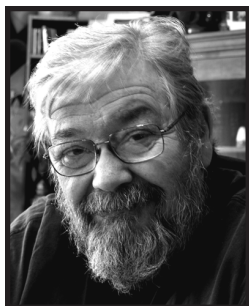


POVERELLO NEWS



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



One of the best parts of my job is getting to interact with volunteers. Mind you, we have so many of them that I only have the opportunity to talk to a small number, but they never cease to encourage me. Things are getting more professional here all the time, but there will never be a day that we won't need volunteers, and people who give of their time here are some of the finest folks that I've ever

met.

One such volunteer was a regular reader of our newsletter, and between what he read and what he experienced working here, he decided that he wanted to share Poverello House with his niece. He also wanted his niece to meet me.

Unfortunately, that meeting hasn't happened yet, because we haven't been able to coordinate schedules (these days doctor visits keep me pretty busy), but the fact that he wanted to introduce his high school-age niece to our work made me think about a few things.

Alcoholics Anonymous operates on the principle of "attraction rather than promotion." I like the concept: people being attracted to what you do, rather than being recruited by what you say you do. I think this uncle was exhibiting this principle by spreading his enthusiasm around and engaging his niece in our mission.

Of course, we have to survive as a nonprofit organization that provides a host of free services, so we do our fair share of promotion, or, as it is more commonly known, marketing. However, after all of these years, I'm still convinced that many people come to us

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through attraction, word of mouth, or curiosity. People see the spirit of Poverello; they see that we deal with the homeless a little differently than they would expect, and they “get it,” they like it, and they want to be a part of it.

That Poverello spirit is essentially how we try to emulate the way of St. Francis of Assisi. I’m not sure volunteers realize that when they see Poverello treating the poor with dignity, we are simply being consistent with our Franciscan roots. That’s why at least once a year, in October, when the Feast of St. Francis is celebrated by the church, we talk about those roots.

There is a concept known as “moral capital.” A society passes on its moral sensibilities from generation to generation, in much the same way a monetary inheritance is passed on. We all have heard stories of undisciplined children of rich parents who squander their inheritance. That can happen with moral capital, also. It’s easy to forget where you came from and squander what you have by moving too far away from your foundation.



We see this sort of thing with organizations that no longer seem to recognize their original purpose: government agencies that were born to help the poor become nightmarish bureaucracies; businesses that began successfully by putting customers first morphing into haughtiness and ignoring customer concerns; or charities that branch out into areas their founders never intended for the organizations. We’re surrounded by examples.

Poverello House continues to grow and change, but I always pray that we will never forget what our name means: the Little Poor Man, St. Francis of Assisi. He didn’t have a marketing plan; he just had God’s plan to reach out to the poor and forgotten with unconditional love, and that attracted enough people to substantially affect the church and Western culture. St. Francis reaffirmed the Gospel message of redemption and incarnation by becoming one of the poor in order to serve the poor. I hope that long after I’m gone, the Little Poor Man continues to shape our mission.

Nike

A Gift of Hope

Poverello House presents: *A Gift of Hope* Saturday, November 12, 2016 at TorNino's Banquet. A Gift of Hope is a gala benefitting Poverello House, sponsored by Saint Agnes Medical Center. Join us for a fun-filled night to honor Mike McGarvin, Founder. Enjoy dinner, drinks, live and silent auction and entertainment. Individual tickets are \$90. Social Hour starts at 5:00 p.m.

Sponsorship levels are available. Live, silent and dessert auction items are welcomed. Please contact Pedro Santana (559) 498-6988 regarding sponsorship opportunities or visit www.poverellohouse.org/gift-of-hope for more information.



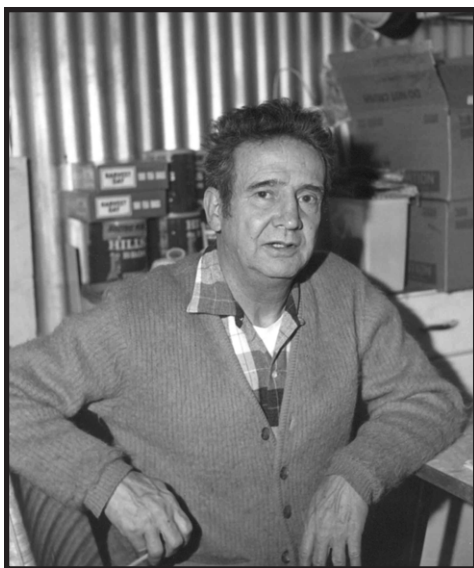
Poverello House's Grandfather

One way we celebrate our roots is to remember Father Simon Scanlon, the Franciscan priest who helped change Mike McGarvin's life, which in turn led to the creation of Poverello House in Fresno. Father Simon was a masterful preacher and skilled, deeply thoughtful writer. The excerpt below is from Way, the Franciscan journal that he edited and to which he contributed.

