



# POVERELLO NEWS

SPECIAL EDITION VOL.8

## EMBRACING CHANGE: A JOURNEY FROM ADDICTION TO OPPORTUNITY

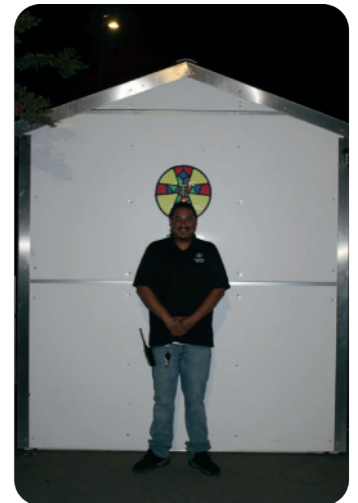
Poverello House was created through one man's heart and care for others. Michael McGarvin began this journey in 1973. Beyond the support of his wife, Mama Mary, he knew he needed more help to meet the growing needs in the community. By 1990, the Men's Residential Rehabilitation Program became the second initiative to take shape at Poverello House; the first being food services. As the program progressed, the group of men on their recovery journey committed their time to Poverello House's daily operations. This would form an essential part of a work therapy program. In 1995, Poverello House introduced transitional housing for men participating in the Men's Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation program.

Over the years, thousands of men have come through our rehab program, some of whom have found employment opportunities within Poverello House. Approximately thirty percent of our current staff came through our rehabilitation program. While the program brings in people from all walks of life with different personalities, different belief systems, etc., all the men who have gone through this journey agree that giving back to society has changed their lives. Having the opportunity to join the staff of the organization that created the environment for their recovery has been beautiful. Here are the stories of just a selection of men who have walked this special pathway.

Village of Hope Client Services Specialist **ERNESTO MAGANA** heard of Poverello House when he was in county jail.

**ERNESTO SAW THE 2022 CALL FOR HOPE TELETHON COMMERCIAL, AND HIS CELLMATE ENCOURAGED ERNESTO TO EXPLORE IT BASED ON HIS OWN EXPERIENCE WITH THE PROGRAM.**

Mr. Magana shared that his struggle with alcoholism and drug abuse ruined his entire life. Unfamiliar with life beyond his addictions, he recognized the need for a change when an opportunity for a program presented itself. The motivation to keep him going during the six-month work program was his new relationship with his family. He was absent from their lives due to his addictions and can now embrace his time with his daughters. Ernesto received his ID and birth certificate through the program and completed his DUI classes at no cost. He says that the program was the "steppingstone I needed to get help."



**DEVIN SANDOVAL** is a recent program graduate who left his life of tattooing behind to serve those experiencing homelessness at the Hope Pointe Emergency Shelter. Devin had a prominent career at Clovis Ink, but after a year of difficulties and bad decisions, Devin found himself in need of help.

The Fresno County Jail released him to the Poverello House Men's Residential Rehabilitation Program, where he learned a life of service. He shared that he needed the structure of a program and a support system around him. His addiction caused him to lose focus on his loved ones and make selfish decisions. Poverello House is blessed to have lived experience staff who can relate to our clients' struggles and can assist in unique ways.

**DEVIN SHARED, "THERE ARE TIMES WHEN IT IS EASIER JUST TO ACCEPT THE LIFE YOU'VE CREATED, BUT IF YOU PUT IN THE FOOTWORK, IT IS AN AMAZING TRANSFORMATION."**

# 24-HOUR SHELTER OPERATIONS



Naomi's House Staff  
Lisa and Jennifer

Poverello House has operated an emergency shelter program since Naomi's House opened in 2002. The Village of Hope would open soon thereafter in 2004.

Emergency shelters are vital to the unhoused community.

They provide safe spaces for them to sleep at night and find a reprieve from the streets during the day. In 2023, Poverello House opened two new shelters. The Family Hope Shelter assists unhoused families, and Hope Pointe, a co-ed shelter with a bridge shelter component (shelter for those waiting for their housing to be ready) Expanding our shelter programs has provided employment opportunities, more shelter beds for the community, and two new safe havens for the unhoused.

