



Serving in the Franciscan Tradition, Poverello House of Tucson is a homelike place of welcome and a safe environment providing daytime rest, food, laundry facilities, showers, and companionship for homeless men.

SOME THOUGHTS.....

After the house was closed from March until August of 2020 because of the pandemic, we decided to see if we could find a way to open up, even if it was a more limited hospitality. Long story short, with the help of many, we were able to open the yard in August. When the number of coronavirus cases in Arizona spiked in early 2021, we shut down again for a short time, but soon reopened.

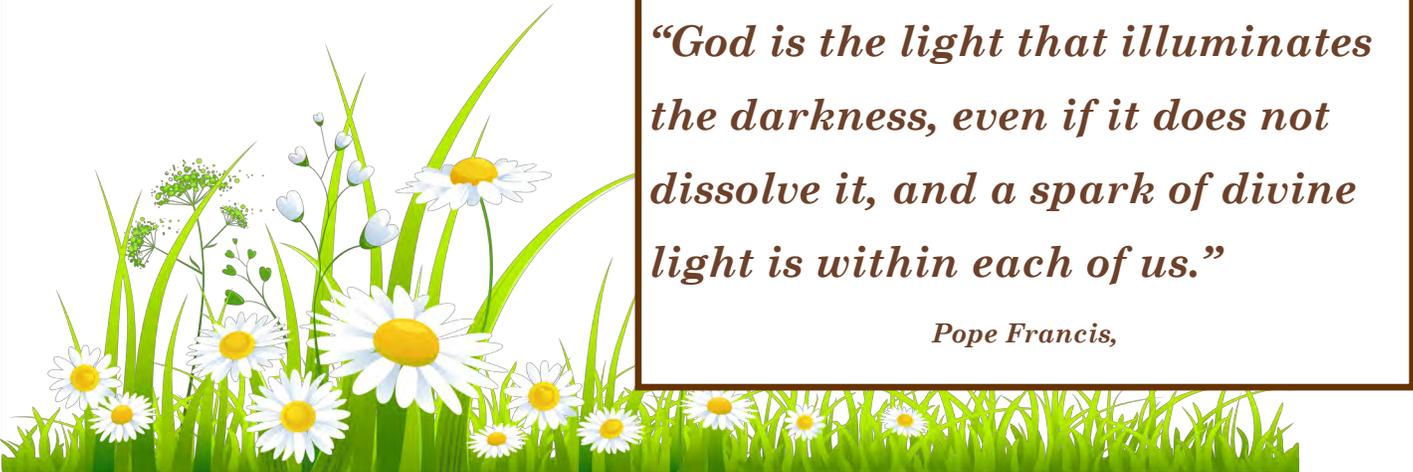
It is a different hospitality. Instead of being open from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, we are now open from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. We still serve a hearty breakfast that awaits our guests when they arrive. But now, before they get to enter, they have to have a temperature check and be masked. All activity happens outside. We have a port-a-potty in the back yard and two washing machines in the courtyard between the two houses.

In the backyard we have four pop up tents, each with tables and chairs that allow our guests to be socially distant. We have some men's clothes available in the shed, but we always could use more men's clothes. The outdoor shower was built in a corner of our courtyard, to insure privacy. And after the hot summer weather was over, we added a hot water spigot as the weather got colder.

With the vaccines ramping up, we are hopeful that we may be able to get back to our regular routine as more and more of our guests get immunized. As of now, we hear that a person is considered immunized after they've taken both shots of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines or one shot of the J & J vaccine, plus two weeks, after the last shot.

I'm due for my second shot of Moderna on April 1st, so I should be considered immunized by mid-April. I encourage everyone to get their vaccine so we (the whole world) can "get back to our wonderful normal life." Like Jimmy Stewart's character in "It's a Wonderful Life" we may now learn to appreciate the ordinariness in our everyday lives, after suffering through the extraordinary, once-in-a-century, pandemic.

David Buer, ofm



“God is the light that illuminates the darkness, even if it does not dissolve it, and a spark of divine light is within each of us.”

Pope Francis,

A YARD FULL OF STORIES

BY JEANETTE ARNQUIST, BOARD MEMEBER

I arrived at 8:50 to fill in for Gary who is taking some time off. Bill let me in and I went around to the alley where Miriam Matz, one of our faithful triage volunteers, was getting set up to ask the usual questions and take temperatures. One by one, the guests, wearing masks, were admitted. Miriam has been doing this job since August and we are very grateful to her and her husband Mike. Miriam is frustrated by the difficulty of scheduling her Covid-19 vaccination.

