

POVERELLO NEWS

MAY 2015 (559) 498-6988
WWW.POVERELLOHOUSE.ORG





I was sitting in our dayroom, waiting for lunch to start. The homeless had been directed outside to queue up for the meal, and most of our security guards were busy with the lines. I was pretty much on my own.

Suddenly, someone came through the door. He was big, and very rough-looking. His eyes darted back and forth in a suspicious, predatory manner. I thought to myself,

“Uh-oh.”

I’d seen that look many times before, when someone was about to explode in rage. Now, as old as I am, I’ve always prided myself in thinking that I have at least one kill left in me if anyone might try to attack me. That confidence has faded since last summer’s heart surgery, so I was a little apprehensive about this guy, and not sure what I would do if things went south.

Then he saw me, and made tracks over to where I was sitting. I prepared myself for the worst.

“Hey,” he said, “Where do I get diapers around here?”

I blinked. OK, maybe I read him wrong. Still, I didn’t want to set him off by telling him that the Women’s Center was closed for lunch, as was the Poverello Contact Office, which meant he would have to wait at least an hour to talk to someone about diapers.

However, there was nothing left to do but explain that both places were closed until after the meal. I could see the frustration

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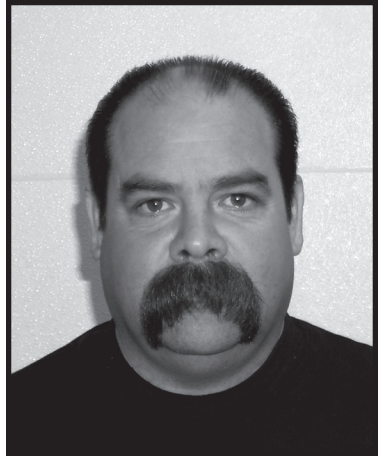
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rising in his face. I then remembered something in my pocket. I reached in and pulled out a grocery store gift card.

“Here,” I said. “You look like you’re new around here, and I know that when the kid needs diapers, he needs them now, not later. I don’t want to make you wait. That card should get you enough diapers to last for awhile.”

I handed him the card. He looked at it almost uncomprehending for a few seconds, then looked up at me. His eyes were starting to water. Before I knew what was happening, this big lug of a guy wrapped his arms around me and hugged me, thanking me over and over again.



So, I guess I misjudged him. What I interpreted as the furtive glances of an opportunistic, angry thug was probably just the nervous scrutiny of confusion and fear of the unknown. I was glad I could help him and that he was so grateful, but I was a little ashamed that I had so wrongly mistaken his intentions.

I had another surprise recently. A newcomer showed up one day, a man in his fifties. I met him outside and told him about the Poverello meals. I didn’t smell alcohol on him, but he nevertheless seemed kind of drifty and muddled. What I didn’t know was that he hadn’t eaten in several days.

He got in line. As he entered the dining room, all of a sudden he passed out. Nearby at a table was a woman who is well-known to us. She is generally loud, rude and hard to deal with. She saw what happened, and out of the blue, said, “Oh, one of God’s children passed out,” and brought her food tray over to the man.

I never would have expected this gal to share her food with anyone. She’s usually really obnoxious. Her act of spontaneous compassion showed me a completely different side of her. Once again, my preconceived notions about someone were proven to be off-base.

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I guess we're never too old to learn. As many times as I've been surprised at Poverello, I'm still surprised when I'm surprised. People can be predictable—that is, until they're unpredictable. If I can expect something negative from an individual, and he or she does something positive, then maybe I ought to be expecting more good things.

Cynicism is often a protective shell that we build up after many disappointments. Lord knows that I've had my share of disappointments, here at Poverello and in life, but that doesn't give me the right to think the worst of someone. My prayer is that all of us can learn to cut people a little slack, both because they need it and because they may not neatly fit into the less-than-positive categories we assign to them.

Mike

Memorial Day and the Table

The Missing Man Table or Fallen Comrade Table is a symbolic commemoration of military men and women who are missing in action, are prisoners of war, or have died in service to our country. The Table is found in many U.S. military dining areas, both on land and ships.

Poverello House has had a Missing Man Table in our dayroom for well over a decade. Founder Mike McGarvin, a veteran himself, instituted it after years of meeting homeless veterans who came to Poverello for help.

The hit movie *American Sniper* caused a great deal of controversy this year. Whether you are a critic or a fan of the film, one thing about it is inescapable: it sent a clear message that war subjects people to such horror and stress that it derails them emotionally. Some are able to regroup and find resources to help themselves when they return home; others are not so fortunate.

According to a study by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (*The 2013 Annual Homeless Assessment*

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Granville Homes introduced the Home of Hope fundraiser in 2006 as a way of raising money to provide food, shelter, health care and education to those in need.

Granville Homes along with the help of many trade partners donates a beautiful new home as the grand prize. 100% of the proceeds are donated to local non-profit organizations.

