



POVERELLO NEWS

November 2024

SERVING WITH RELENTLESS HOSPITALITY

Papa Mike and Mama Mary started Poverello House with one simple act of kindness; passing out a PB&J sandwich. Over the last 51 years, their love and compassion have reached thousands who needed a “hand-up” within the Fresno community. They envisioned Poverello House as an organization changing lives with relentless hospitality.

Although Papa Mike passed away a few years ago, Mama Mary still serves at Poverello House as an important part of the team! She mainly spends her time in the Contact Office. She assists guests with getting their mail and providing other essentials for our guests. Mary is a reflection of what relentless hospitality looks like daily. She is friendly, welcoming, and responsive to the needs of our guests. Her efforts are a central part of our main goal as an organization: to permanently end homelessness.

Papa Mike's legacy continues through the spirit of service by volunteers throughout Poverello House. Papa Mike's Café captures an enduring commitment to providing relentless hospitality for all patrons of the no-cost restaurant. For all, Papa Mike's Café is more than just a place for meals; it's a place to feel at home, which is especially important to families who dine with us.

One family that has become part of our Poverello House family is Johanna, her partner David, and their four children. They have been visiting Papa Mike's Café regularly since it opened in January. From their very first visit, the family found a warm and welcoming environment where they could enjoy meals together. “Every time we come, we are treated like family,” Johanna says with a smile. This sense of belonging provides comfort and reassurance during challenging times.

Johanna and David work hard to shield their children from the weight of their hardships despite the struggles of living in a motel. They are determined to give their kids as much stability as possible. “We try our best not to let the kids see us upset,” Johanna shares. We want them to feel as normal as they can.” Their regular visits to Papa Mike's Café have provided a comforting routine and some valuable normalcy despite uncertain times.

Through many challenges, Johanna and David stay focused on their goals for a better future. Dining at Papa Mike's Cafe opened the door for the family to access other available services that Poverello House provides. They are actively working with MAP Point to receive the necessary documents to secure permanent housing. Document readiness is a milestone they believe will give their family a strong foundation to grow and thrive. “We know we will get there,” David says. They are moving steadily toward their dream of a place they can truly call their own. Their determination and the support of Poverello House will help them to get there soon!





Zack Darrah
Poverello House CEO

HOPE FOR FAMILIES

For many of us, family and the holidays go together. I have countless memories during the holidays growing up as a child. I grew up in Washington and have a clear memory of waking up to snow on Christmas morning. My family was together enjoying a traditional “white Christmas” together. We drank hot cocoa and opened gifts while looking out at the winter wonderland outside. As you know, we do not have snow during Christmas here in Fresno! However, I have been given the blessing of enjoying the holidays with my wife and children. We have the blessing of doing so in our home. We have made many memories together and I look forward to all the time we will have together in the future during this special time of year. However, for so many families in our community, the holidays are not a special time for memories. There are families who will spend Thanksgiving in their car or Christmas in a shelter. That truth is heartbreaking. This truth is why the Family Hope Shelter was ultimately opened in April of 2023. We wanted to be part of ending homelessness for families in our community. We were blessed by a \$2.5 million gift from the Bezos Day 1 Families Foundation nearly five years ago to begin this work. I believed that gift was part of the Providential support that we refer to in our mission statement.

As we have opened the Family Hope Shelter, I have been amazed by the incredible success we have had. The shelter’s mission was to end homelessness for every family that entered the shelter. Since opening the shelter, 74 children and 60 adults have been permanently housed! I believe that every family experiencing homelessness wants a home. Each family needs support in different ways to get there. Our team works tirelessly to walk alongside families on this journey. There are not too many stories I encounter at Poverello House that are more beautiful than seeing a family get their keys to their permanent home.

As we embark upon the holidays, I know that for many of us, we will be spending time with family in our homes. I am so thrilled to share that there will be 74 more children and their parents having a holiday season in their home. The Family Hope Shelter is making this possible each day. The truth is that our funds for the Family Hope Shelter are dwindling. I ask that this holiday season that you will think about these 74 children and the many more who will enjoy this time of the year in their home. We need your partnership to keep doing this work daily! I hope you will consider making a gift to see that more and more children will be able to enjoy the holidays with their families. We need your help to ensure that children in our community will have memories full of holiday joy rather than despair.

Blessings,



GROCERIES TO-GO
BITE BACK AGAINST HUNGER

DONATE DRY/ CANNED GOODS

DONATION LANE OPEN DAILY!

Most Needed Items:

- 1) Bags of Rice
- 2) Bags of Beans
- 3) Pasta/ Pasta Sauce
- 4) Peanut Butter
- 5) Canned Fruits/ Vegetables

**Scan the QR Code below for
more information!**



412 F STREET
Fresno, CA 93706



**Poverello
House**



SPREADING

LOVE, HOPE, DIGNITY, PEANUT BUTTER & JELLY

These sandwiches are more than
a simple act of kindness, they
serve as a conversation starter.

HELP SPREAD KINDNESS

Start a conversation with us.
Scan the QR to get started.



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