



# POVERELLO NEWS

SPECIAL EDITION VOL.9

## POVERELLO HOUSE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



*First Poverello House Board of Directors*

Poverello House created a Board of Directors in the early 1980's. Founder Mike McGarvin had a passion for people and helping those in need but lacked the spirit for business. A Board of Directors was formed to handle the organizational logistics and accounting of funds. The original Board of Directors was eight people who believed in Mike and the organization's mission of believing in the dignity of every person and enriching the lives and spirits of all who pass our way.

The origins of Poverello House are unbelievable at times. One man led by his passion for servitude, created an inheritance of love that lives on 50 years later. One man surrendered control of his footwork to a group of experts in business and law. One man brought the

### **STREETS TO THE BOARD TABLE.**

As Mike gave control to a Board of Directors and Executive Director, he could focus on client relations. His Founders Report to the board always had a shocking or inspiring story from the clients that month. Mike had a way with people and was known on the streets as "Papa Mike." He was always there to lend a helping hand or to share a hello and smile.

Jim Connell was the Executive Director of Poverello House from 1990 to 2013. He was a stockbroker and got coerced into the role of Executive Director. He committed to one year but was consumed by Poverello House, "This place is miraculous, and we're all changed by our experience, and I think that's why we're still here." Ten years after his time as the Executive Director, he rejoined Poverello House in 2023 as a member of the 50th Anniversary Committee and an Emeritus Board Member. Jim handled the day-to-day organizational structure, and Mike could focus on clients. Jim said, **"MIKE WASN'T**

**ABOUT CREATING A LEGACY. IT WAS SIMPLY, 'WHAT DO YOU NEED? THE REST WAS JUST NOISE TO HIM.**

Charles Farnsworth has been involved with Poverello House in a board setting since 1990. He has dedicated thirty-three years to the organization. The board was hands-on and involved in day-to-day events in the early days. Charles used to review all finances and was the accounting controller to sign off on payroll. There weren't many fundraising events or grant funding in the early era. There were times when the organization feared payroll would not be met. However, miracles always appeared just in time.

John Frye, a Board Member beginning in 1992, and current Finance Committee member shared that there was a time when Poverello House had \$30 in the bank account. Payroll was due that week, and the board was scrambling. One day, a black sedan pulled up to the gates and dropped off a paper bag. That paper bag had \$10,000 in it. The driver never gave his name nor how he obtained the funds. Poverello House was able to fulfill payroll that month. This is a perfect example of the providential and community support mentioned in our mission statement!

Mike had a strong presence in the community and drew people in to help. He made an evident impact and captured people with his ability to engage with anyone. His photographs of the unhoused spoke volumes and resonated with people's hearts. Mike always said, "Listen with compassion; give with a warm heart and a smile." The Fresno community gravitated towards Mike and the mission of Poverello House.

Robin Duke was a volunteer who began a large community-run group called The Amici Guild. In 1990, Poverello House sought hands-on volunteers to assist with client-related and fundraising events. The 40 members hosted potlucks, Tower Theater movie nights, Holiday parties, and more! Robin joined the Board of Directors in the late 90s and shares, "I got more out of it [being a member and volunteer] than I ever put into it." Robin returned to Poverello House in 2023 to join the 50th Anniversary Committee.

In 1988, Jennifer Graves volunteered every Tuesday and Wednesday during different mealtimes. She was dedicated to the cause and would assist with clerical administrative work. She was asked to join the Board of Directors to record the minutes! Jennifer said the board was always focused on how to move the mission forward and how to serve the unhoused. There was never a vision for the future. It was the actions of the day-to-day that made an impact and created what is Poverello House today.



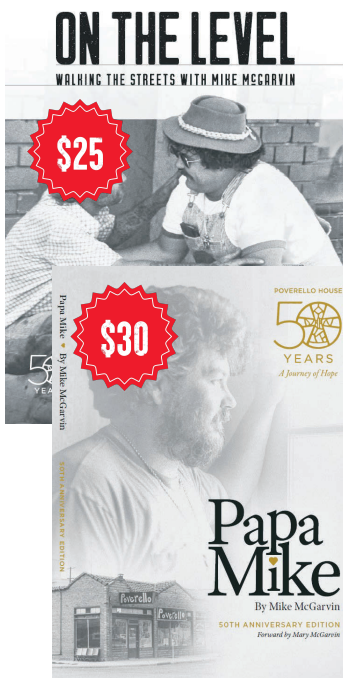
**Board of Directors**  
*Prashant Patel, Paula Capozzi, Heidi Michael, and Tushar Patel, CEO, Zack Darrah*

## THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS: ADVANCING THE MISSION OF POVERELLO HOUSE

The story of Poverello House begins with “Papa Mike” McGarvin serving peanut butter and jelly sandwiches out of the back of his car in downtown Fresno. If you have been part of the community here, you know how this journey of hope began. As the founder of the organization and driver of services beginning in 1973, he found that at some point, he needed to find others to help. As the work grew exponentially, there was more to be done than loving others and making sandwiches! I am amazed by his humility by identifying the need for a governing body to oversee and manage the many moving parts of running an organization. About a decade after the first sandwich was served, the Board of Directors was born.