One of the guests told me he had recently been released from 42 years in prison when his conviction was overturned. New evidence was found that proved him innocent of the arson that sent him to prison when he was 15 ½ years old. Finally, he is out, but he is living on the streets. He is hoping for a settlement for the wrongful conviction. Even though he is very happy that he is out, he has found the transition difficult.

As the guests were welcomed into the back yard, most of them grabbed their coffee and then settled into a seat six feet away from other guests. Those who have cell phones head to the charger to plug them in. As they were waiting for breakfast, a couple of them went into the courtyard area and started their laundry. Then they dug into a full breakfast, eggs, sausage, and pancakes, the works. After eating their fill, one by one, they went to the outdoor shower, the only shower they have had since last week.

After a few of the guys were admitted, I spent some time talking to Pat Long, another volunteer. I met Pat a few years ago on Soup Patrol, a ministry of Most Holy Trinity that delivers soup to anyone who shows up along the route during the winter months. (Soup Patrol did not operate in the winter of 2020/21 because of the pandemic.) Pat is motivated by his faith to be of service. Now that he has retired from his mechanical engineering career, he hopes to spend time in the ministries of prayer, service and mercy. Pat likes hands-on volunteer work. He appreciates how it makes him feel like he has done something.

I talked in length to Gene, one of our guests. Gene has been coming to Poverello House for ten years, but his relationship with Br. David began in Las Vegas. Gene has been homeless for about ten years. He was working, but lost his job and when his unemployment ran out, he became homeless.

Gene does get SNAP (formerly called Food Stamps) so he usually has enough to eat between what he can buy and the meals at Casa Maria. He doesn't qualify for programs that might assist him in finding housing so he sleeps outside. He doesn't have a camp, so he carries everything with him where ever he goes. Gene finds things more difficult during the pandemic because more public restrooms are closed. He does rely on the facilities at Reid Park,

IN MEMORY

On Saint Patrick's Day a group of guests, staff and volunteers joined Br. David in a socially distant circle in the yard of Poverello House. They gathered to memorialize Tom Easton who died on March 8th. After those gathered had a opportunity to share their remembrances of Tom, Br. David concluded by reading an Irish Blessing. Tom had been a Wednesday guest at the house for quite some time.

His daughter, Pam, had not spoken to her Dad for a number of years but had kept tabs on him through contact with his health care advocate. She spoke of him as "at times being very charming." She knew that recently he served as a caretaker at a home in Tucson and was able to live on the property. Pam noted that her Dad was a brilliant gunsmith who had been sought out internationally for his work. He loved the desert and especially a ranch in Elgin that was owned by his uncle. As was his wish, Pam and her sister will scatter his ashes in the desert. Tom will be missed by all at Poverello House, especially by his good friend, Charlie.

which remain open. One good thing about the pandemic is that the busses are free, so it is easy to get around. Gene expressed how much harder this time has been because there are no opportunities to go inside and get a break from the outdoors. While most of us who live here complain that it is too hot or (occasionally) too cold to be outside, homeless people have no other option.

I also spoke to Jesse, another long-term guest. Jesse has lived in Tucson for over 40 years. He has been homeless on and off during that time. At the present, he lives in a "shack" on his friend's property. Electricity is supplied by an extension cord, but there is no plumbing in his shack, so he has to rely on the facilities at Estevan Park. Access to restrooms is a real challenge. Jesse has his first Covid-19 vaccination scheduled.



Jesse Lopez

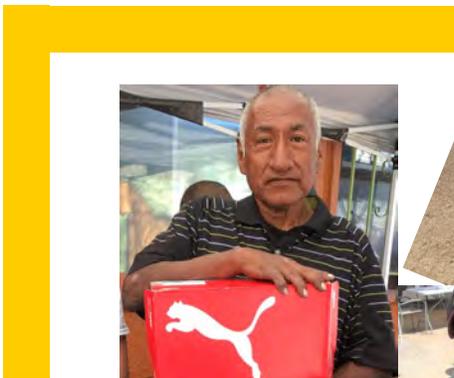
Both of the guests I interviewed said the same thing about Poverello House. The staff, Bill and Gary, offer them hospitality and respect. Bill cooks a terrific breakfast. They appreciate the shower and laundry facilities. They miss being able to go inside and chill out watching TV. They both think it would be great if Poverello House had a dining room and expanded bathroom facilities. They both said that Poverello House is a godsend.