As a 24-hour shelter, we have staff overnight that do unique tasks and serve in a different environment than the day staff. Our overnight team consists of Client Services Specialists and Security Specialists. Jose Gastulum, Client Services Specialist at Village of Hope, shared that some roommates are more comfortable with different sleeping environments. This includes temperature, lighting, music, or other preferences. The overnight staff must accommodate all clients and ensure that the community remains peaceful and safe during the evening hours.

Naomi's House staff explained that many women staying at the women's shelter have encountered domestic violence. These difficulties cause women with trauma to continuously respond to triggers or prevent them from getting proper rest.

The all-female staff at Naomi's House creates enrichment activities geared toward self-care to provide new habits and teach self-love. Lisa, a Client Services Specialist, shared that she will spend part of her shift connecting with clients who cannot sleep. If they are having trouble, she creates a safe space to share and feel their emotions without judgment. Hope Pointe staff shared that to keep clients engaged at night, they will host various enrichment activities such as board games, arts and crafts, sports, and more. Weezy, a Client Services Specialist, shared, "We want to lead them in the right direction, not police them. We want clients to know that the world is not against you; you are just down on your luck." The Hope Pointe staff connects with clients to build meaningful relationships while they are staying at the shelters. The client services staff focuses on maintaining a clean and welcoming lobby environment, campus walks, groundskeeping, client room checks and cleanliness, enrichment activities, and, if necessary, incident reports. The overnight staff must get creative while doing their tasks as they navigate working around sleeping clients and those who prefer to be up all night. Security Specialist Melvin Jackson came from a private security company and shared that this job has similar tasks, but he no longer serves as an enforcer. At Hope Pointe, he can build rapport with his clients. He does so by playing dominos, basketball, or soccer. Melvin shared, "My motivation to keep engaging at night is that I'm giving back, and truly, there's never a boring time here." Poverello House never closes. On a typical night, approximately 450 individuals are sleeping in a bed operated by the organization. Every day of the year, three hot meals are being served to thousands. As we have been for the last five decades, we will be here for this community. We know that with your support, we can continue to meet the needs of our community. Thank you for walking this "Journey of Hope" alongside side us.



**Poverello House Men's Residential Rehab Graduates, Javier and Ricardo, were recently honored by the Fresno and Madera Police Chiefs' Association. These two extraordinary men were recognized for their unwavering courage and for putting other's safety before their own.**



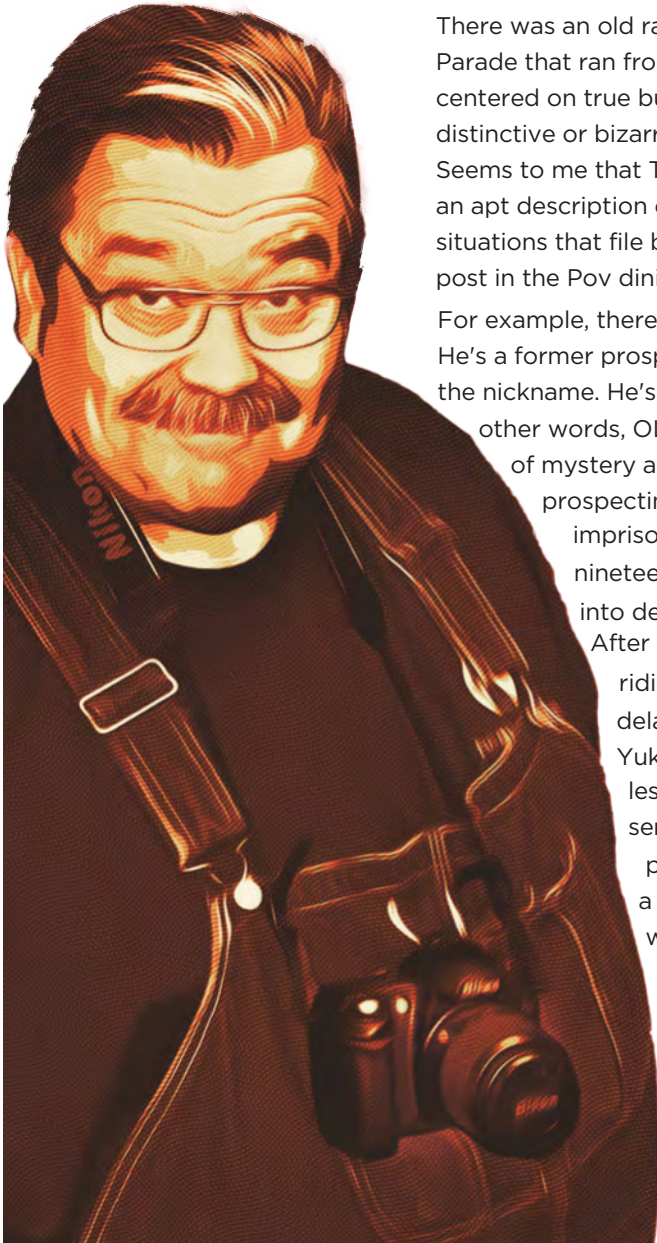
Hope Pointe Staff  
Client Enrichment Activities



