papa Mike clearly believed that if he could be transformed, anyone could. He believed that his best life was one of sobriety. This belief continues to guide the rehab program even after four decades.

There have been many changes in the drug rehab program during my time at Poverello House. We have added three staff members to the team, grown the program to accommodate over 45 men, fully renovated the after-care facility (PICO House), added clinical mental health counseling services, and improved many programmatic elements. These improvements have only been possible through substantial partnerships with the California Community Reinvestment Grant (Cal CRG) Program, the County Department of Social Services, and many donors who support the rehab program monthly. I am also excited about Poverello House offering open AA and NA meetings

for anyone (including the men in the program) during the evenings, Friday through Monday. Recovery is at the heart of Poverello House, and we will work to advance these efforts more and more.

This program is close to my heart as I myself am working on the 12-steps of recovery. I have learned a lot about this process through my own experiences. The truth that has been apparent is that recovery is a journey and not a destination. Recovery is a day-by-day journey of becoming the very best version of myself. It is not easy, and there is no "quick fix." The program at Poverello House is part of the journey for so many.

Even for those who graduate, it is just the beginning. However, this beginning is beautiful as I have had the pleasure of seeing men's lives transformed from their first day with us to their last day with us. I have seen men reunite with their families, start new careers, buy homes, go to college, get their first driver's license, and change the trajectory of their entire life. I have gone on outings to the mountains or a Grizzlies baseball game with the men in our program. I have been told countless times that it was the first time they can remember having done anything fun while sober.

Thank you for partnering with us to provide the men's residential drug rehab program for so many years. The transformation of countless lives is occurring daily through your generous support!

With gratitude,

Zack



SEPTEMBER WISH LIST

TRAVEL-SIZE HYGIENE ITEMS

- Razors
- Shaving Cream
- Shampoo / Conditioner
- Lotion
- Bar Soap
- Toothpaste / Toothbrushes
- Feminine Hygiene Products



DONATIONS ARE ACCEPTED MONDAY-FRIDAY 8 AM-5 PM AND SATURDAY - SUNDAY 8 AM-1 PM
412 F. STREET, FRESNO (DONATION LANE LOCATED ON G STREET)
EMAIL US: INFO@POVERELLOHOUSE.ORG



PISMO BEACH



BASS LAKE



DUNLAP



GRIZZLY GAME

Men's Residential
Rehabilitation
Program
2022 Outings!



GRIZZLY GAME



GRIZZLY GAME



BASS LAKE



OAKHURST