

Everyone eats free...

HOME OF *Papa Mike's Café*



Poverello
House



WHERE DIGNITY IS THE MAIN COURSE

...but the cost to Poverello House is not. Your support can help provide a meal to someone in need today. Papa Mike's Café is a **no-cost, full-service restaurant** serving three made-to-order meals for anyone in need in our community.



A volunteer greets guests and assists with placing their order. Guests can choose from 4-5 menu options, along with a selection of Coca-Cola fountain drinks.



Our kitchen staff of **ten** prepares each order fresh off the grill for our guests. **Five** of the ten team members are graduates of our Men's Rehab Program.



Our dedicated volunteers serve guests by bringing their drinks and meals directly to their table, providing a full-service restaurant experience.

Meals Per Day 1000



It's usually crowded, but they keep things moving and make sure everyone gets served. The staff here do a great job.

-Robert

Benito describes the café as "a lot better than Denny's" as he enjoys his favorite menu item, the Courtyard Slam.



I like it so far, so good. If you have a problem with the food, they'll fix it without any issues. I like everyone here, the staff is respectful.

- Shaquilla

Meals Provided in Café
January 2024-September 2024

300,000



Cost Per Meal \$5.00

This work began with one man, "Papa" Mike, giving out peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to those on the streets in downtown Fresno.

Now, our Culinary Services department consists of 13 staff. Continuing the foundation which Papa Mike built Poverello House upon; that every person has dignity, value, and worth.

WHERE DIGNITY IS THE MAIN COURSE



Finding Purpose and Passion at Poverello House

Earlier this year, Shawn's journey with Poverello House began when he entered the Men's Rehabilitation Program. Feeling uneasy, Shawn looked to change his trajectory away from addiction and toward sobriety. Shawn found Poverello House to be the beacon of hope he needed to turn the page and begin a new chapter.

Addiction had been the most stable piece of his upbringing as he witnessed both of his parents struggle with drug addiction for years. He began smoking cigarettes for the first time at the early age of 9 years old. Shawn recalled, "It gave me a head buzz." It marked the moment of his early introduction to substances. But it was not until his first D.A.R.E. class that he realized his parents' behaviors were not normal—they made him feel trapped in a lifestyle that would shape his own challenges for years to come.

As time went on, cigarettes lost their touch and no longer provided the same "buzz." Marijuana eventually replaced cigarettes. By the age of 14, Shawn's home life lapsed into a complete "tweaker pad" and became too much to bear. Chaos was ever-present. Frustrated and yearning for change, Shawn reached a breaking point and made the difficult decision to leave.

His escape was short-lived. Within two weeks of relocating, Shawn tried methamphetamine for the first time—a choice that would pull him deeper into addiction. The spiral of constant drug use consumed him for years. He hit rock bottom and realized he needed real help. He then entered the Men's Rehabilitation Program at Poverello House in January 2024.

Shawn found himself working in the kitchen just 45 days into the program. He was eager to contribute and gain new skills. Becoming an employee was not part of his initial plan—he thought he would get clean and move on. "God had a different plan," Shawn explained.

Six months into the program, Shawn became a full-time employee in the kitchen. This was a full-circle moment, as he was now working for the very place that had given him a second chance at life. He never expected to find joy in the culinary world. Yet, the kitchen has become a rewarding experience for him.

Shawn has taken on a mentorship role by onboarding and training new kitchen members. He has discovered a passion for cooking. He envisions his future in the culinary field. He is grateful for the opportunities Poverello House has given him. Shawn remains focused on his recovery and the positive path ahead.



New Culinary Program at Poverello House Opens Doors to Career Opportunities



Residents at Poverello House now have the chance to enroll in culinary classes led by Chef Ashley. This new program was developed by Director of Culinary Services, Rafael Vasquez, who is also a graduate of the rehab program. This comprehensive, four-and-a-half-month course provides hands-on kitchen training covering everything from behind-the-scenes kitchen operations to running the line.



Upon completion, participants receive certificates and acquire valuable skills for the culinary industry. Additionally, Chef Ashley and the team assist graduates in securing job opportunities, thus paving the way for new career paths in culinary services.