“The Granville Home of Hope fundraiser has helped over 1 million Valley families by raising more than \$3 million for charities.”

Your support continues for:

Poverello House

Hinds Hospice

Assistance League

Community Food Bank

Renaissance Scholars (Fresno State)

Foundation for Central Schools

Foundation for Clovis Schools

Foundation for Sanger Schools

EPU Children's Center

Fresno Police Chaplaincy

when you purchase a \$100 raffle ticket

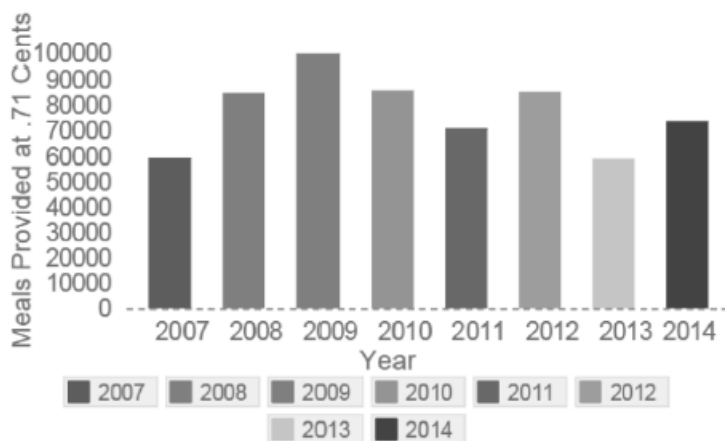
for the Granville Home of Hope.

“Since 2007, Poverello House has received over \$445,945 from this wonderful and charitable fundraiser.”

Purchase Your Home of Hope Ticket Today

1 Ticket = 140 Meals to those in need
2 Tickets = 280 Meals to those in need
*See multiple ticket buyer deal below

Goal to sell 5,000 Tickets



Meals Provided Through Home of Hope

*When you purchase two Home of Hope tickets you are eligible to win a Lexus NX. A limit of 750 Lexus tickets will be sold. Multiple ticket buyer drawing will be held Thursday, June 11, 2015. Purchase your Home of Hope ticket through Poverello House and 100% of the proceeds is returned to us.

A Fundraiser to Help Support Local Organizations.

Don't Delay!

CUT HERE

**Drawing
June 2015**

**GRANVILLE
HOME of HOPE
2015**

HOH Entry Form \$100

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: () _____

Email*: _____

Quantity of tickets _____

No limit on the number of tickets purchased per person.

A maximum of 5,000 total tickets will be sold.

Credit Card: ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

☐ American Express

Credit Card # _____

Exp. Date: _____ CVC Code: _____

(security code on credit card)

Billing address if different than mailing address:

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

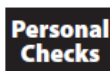
Make checks payable to The Granville Foundation

Checks must be postmarked by June 5, 2015

Mail to: Poverello House

PO Box 12225 Fresno, CA 93777-2225

**For more information and to view rules and regulations
visit: www.gvhomeofhope.com or call 559.440.8388**





*“Thank you . . .
for all your support.”*



Poverello
House

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Report [AHAR] To Congress), over 12% of all homeless people in the United States are military veterans. This statistic merits some discussion.

Twelve percent of the total homeless population of 610,042 (according to HUD) is 73,205 people. That seems like a shockingly high number until you consider that there are 22,676,149 veterans in the U.S., from all wars dating back to World War II, as well as veterans of peacetimes between wars. That homeless number amounts to a little over 3% of the total veteran population.

Of that three percent, not all are combat veterans. Thus, it would be an erroneous assumption to conclude that all homeless veterans are on the streets due to war trauma.

This distinction is important. Combat veterans whose lives have fallen apart because war experiences overwhelmed their minds and souls need far more intensive care and specialized treatment than men and women who have not seen combat.



One common denominator for combat vets is that they returned to families, friends and social groups that didn't seem to understand their pain. At Poverello, we believe that healing begins with recognition. In alcoholism and drug addiction treatment, the first step is the addict's acknowledgement of his or her problem, no matter what others say or think. For battle-traumatized people,

sometimes the first step is for *others* to acknowledge and validate their painful experiences, so that they don't feel so alone and misunderstood.

At Poverello House, that's what the Missing Man Table, and our commemoration of Memorial Day, is all about. The table is something sacred in our dayroom; people know not to disturb it. In keeping the table, and in serving a special meal on Memorial Day, we are saying to those vets on the streets, "We recognize your sacrifice, and the sacrifices of people you know who suffered, were killed, or are missing. We honor you, and acknowledge that what you have done in service to us all is immensely important."

Volunteer Profile

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 than 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 came 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 result 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



Robin Duke (left) and Kathy Hoover

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."

May Wish List

Letter-sized copy paper * Short-sleeved men's shirts

To donate online, visit our website at www.poverellohouse.org

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

Poverello House

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P.O. Box 12225
Fresno, CA 93777-2225
(559) 498-6988

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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.



Scan to make a donation