



POVERELLO NEWS

APRIL 2024



POVERELLO HOUSE VOLUNTEER FORCE

California Service Corps is a service force consisting of four opportunities that all make a lasting impact on the communities served. The four programs are College Corps, California Climate Action Corps, Youth Job Corps, and AmeriCorps. Corps members help communities by focusing on several key areas; climate, tutoring/mentoring youth, disaster support, food insecurity, and more.

Poverello House has several staff members who participated in AmeriCorps as Volunteer Infrastructure Project (VIP) Fellows. The VIP Fellowship provides a full-time Corps member to a nonprofit organization to fulfill 1,700 hours of service. CEO Zack Darrah completed two terms with Care Fresno as an Americorps member. Coordinator Nate Schenck has done one term with United Way. Coordinators Cierra Beninga and Mary Sosa both completed one term as VIP Fellows for Poverello House! After completing their service hours, all four VIP Fellows were hired at their nonprofit placements!

Poverello House has partnered with Fresno State's Richter Center to host twelve Central Valley College Corps Fellows. The fellows are placed with a local community benefit organization in areas of education, food insecurity, and climate action to build healthier and more equitable communities across California. Students are required to provide 450 hours of services to the community and engage in personal and professional development. They can gain work experience while being paid a stipend from Fresno State University. The College Corps members placed at Poverello House oversee numerous areas

providing leadership to volunteer groups and recruiting new volunteers! We love having Fresno State students on our campus helping to advance our mission.

The Youth Jobs Corps Program gives young adults the opportunity to gain work experience in various departments within Fresno. Assignments can range from working in an office setting to outdoors in the field, all while working alongside professional staff to best serve our community. In partnership with the City of Fresno, we have ten Youth Job Corps placements for Papa Mike's Café and Warehouse Services. The Youth Fellows in the no-cost restaurant will be taking orders, serving guests their meals, bussing tables, and washing dishes! The Warehouse Service Youth Fellows will maintain the organizational structure and oversee the donation lane. Every Youth Jobs Corps Fellow will earn real work experience that will help them in their future pursuits.

A robust volunteer force is how Poverello House has sustained our work for over 50 years. From the earliest of days, we have relied on volunteers from the Sisters of the Holy Cross, to Franciscans, to the Amici Guild, and many more. Now, the California Volunteers Office of the Governor has designed numerous programs that were created to support communities and organizations like Poverello House! These partnerships are impactful in helping make what we do possible daily. Yet, we need you and many more to continue sustaining our work for years to come!



Zack Darrah
Poverello House CEO

VOLUNTEER SERVICE IS TRANSFORMATIONAL

Happy National Volunteer Month!

My first volunteer experience was about 25 years ago. I went with my church group to help an older woman that was a widow at our church. We helped her with her lawn that day. Mowing the lawn and trimming rose bushes was all it took to make her day. As it turned out, serving others (a.k.a. volunteering) is a transformational experience. While she was proud of her yard that day, I received a tenfold blessing. Little did I know that it was just the beginning of a journey that God had in mind for me.

This volunteering journey took me to many places and allowed me to help so many others. Each time that I would serve, I wanted to do more!

I BELIEVE STRONGLY THAT SERVING OTHERS IS ADDICTING.

We are also genuinely great when serving others; Jesus said, "The greatest among you will be your servant." I continued this spirit of volunteering throughout high school, college, and into my career. I would later serve two years with AmeriCorps, a federal agency for national service and volunteerism. Every step along this journey led me to more and more places where serving others was at the core of what I was doing. Ultimately, that is how I ended up here, at Poverello House!

The very roots of Poverello House were planted through "Papa" Mike volunteerings to give out peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to those on the streets. This last year, we awarded "Mama" Mary McGarvin the first-ever Michael McGarvin Humanitarian Award for her life of service to

the mission of Poverello House. She is often referred to as the "first volunteer" in our history! These roots grew a beautiful organization that only functions through so many in the community serving as volunteers. We are uniquely designed to serve the hungry, homeless, and hurting only if people give their time daily to help make it happen.

This month, we celebrate the fantastic people who have given their time over the decades to volunteer here at Poverello House. Your contribution is astounding. You have changed people's lives. We are nothing without you. If you have yet to volunteer with us, please get signed up today! I give you a 100% money-back guarantee that you will not be disappointed with how you spend your time. Please be warned that you may just come back repeatedly; I hope you will!

May God richly bless you for serving so many in need, and may our gratitude for your service be deeply felt.

In service,

Zack

Sisters of the Holy Cross served in the Holy Cross Clinic.



Brother Kurt helping serve Chili Beans in the 80's. Mike met Kurt in San Francisco.



Mary McGarvin's mother, Jane, was one of the first kitchen volunteers at Poverello House.



