

A Journey of Hope

50TH ANNIVERSARY • 2023

50 YEARS POVERELLO NEWS

SPECIAL EDITION VOL.2

THE SHELTER JOURNEY: MICHAEL MCGARVIN JR. VILLAGE OF HOPE

The Village of Hope is our co-ed shelter providing over one thousand nights of shelter annually to those experiencing homelessness in Fresno County. The original Village began in 2004 with 32 tents over wood pallets. In 2006, the City of Fresno partnered to expand shelter services with fifty Tuff Sheds, and the campus became home to Villages 1 and 2.

Client Ron Glassen oversaw Village 2 and created an environment of respect with the philosophy, "Take care of yourself. Take care of each other. Take care of this place" – a mantra still used around campus today. Trusted shelter clients were given a stipend to fulfill security roles at Villages 1 and 2, which worked better than hired security!

In 2019, newly appointed CEO, Zachary Darrah, knew there was a more dignified way to provide a shelter bed. He quickly got funding for new products called Pallet Shelters, and the Michael McGarvin, Jr. Village of Hope was reimagined into its current form.

The new sleeping cabins offer heating, air conditioning, electricity and a proper bed. The Village of Hope now has nine Client Specialists, four Navigators, two Housing Stability Case Managers and a Shelter Coordinator. There is 24-hour staffing and security to assist clients where they are. The Navigators are assigned Village of Hope clients upon intake and work alongside them for a 90-day

housing goal. They work with clients to receive necessary documentation, financial assistance and a permanent housing plan. Once housed, these clients are supported by Housing Stability Case Managers for one year, covering such items as transportation, appointment scheduling, financial assistance, financial literacy and more.

Currently, the Village of Hope is operated in partnership with the State of California and the City of Fresno through the Encampment Resolution Funding (ERF) grant. This program received the highest award in the entire state and has been a tremendous success. The Village is a place of hope for many in our community!



From tents on wood pallets, to fully-equipped, modern and secure 'Pallet Shelters'



Zack Darrah
Poverello House CEO

SHELTER IS **NOT** THE END OF THE JOURNEY



Just this week, I started my day with an email from a team member saying, "It's moving day today!" This email shared the story of one of our clients leaving the Village of Hope shelter program and moving into permanent housing.

This person had been experiencing homelessness for three years and had been through Poverello House programs in the past. However, this time was different. Through the hard work of their Navigator/Case Manager and many others along the way, they were ready to move into permanent housing for the first time in three years after staying in the Village of Hope for less than 30 days. I got emotional because this client said the advice they would give others on the same journey is, "Stick with it, get back up if you fall, and if I can do it, truly anyone can do it." For many we serve, their journey is not linear, and this client used their story to motivate others just like them.

The Village of Hope and Naomi's House are shelter programs that provide immediate needs during a crisis. However, all the work in our shelters for those who come our way is about walking alongside them into permanent housing. For some, this is an apartment. For others, it is reunification with their families. Sometimes emergency shelters can be misjudged as enabling those experiencing homelessness or as "warehousing" those stuck in the cycle of homelessness. This is not true! At Poverello House, shelter is not the end of the journey for anyone who stays with us.

THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING THIS WORK TO HAPPEN DAILY ON OUR CAMPUS;

We truly could not do it without you! You are making an impact, and your support ensures many more "moving day" stories ahead.

Blessings,

Zack

A GIFT THAT COSTS YOU NOTHING NOW?

Did you know that you can provide a life-changing gift to Poverello House at no cost to you today? IRA accounts and insurance policies both require you to name a beneficiary that will receive the payout at the time of disbursement. By naming Poverello House as a beneficiary, you can make a significant gift at no cost to you today.

Go to www.poverellohouse.org or call 559-498-6988 to learn more about how you can make a life-changing gift!

