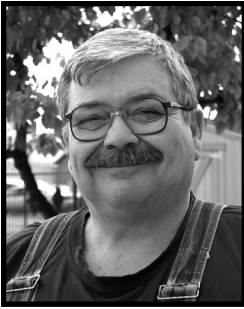


# POVERELLO NEWS

AUGUST 2015  
(559) 498-6988

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





Being a good Catholic, it seems to me that I ought to emulate the Pope. The Pope for years has had his Popemobile, and now I have my Mikemobile.

Sadly, the Mikemobile is not tricked out as nicely as the Pope's vehicle. For example, I don't have bulletproof glass surrounding me, but since most people down here long ago traded their guns for drugs, I still feel pretty

safe.

The Mikemobile was acquired for me following my heart surgery, after which getting around was a tad more difficult. I can now cruise the grounds in my little modified golf cart, and it allows me to get more done, because I don't wear out as fast.

I was using my golf cart one day to negotiate my way through the crowds at our annual block party. There were lots of providers here, assisting with everything from housing to haircuts. I was observing from my driver's seat, taking a few pictures, when a boy about seven years old approached me.

"Hey," he said, "lemme use your camera."

It didn't take me long to evaluate the situation: "Hmmm... Seven-year-old rude kid, expensive camera. I don't think so." I told him, "No."

He didn't miss a beat. "Then lemme drive your golf cart."

Again, my adult brain advised me against the wisdom of this idea. "Sorry. You don't have a driver's license."

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The kid was disappointed, and he stepped away, but not too far. After taking a few more photos, I thought I'd go inside and snap some shots of the hairdressers giving free haircuts. The Mikemobile doesn't fit through the door, so I stepped out and proceeded toward the dayroom.

Just as I reached my destination, one of our security guards came running up to me. "Papa Mike!" he exclaimed breathlessly, "A kid just tried to steal your cart!"

Sure enough, the boy to whom I had denied a test drive waited until I left, got in, turned the key, and put it in reverse.

He went a few feet before the security team caught him.

Part of me wanted to scare him straight and tell him,

"Well, you

know, we hang golf cart rustlers around here." That adult part of me took over, however, and I just gave him a stern warning.

At any given time, a kid is liable to do something stupid. It's part of being a kid. I don't think that impulsive acts are necessarily predictors of future behavior. However, here at Poverello, there is a context to consider.

That context is that a child ending up here is likely a member of a family with issues. Over the years here, I've met pregnant twelve-year olds; kids who were severely malnourished; children shuttled between the streets and sleazy, drug-infested motels; victims of physical and sexual abuse; and children whose parents were criminals, alcoholics, or addicts. It's a rare thing to find an intact, reasonably functional family eating at our tables.



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So there's a sense of sadness I feel for the boy who tried to hijack my golf cart. He's off to a bad start, it would seem, and his prospects probably aren't good for a decent life.

These depressing realities make me want to grasp at something hopeful, and I don't have to look far. When men in our rehab program get clean and sober, it often means that their shattered families end up getting back together, which frequently means a new opportunity for their kids. When a wayward parent straightens out, it's amazing how much healing can take place in one family. I hope and pray that the parents of our little golf cart thief might get their act together and help him get on the right path, before he becomes another grim statistic.

*Mike*

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## 3rd Annual Run for Meals

Do you enjoy the vigor of running? Do you find walking to be a relaxing, mellow way to exercise? Do you really dislike both running and walking, but love Poverello House?

If you answered "yes" to any of the above questions, then please join us on Saturday, October 3, 2015 at Woodward Park for the third annual **Poverello House 5k Run for Meals**. For the past two years, this has been a great event for everyone involved, and one of the few places where you can see manly men dressed in banana costumes!

Registration will begin at 7:00 a.m. the day of event. The 5K run begins at 7:45 a.m., the two-mile walk begins at 8:00



a.m. and the Kids Zone starts at 8:00 a.m. You can also register early by downloading the registration form at [www.poverellohouse.org/5krun](http://www.poverellohouse.org/5krun). Each participant will receive a tee-shirt and refreshments following the run/walk.

All proceeds from this fun event will benefit Poverello's mission to the homeless, so just by coming and getting a little exercise (and isn't that what the doctor said to do?), you'll be helping Poverello House keep the doors open.

For more information, please contact Stephanie Ortiz at [Ortiz@poverellohouse.org](mailto:Ortiz@poverellohouse.org), or give her a call at (559) 498-6988. Hope to see you there!



# The Value of Courtesy

After the horrific church murders in South Carolina last June, negative comments about the American South again became the norm in the media. However, there is more to the South than its history of racism and violence.

Recently, Mike McGarvin had a lesson on those other aspects of Southern culture. He was approached by a couple from North Carolina who were trying to get back home. Their story was like many others we've heard; they came to Fresno and encountered bad luck that made them long for home, but left them without the resources to return. In their case, they said they had an argument with an aunt, who then stole their ID and bus tickets.

What struck Mike was their comportment: polite, grateful, considerate, and undemanding. It's a sad commentary on our culture that he was taken aback by this encounter, because the rarity of gentle courtesy here at Poverello made this interaction noteworthy.

That's not to say that everyone here is unpleasant; but Mike has dealt with people in need for over forty years, and in that time he's witnessed an overall coarsening of manners and a rise in the sense of angry entitlement people feel.

Thus, it was a pleasure for him to help this couple out. He bought them bus tickets to their home state, and their gratitude was overwhelming. It made him reflect on that aspect of Southern culture that few of us think about: the grace and humility of Southern good manners that are often instilled at an early age. For example, most children in the South still address their parents, teachers and other elders as "Sir" or "Ma'am."

Emily Post, whose name was once synonymous with etiquette, wrote that "Manners are a sensitive awareness of the feelings of others. If you have that awareness, you have good manners, no matter what fork you use." Put more simply, the old children's classic, *My Little Golden Book of Manners* by Ruth Parrish, declares that "Good manners help to make a person think of other people and how to make them happy. Good manners help to make a person nice to know."

The day that Mike helped this husband and wife, their good manners did just that. The couple were a breath of fresh air to a man who has assisted thousands of people over the years, but is rarely thanked for his help.

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## Block Party

Last May 30, Poverello House had its annual Block Party. We invite volunteers and service organizations to come and help us be good neighbors to people who live nearby, as well as to homeless clients who stay in the area.

We're grateful for all the folks who helped make this year's Block Party a success by distributing information about social services, cutting clients' hair, serving food and supervising fun activities for kids. As with any Poverello endeavor, we couldn't have done it without you!



### *August Wish List*

Letter-sized copy paper \* Toothpaste \* Coffee

*To donate online, visit our website at [www.poverellohouse.org](http://www.poverellohouse.org)*

*Remember, we now take credit card donations. Please see the enclosed envelope for instructions.*

# Poverello House

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## FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

**Who Are We?** A nonprofit, nondenominational organization that believes in the dignity of every human being. Our mission is to enrich the lives and spirits of all who pass our way, to feed the hungry, offer focused rehabilitation programs, temporary shelter, medical, dental and other basic services to the poor, the homeless, and the disadvantaged unconditionally, without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex or disability, through Providential and community support. We have been operating since 1973 and are governed by a Board of Directors, consisting of local volunteer business men and women.

**Future Goals?** To provide additional facilities for increased services.

**How Are We Funded?** Primarily through private donations from individuals, churches, businesses, and community organizations; and through United Way. Rules for acceptance and participation in the programs of Poverello House are the same for everyone, without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability.



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