# FROM THE POVERELLO HOUSE NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE

BY PAPA MIKE MCGARVIN JUNE 2015

POVERELLO HOUSE IS FILLED WITH UNIQUE STORIES AND PEOPLE. THERE IS NEVER A DULL MOMENT IN THE SHELTERS OR ON OUR CAMPUS. DURING PAPA MIKE'S ERA, HE WOULD CHRONICLE THESE EXCEPTIONAL ENCOUNTERS IN THE POVERELLO NEWS-A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER SENT TO SUPPORTERS. YOU CAN LOCATE HIS NEWSLETTERS ON OUR WEBSITE'S "STAY CONNECTED" SECTION!



There was an old radio show called The Passing Parade that ran from 1937 to 1951. The series centered on true but weird past events and distinctive or bizarre people throughout history. Seems to me that The Poverello Parade would be an apt description of the various people and situations that file by me as I sit at my observation post in the Pov dining room.

For example, there's a fellow I call Yukon Jack. He's a former prospector, which is why I gave him the nickname. He's somewhere close to my age (in other words, OLD), and he maintains an aura of mystery about himself. He says his prospecting was interrupted by being imprisoned under false pretenses for nineteen years. Although he doesn't go into detail, he claims it was all political. After his release, he was hit by a car riding his bike, which further delayed his return to gold mining. Yukon is a quiet guy who more or less keeps to himself. Now, in his senior years, he wants to try prospecting again. He says he had a deal lined up with a landowner who agreed to let him prospect on his property for a ten percent cut, but somehow the deal folded. Undaunted, he has put together a proposal for an "investment opportunity" to finance a venture on the Rogue Rover in Oregon.

What I like about him is his crusty uniqueness, the inscrutability surrounding him, and his undaunted spirit. Like so many other people I've met at Poverello House, God probably broke the mold after He made Yukon Jack.

Papa Mike's Café, Chef Tito's brainchild of having a very nice, restaurant-quality meal once a month, has had an impact on at least one person. I came over one night to observe the meal. A woman started crying halfway through, and another woman brought her over to me. Through her tears, she said, "I just wanted to thank you. I'm so happy about the way you treated me tonight."

Apparently, the good café dinner and the polite Pov residents touched her heart. After becoming homeless, she wasn't used to being treated like a lady. That night, she slept at Naomi's House, and her roommate told me that she was still crying the next morning. Meeting a character like Yukon Jack, getting a hug from a grateful young man who calls me "Dude," or being thanked by a tearful woman aren't assets that I can put in the bank. However, they are the kinds of treasures that I bank in my heart, and they make me awfully grateful for this place called Poverello House.

**THERE ARE ENDLESS STORIES POVERELLO HOUSE STAFF AND CLIENTS COULD SHARE, ESPECIALLY THROUGH FIVE DECADES OF SERVICE. IT IS A REMARKABLE PLACE FILLED WITH INCREDIBLE PEOPLE. THANKS TO PAPA MIKE FOR CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE OF LOVE AND RESPECT.**



Poverello  
House

50  
YEARS

POVERELLO  
HOUSE

*A Journey of Hope*

LEARN MORE AT:  
[POVERELLOHOUSE.ORG](http://POVERELLOHOUSE.ORG)

HOWEVER YOU HELP,  
IT LOOKS LIKE  
**HOPE.**

**DONATE TODAY**