POVERELLO HOUSE WELCOMES NEW BOARD CHAIR & NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to introduce our new Board Chair, **Prashant Patel!** Prashant earned his Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration - Finance from California State University, Fresno. He has a decade of experience with the community banking and financial services industry and is a financial advisor at Wells Fargo Bank, providing personalized financial advice and investment planning to individuals, families and businesses. In his free time, Prashant enjoys spending time with his wife and children jogging, walking and taking regular trips to the beach to keep both physically and mentally healthy. Prashant believes in giving back to the community through volunteerism, and he began volunteering at Poverello House ten years ago spending his weekends assisting in the kitchen and preparation areas.

"I truly care and have a passion for our [Poverello House] mission and the clients we serve in our community," Prashant says. "I became a Board member about five years ago to meaningfully contribute and serve the organization and its mission in the community."

Sharif Elkhaldy is one of our newest board members, joining us from Southern California. Mr. Elkhaldy has been in corporate banking for the last 17 years and currently oversees the team managing the banking needs for privately held companies here in

the Central Valley with annual revenue of up to \$50,000,000. Based on his community involvement in Southern California, Mr. Elkhaldy was recommended to Poverello House by local Bank of America leadership. He and his wife have been engaged in community work through volunteering and mentoring at-risk, homeless youth for two organizations.

Dr. Tushar Patel joined the board in 2022 bringing 24 years of healthcare provider experience. Dr. Patel is a pediatrician and co-owner of Children's Medical Centers of Fresno, providing low-cost healthcare to Fresno County. He has spent 25 years volunteering with BAPS Fresno, and has held leadership roles in walk-a-thons, health drives and making interfaith community connections. He shared that Papa Mike's empathy and vision drew him into Poverello House - a legacy he wishes to solidify as he continues to give back. He has already joined several committees and was nominated to join the Executive Committee in his first year of service.

Yellowfeather Alfaro Noriega joined the Poverello House Board to represent the unhoused community as the "Lived Experience" member. In 2003, Yellowfeather was separated from her husband and children as her addiction progressed. As her experience with homelessness began, Yellowfeather created an encampment on F street that was



Prashant Patel
2023 Board Chair

self-governed by the unsheltered. She shared that in 2013 a church group was on F street passing out fruit and socks and praying over those who asked. She requested prayer, saying, "I want to stop getting kicked while I'm already down." The church volunteer then asked Yellowfeather, "Why would anyone here treat you differently than you treat yourself?" Yellowfeather shared that this conversation changed her perspective and kickstarted her sobriety. She was on the streets clean and sober for six months until she was accepted into Project Phoenix, a Section Eight housing program. Yellowfeather has now been sober for ten years and wishes to use her position on the Board to advocate for the voiceless and connect with the community.

Other new Board members who joined in 2022 include **Dr. Mickey Sachdeva** (Kaiser Permanente) and **Dr. Manavjeet Sidhu** (UCSF Fresno).

We are excited about our new members and their leadership as we celebrate our 50th year of enriching the lives and spirits of all who pass our way.

BECOME A SPONSOR.



Poverello
House

CONTACT CIERRA BENINGA • 559.498.6988
CBENINGA@POVERELLOHOUSE.ORG

ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES FOR SHELTER CLIENTS:

SHAMPOO/CONDITIONER TOOTHBRUSH/PASTE
BODY WASH/LOTION SHOWER SHOES
CHAPSTICK/NAIL CLIPPERS UNDERGARMENTS
HAIR BRUSH REUSABLE WATER BOTTLE
DEODORANT

(ONE KIT PROVIDES BASIC NEEDS TO THOSE ENTERING
POVERELLO HOUSE SHELTER)

ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES FOR HOUSED CLIENTS:

SHAMPOO/CONDITIONER LAUNDRY BASKET/SUPPLIES
BODY WASH BOWLS/PLATES
TOWELS CUPS/UTENSILS
CLEANING SUPPLIES POTS/PANS
MOP/BROOM

(ONE KIT PROVIDES A STARTER HOME PACKAGE TO THOSE
ENTERING PERMANENT HOUSING)