At the turn of this century a group of the most oppressed and deprived workers went on strike. The strike was long and bitter. The bosses used every trick in the book to break the strike: hired thugs to beat the strike leaders; the companies bought up the mort-

gages on the homes of the strike leaders; credit was withdrawn from strikers by company stores; company-controlled police harassed strikers. The owners tried to beat and starve the workers into submission to slave conditions. Those workers were (some of) the most dehumanized of any segment of the population in our nation's history. Surely one could understand if they had taken as their slogan in their revolution such phrases as, "Kill the Fascist Insect," or, "Burn it Down," or any of the appeals to violence and destruction adopted by some of the modern pretenders to revolutionary dedication. But those workers were the inheritors of another tradition, and the slogan they cried was "Bread and Roses." They refused to settle, like the people in Ivan Karamosov's "Grand Inquisitor" for bread alone. They knew they were men.

The only true revolution in all history was proclaimed at the turn of this era, two thousand years ago when God pitched His tent among us. The Old Testament had told us through the prophets all about God. Now God came to show us all about man. Today, the mystique of the only true revolution is being lost. Not only are oppressors on the rampage, but the Grand Inquisitor's prophecy is being realized: false revolutionaries who are trying to get us to settle for bread without roses. Men need bread, all those material goods God gave the world, to live. But men need roses, all those spiritual goods brought to the world by God's Son, to make life worth living... Let us dedicate ourselves to His Revolution: to bring to all His poor brothers and sisters "Bread and Roses."



—Simon Scanlon, Ordo Fratrum Minorum

Special Ops and Force Multipliers

After some high-profile missions in recent years, we've learned quite a bit about the special operations branches of our military. These are elite units that are trained to perform assignments above and beyond the abilities of conventional forces. While *all* those in the military deserve our gratitude and respect, the special ops branches engender awe when we hear about the nearly impossible missions that they execute.

At Poverello, there is a new service that is somewhat analogous to special operations, although it is an imperfect analogy. This group is called HART: Homeless Assessment Reengagement Team. This small group of Poverello and Fresno County Mental Health employees definitely goes above and beyond what is normally done for hardcore homeless clients. Sara Mirhadi, Poverello's Director of Program Development, has called the HART Team "Poverello's special ops."

The HART members' mission is to take on the hardest cases, the people who have given up on themselves and who are considered too difficult to help. This might be a man whose symptoms of mental illness are so florid that he frightens people away; a woman whose addiction has led her to become riddled with debilitating diseases and hopelessness; or perhaps someone with extensive brain damage who has been eking out an anonymous existence on the street. HART takes on these sorts of problems, and has thus far dealt with them successfully.

HART utilizes every imaginable resource, and extends Poverello's recent role as a navigator for the homeless. HART doesn't target everyone, but especially tries to help those thought to be "un-helpable." A good example is a man named Geno, who we wrote about in a recent newsletter. Geno is severely mentally ill, so much so that he had a short life expectancy on the streets. Working with MAP Point at Pov, HART members took Geno step-by-step through the processes he needed to achieve some stability. It began by walking him through bureaucracies to get needed identification, and then to the county department of mental health to be evaluated, which led to obtaining the antipsychotic medication that he needed

to function. The team was able to help him get general relief, work through Holy Cross Clinic to monitor his pill regimen, and ultimately secure him permanent supportive housing that will supervise him to ensure he remains stable. Yet, the team is not done. They will continue to monitor him long after he is no longer living on the streets, with regular visits and ongoing assistance.

There is a phrase used frequently in elite military branches, such as the Green Berets or Navy Seals: force multiplier. A force multiplier is “a factor that increases (hence ‘multiplies’) an item or a group.” (Wikipedia definition). Some force multipliers of these elite units include high morale, intelligence, training, experience, and strategy. Thus, a small group that embodies all of these traits may accomplish things that larger, conventional forces could not.

HART is a resource that is a force multiplier. Two Poverello staff and one Fresno County Mental Health employee, because of their incredible dedication, unique experiences, and special training, are able to help navigate a chronically homeless person through a labyrinth of bureaucratic impediments and get results that “conventional” methods could never achieve.

This is almost miraculous. Geno was a man who was probably doomed to die on the streets; he is now stable, housed, and receiving continuing support. Our hats are off to HART, the “special ops” team at Poverello, and our thanks go out to the many partner agencies involved in helping this endeavor.



October Wish List

Coffee * Turkeys * Warm men's clothing

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.