



# POVERELLO NEWS

SPECIAL EDITION VOL.3

## WOMEN AT POVERELLO HOUSE: BUILDING ON PAST AND FUTURE GREATNESS

Renowned author and female activist, Diane Mariechild once said, “a woman is the full circle. Within her is the power to create, nurture and transform.”

Women have had a significant role in the evolution of Poverello House services. It started with Mary McGarvin, who was the first volunteer at Poverello House. In 1973, she began making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches with our founder and her husband. Today, she continues to provide hospitality and kindness fifty years later. Women served as board members at Poverello House from its inception to today. Poverello House’s executive team consists of dynamic women. Linda Bowman is the Chief Financial Officer. She has over 30 years of experience working with nonprofits ensuring that they remain financially viable and secure. Sara Mirhadi, Chief Programs Officer, has worked at Poverello House for 10 years. She is developing and overseeing programs that provide hope for people experiencing homelessness and addiction.

However, the most important women at Poverello House are the unhoused women we serve. According to the last Point in Time Count, 40% of

people experiencing homelessness are women. These women are the future of our community. With staff guidance, they can transform themselves into the people they are destined to be. Poverello House invests in these women because their successes will inspire the next generation of women. This March and every day, Poverello House celebrates the women who have made us the organization we are today. They are the beautiful masterpieces painted upon the canvas of 50 years of enriching the lives and spirits of all who pass our way.





**Zack Darrah**  
*Poverello House CEO*

# TELLING OUR STORY

I have the honor of taking many incredible community members on a tour of our campus. I cannot tell you how many times, at the end of the tour, someone says, "I had no idea about everything you do down here!" Even though we have been doing our work for five decades, many people still have never heard the story of Poverello House. Most people know that we feed those who are hungry. Many people know that we do some direct work with those experiencing homelessness. However, much of our community knows very little about the incredible services that are provided daily for the hungry, homeless, and hurting.

There is no better time than during our 50th Anniversary to share our story and work with the community! We are committed to ensuring everyone knows about Poverello House, our roots, our work today, and how to get involved. This month, we will have our 28-minute, commercial-free, special program that will air on ABC 30 on March 26th and follow that up with our all-day ABC 30 "Call for Hope" Telethon on March 30th! We hope you will join in on these exciting moments as we share the history of Poverello House and what the future holds.

The last week of March will be the official launch of our new marketing campaign in partnership with MJR Creative Group. We aim to ensure our story is known, thank the community for their support, and share how our work began. We want everyone to know that Poverello House began with

"Papa Mike," giving peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to those on the streets in downtown Fresno. We also want to share stories of our work's impact on individuals and families we have been blessed to serve. Our campaign will all be just one way to help the community know about all we do daily.

I need your help to be part of these efforts! You are vital to sharing the story of Poverello House throughout the community. Will you help us share our story with someone you know this year? I hope you will point someone to come volunteer, donate financially or otherwise, tell someone to visit our website or social media outlets or share how you have personally been part of this work. Just as we rely on your support so that the work can happen, we need your help so that our whole community can join in on the incredible work of enriching the lives and spirits of all who pass our way! I know that the more people who know about what we do, it will allow us to serve more people than ever before.

**Thank you for making this 50th year possible; we would not be here without you!**

Blessings,

Zack

## GIVE A STOCK GIFT AND LOWER YOUR TAX BILL.

Giving an appreciated asset, such as stocks or taxable investment accounts, may allow you to give hope through Poverello House AND save significantly on your tax bill. When you give an appreciated asset, you can avoid capital gains taxes and receive a charitable deduction. This double tax benefit can be a significant tax benefit for you.

Go to [www.poverellohouse.org](http://www.poverellohouse.org) or call 559-498-6988 to learn more about how you can make a life-changing gift!



# 20 YEARS OF WOMEN'S SHELTER



MILESTONES WITH "MAMA MARY"  
& CLARE MCGARVIN

We have another anniversary that we are celebrating here at the Poverello House campus; Naomi's House is celebrating its 20th anniversary! Naomi's House was a concept that was years in the making before it became a reality in 2002. Since Mike's early days of ministry in downtown Fresno, he regularly looked for the women who came to him with their needs. The night we opened our doors in Fresno, Karen was our first client. She was a prostitute who was often unhoused and needed various supportive services. She was a Poverello House regular during most of the 1970s before we had a location for clients to sleep at. Karen is someone I often remember when thinking about unhoused women in need. Like many women we encountered at Poverello House, she struggled to have permanent housing.

Before Naomi's House came to be, Mike regularly cared for the women as much as he could. He made many trips to methadone clinics for the women who did not have the means

to get there independently. I also remember when he provided the short overnight shelter of a hotel room (with no strings attached), so these women would get a quiet place to clean up and rest. These were the little ways that Mike would try to help. Sometimes this could be seen as enabling. However, we knew we were showing them unconditional love and the dignity they deserved. We always provided whatever we could at the time, yet, we both knew there was a greater need to support women living without a home. I was very distressed over the years. As a woman who had the blessings of a home and a caring husband, I could see the needs of women on the streets that were not being met. So, having Naomi's House for the past more than twenty years has been a true blessing. We have provided overnight stable shelter to countless women and plan to continue this work as we advance.

When we opened Naomi's House, there was a gap in overnight shelters for women in the community. The Holy Cross Center for Women was

operating on our campus, providing daytime shelter and services strictly for women experiencing homelessness. Back then, we were still one year away from opening The Village of Hope, and the Women's Center was only for daytime use. I remember the support and guidance we received from Marjaree Mason Center. At the same time, as we prepared for opening, we were embarking on providing new desperately needed services. We wanted to be sure that this project would be successful. We are grateful to all those individuals and organizations who supported our needs at the time to help make sure Naomi's House was opened with a stable foundation.

I want to extend a personal thank you to all the women who have helped to keep Naomi's House running for the past twenty years. I greatly admire you all for the work you accomplish at Naomi's House. It takes a special person to take care of so many daily. We could not have made it these past 20 years without your support!



(Above & Right)  
Naomi's House  
staff and clients  
through the years.



National Women's Day celebration at Naomi's House.



P.O. Box 12225  
Fresno, CA 93777-2225

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
FRESNO, CA  
PERMIT NO. 2440

# PAPA MIKE DONOR RECOGNITION TILES.

Donor tiles are personalized fixtures that provide permanent recognition towards the memorial project. Memorial project will be located on our campus to memorialize the legacy of "Papa Mike."

Minimum Donation: \$500



**CONTACT** CIERRA BENINGA • 559.498.6988 (EXT. 109)  
CBENINGA@POVERELLOHOUSE.ORG

◀ Example Tile