THE FAMILY HOPE SHELTER

Poverello House has been serving families experiencing homelessness for over 50 years. In 2020, the Bezos Day 1 Families Fund awarded Poverello House \$2.5 million to establish and operate a family shelter for unhoused families. With these funds, a beautiful shelter facility was purchased and we began operating as soon as possible. At the facility, every family is provided shelter in their own, private unit with a bathroom, kitchenette, bedroom, and living space. On April 24, 2024, the Family Hope Shelter will celebrate one full year of service for families experiencing homelessness!

Family Hope Shelter Coordinator, Leticia "Lety" Martinez, has been navigating families out of homelessness for over a decade. She has worked at Poverello House for 18 years. When asked how Lety keeps her clients hopeful during their journey, she shared that she builds relationships beyond shelter and housing. Lety said, "It's different for families. Sometimes, you have to identify how to break the cycle of generational homelessness." Being patient and understanding towards the unique needs of families has successfully allowed Lety to house countless families during her tenure.



FAMILY HOPE SHELTER

SINCE OPENING IN APRIL 2023, THE FAMILY HOPE SHELTER HAS HOUSED 16 FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS!

A household can be anything from a single parent and one child to grandparents, parents, and multiple children. The Family Hope Shelter has served parents ranging from 18 to 63 and kids ranging from newborn to 17. Each family has different needs and challenges. At The Family Hope Shelter, we aim to provide personalized support.

Our dedicated staff work tirelessly to create a welcoming and safe environment for every family that passes our way. The staff have planned holidays and seasonal events to celebrate with the families staying at the shelter. In August, the staff hosted a Back-to-School event with haircuts, school supplies, new clothes and shoes, and new backpacks to kick off their Fall Semester! For Christmas, the ten households in the shelter were able to go to John's Incredible Pizza where they were blessed with presents and a visit from Santa!

Bobby Hubbard, Senior Director of Shelter Services, wants the community to know that the "face" of homelessness is not the typical older person down on their luck. All walks of life can become homeless, and unhoused families encounter unique challenges. The parents get up each day with a lot of stress and worry, not about themselves, but about their children's next meal and place to stay. "There is urgency and importance in helping these children. It goes above relentless hospitality, and the staff becomes role models for the kids." Lety continued, "It's the atmosphere created by staff, showing them there is more out there, and there is pride in their story."

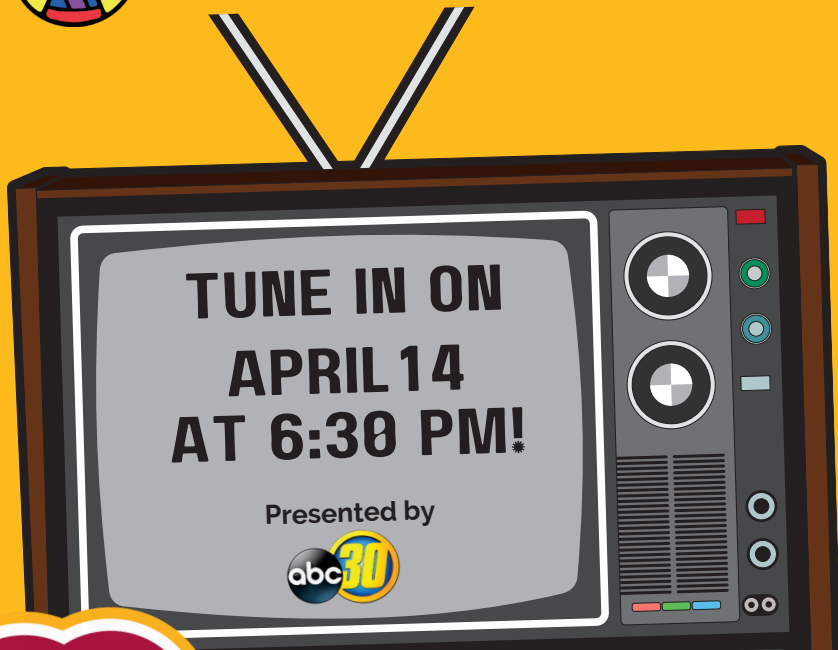
The goals for the next year of operations are strengthening relationships with educators and resource centers to bring classes onsite for personal development. Bobby wants to create a safe space for fulfilling rest and opportunities for carefree fun. The community can support The Family Hope Shelter by donating supplies, financial support, and other resources to support the families in their day-to-day lives. You can help make a generational impact in a family's journey out of homelessness for good!



FAMILY HOPE SHELTER



POVERELLO HOUSE 30-MINUTE SPECIAL



Ways to give:



(559) 319-1900



Text: POV to
(559) 319-1900

venmo @PovFresno



@PoverelloHouseFresno



poverellohouse.org

Call for
Hope

FOLLOWED BY OUR CALL FOR HOPE TELETHON EVENT ON APRIL 18TH!
A DAY FILLED WITH INSPIRING STORIES AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPORT POVERELLO HOUSE