Breakfast Time



At a luncheon on March 22nd, the Catholic Foundation presented a check for \$15,000 to Jeanette Arnquist and Vicki Myers. The grant request was for special items for Poverello House. We expect that the money will be used for a new printer; for shoes, backpacks, new clothing (jeans, underwear, shirts) jackets for the guests; and to replace the yard tents, tables and other items as needed. We are very grateful for the support given by Bishop Weisenburger and the Catholic Foundation.



GRATEFUL MEN—HAPPY FEET!
SHOE DELIVERY 2021

TWO FRIENDS – TWO GOOD COOKS – TWO GENEROUS VOLUNTEERS

Kim Dickinson is a longtime supporter and friend of the Poverello House. Originally from Minnesota, Kim has lived in Oro Valley for 16 years. She retired a few years ago from a career in Hospital and Healthcare Administration. Introduced to Poverello House by Brick Wall several years ago, she and her BFF Karen Gove, a 5-year resident of Marana, started cooking monthly for the guests. When speaking of making lunch for Poverello House, Kim noted: “we enjoyed that so much and would spend hours planning and cooking up a storm!”



Kim channels her love for her furry babies by proudly serving on the Board of Directors for the Humane Society of Southern Arizona. A member of the Board for four years, she is the current Board Chair. Kim and Karen served on the Board of Directors for St. Francis Homeless Shelter and helped with the thrift store and serving meals during the shelter season. Both are faithfully involved with the Interfaith Community Services Food Bank, spending about 25 hours a week packing and distributing food throughout Tucson. Kim explained that the motivation for their ambitious schedule lies with a sincere recognition of the incredibly good fortune they have been graced with over the years and their deep desire to serve people who are less fortunate, but no less deserving.

A wonderful example of dedication was a recent sock drive. Organized by Karen, a request for socks went out to the Del Webb Community during the month of February. At the end of the month, she delivered 500 pairs of socks to the Poverello House. Kim and Karen support Poverello House and encourage family and friends to contribute as well. They look forward to getting back to a schedule of cooking and delivering delicious meals for the guests and staff.





Thanks to all who responded to the Art Event on the Poverello Web page. Due to your generosity we were able to add \$3225.00 to our Capital Campaign

WELCOME BACK TO WARD THREE

Poverello House welcomes **Karin Uhlich** back as the newly appointed Ward 3 City Council Member. Karin served on the council for most of Poverello House's existence, from 2005 to 2017. Her career has been dedicated to helping those who society often leaves behind. We look forward to working with Karin again.



COVID VACCINE FOR THE HOMELESS IN TUCSON

A team from the El Rio Health Care network has begun providing vaccine to the homeless at shelters around the city. Each week, up to 200 vials of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine are being utilized. As part of the triage process when the men arrive at the Poverello yard, we have begun to ask questions about the status of each person in regard to the covid vaccination. We hope to work closely with the outreach time from El Rio to assure the vaccine is made available to our guests.

SPECIAL THANKS DUE

Support for the mission of Poverello House comes from many different sources. We are especially grateful for the assistance we are receiving as part of the Community Giving Program at Tucson Electric Power. Once again TEP printed the newsletter. **Thank you, TEP.**

Printing Powered by:



Poverello House is grateful to Midwest Food Bank for supplying us with many of the things that would be on our shopping list every month, especially coffee, bottled water, and energy drinks. In 2020, Midwest Food bank donated 11,000 pounds of food to Poverello House with a retail value of \$30,000 **Thank you, Midwest Food Bank.**

Thanks are due to the City of Tucson for providing hand washing stations and a port-a-potty and to Pima County for supplying us with PPE and hand sanitizer for use in the yard. Thanks **City of Tucson and Pima County**

Each week a volunteer shopper for Poverello House gets a list of items needed for the House from Bill Quigley and heads off to Costco. The weekly shopper frequently makes a stop at a Dollar Store too. Thanks to our team of shoppers:

Br. David Buer
Jeanette and Cliff Arnquist
Suzanne Machain
Vicki Myers
Conrad (Brick) Wall

Save the Date! The Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, October 4.

Join us in participating and celebrating our annual fundraiser!



Poverello House, P.O. Box 50782, Tucson, Tucson, 85703

Poverello House costs about \$6000 a month to operate. Any donation that you can contribute will be put right to use to help pay for our rent, utilities, supplies, and food. Please use the enclosed envelope to make a tax-exempt donation (residents of Arizona can also receive a tax credit using QCO code 20503). Checks may be made payable to Poverello House or you may donate on our secure web site tucsonpoverello.com