As the Chief Executive Officer, I am privileged to work closely with our Board of Directors. As a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, we are required to have a Board of Directors. The Board has many responsibilities. However, their main role is to govern the organization to ensure that laws, policies, and procedures are being implemented to advance the mission of Poverello House. One unique reality for non-profit organizations is that the Board does not have any ownership of the organization, yet they do have a fiduciary responsibility to the organization. No Board members at Poverello House are compensated for their time. So, the Board of Directors is a group of volunteers who are particularly passionate, committed, and dedicated to our success! We meet monthly as a body and meet between meetings through committees conducting organizational business. I am a member of all committees, yet I am not a Board Member and have no voting rights as the CEO.

I have been blessed to have been hired by the Board in November of 2019 to serve in my role. The CEO is the only employee explicitly hired by the Board. Our Board is a very special group of people who care deeply for our daily work. They bring their time, talents, and treasure to support the organization. The truth of the matter is that we could not possibly accomplish our goals without their support. As we have seen much growth over the last several years, none of it would be possible without the incredible people at our Board table. As we look back at 50 years, countless individuals have provided leadership as Board members that we are forever grateful to. Thank you to all of our Board members, past and present, for their partnership, vision, and investment to ensure that we continue to enrich the lives and spirits of all who pass our way for decades to come.



**50TH EDITION  
 BOOKS FOR SALE!**

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**1990 Board of Directors**



**50th Committee Members**  
*Charles Farnsworth, John Frye, Jim Connell, Mary McGarvin, Zack Darrah, Clare McGarvin, Mayo Ryan, and Marvin Smith.*



# FROM THE POVERELLO HOUSE NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE: ROBIN DUKE BY MEL RENGE MAY 2015

If you're going to have coffee with Robin Duke, you'll need to bring a few extra napkins, because you'll be laughing so hard that you'll probably spit out your drink. Robin's trademark is a rapid-fire, self-deprecating, Henny Youngman-style humor. In a word, she is hilarious.

She is also one of Poverello's longest-serving volunteers. Founder Mike McGarvin has always said that you need a sense of humor to work here, so maybe that's why Robin has lasted twenty-six years.

Robin entered our lives in 1989, along with Kathy Hoover, the co-founder of the Amici Del Poverello Guild. A former Poverello House board member who knew Robin asked her to start a supportive guild to help the organization. Robin and Kathy thought they should become acquainted with the place first, so they volunteered in what was then our clothing warehouse, spending hours organizing the staggering amount of donated clothing that we had. After months of serving in the food line and sorting more clothes that they thought existed in the entire world, Robin and Kathy made some phone calls and then set up an informational meeting to get people interested in starting a guild. Much to their surprise about forty-five people come to the meeting, and it wasn't long before Amici was up and running.

Over the years, Amici has focused on two things: raising funds for Poverello House, and providing special events for clients of Poverello. One of their first activities was a movie night fundraiser in the Tower District. Other fundraisers have included Second Space Theater showings, the annual Elvis event, a card party, and a yard sale. This is just a sampling of the many activities taken on by the Guild during its long tenure of service.

Their other focus, special events for Poverello clients, has also had a rich history. There was an "Octoberfest" (minus the beer) for the men in the drug program, with food, live music and a lot of relaxation. Easter and Cinco de Mayo parties for children, movie days for the homeless, and Christmas parties for homeless families, as well as a holiday party for residents, their families, and Poverello staff have all been the results of the Guild's work.

Robin pointed out that there are still some of the original members helping the Guild. Mary Hung, Diane Kittredge, Mary Ann LeCompte, and Carol Maul were either there at the beginning or have been around for so long that it seems like they were there from the start. All these women have donated hundreds of hours to Amici. Robin has served as a member of Poverello's Board of Directors for many years. Her hands-on experience with the Guild makes her a valuable resource for our board. In addition, she and Kathy Hoover have done some

"dynamic duo" projects together, such as upgrading the Poverello dog kennel and being "den mothers" for the resident baseball teams, providing them with drinks and snacks, and showing up to cheer them on.

With sincere emotion, Robin said in conclusion that, "Pov has been a very important part of my life. I don't know if I can ever let it go. The people who work there are incredible. I can't imagine not doing something for Pov. I felt since day one a connection there. I still go down and serve/ In all the years I've been there, I've never had any homeless person be rude to me, or anything other than gracious and thankful.

"I'm very, very proud of the Guild and the ones who have worked so hard to keep it going. It's a wonderful, important organization, full of wonderful people. I feel so privileged to have been a part of it."



*Kathy Hoover, Robin Duke, and Mary McGarvin.*

## 2023 POVERELLO HOUSE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### BOARD CHAIR

Prashant Patel

### FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Charles Farnsworth

### SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

Dr. Tushar Patel

### SECRETARY

Paula Capozzi

### TREASURER

Linda Bowman

### PAST CHAIR

Curtis Davies

Nick Amendola  
Marc' Bady  
Hank Bennett  
Jim Connell  
Sharif Elkhaldy  
Cate Ervin

Rebecca Garth-Nelson  
Constance Jones  
Adam Mendes  
Heidi Michael  
YellowFeather Noriega  
David Olmos

Ken Ramos  
Dr. Mickey Sachdeva  
Dr. Manavjeet Sidhu  
Andrew Slater  
Victor Thao  
Rob Veneski

YARD SIGNS AVAILABLE! CONTACT [KFLORES@POVERELLOHOUSE.ORG](mailto:KFLORES@POVERELLOHOUSE.ORG)

*A Journey of Hope*



YEARS

# HOPE



# LIVES HERE.

**WE SUPPORT POVERELLO HOUSE.**



Poverello  
House

[POVERELLOHOUSE.ORG](http://POVERELLOHOUSE.ORG)