



Brother Benno's Newsletter

"Uplifting The Dignity of Those We Serve"

Interdenominational Volunteers
Making a Difference in This World

April 2014

"THIS IS WHAT WE'RE HERE FOR"

Difficult situations probably outnumber the success stories at Brother Benno's; but when someone's life is made better, the sad stories seem to fade into the background, at least for a while.

Diana Shields, in our intake office, had an especially good week in the middle of March. First was her encounter with a homeless man who came to the Center only once and then disappeared. "He was the most disgusting looking person we'd ever seen," she said, "so dirty, and the soles on his shoes flopped as he walked. And the smell! I've never experienced anything so awful."

She and others gave him something to eat, found some clothes and a decent pair of shoes, and gave him a donated suitcase with wheels for his few possessions, as he was obviously traveling. One volunteer even fixed the wobbly wheels on the suitcase. "Everybody pitched in," Diana said. "It was nice to see."

What happened next was unbelievable, according to Diana. She was standing near the man as he got ready to leave, and he suddenly reached out and embraced her. "Not just a little hug," she said, "but a full-blown, long embrace. I wanted to pull away, the smell was so bad. But I didn't. And the smell went away! It absolutely went away!"

The others watched the scene in amazement. After the man left, they asked Diana how she could do that? And all Diana could think was, God is reminding me why I'm here. It also made her think of **Kay Kutler**, who was known far and

wide for hugging everybody, many who were also dirty and smelly. At one point Diana thought, If Kay could do it, so can I. When the smell went away, she felt it was a sign of some kind. Upon reflection, she wondered if God was testing her; maybe the man was "an angel in disguise."

Diana's second experience, also shared by many others, involved a woman who came to the Center just for a food box. She mentioned that her 12-year-old daughter was having a birthday the next day, and she wanted some food for a small gathering. Since Brother Benno's often gets fancy cakes donated by various stores, they were able to find a beautifully decorated cake. One of the men in the Center pantry gave her a box of cookies and a bag of chips, and another man in the kitchen added a package of chicken.

Was there anything else she needed, they asked the woman? The answer came shyly. Well, her daughter had been hit by a car in the parking lot at their apartment, and she was on crutches. But the big problem was her bed. It was just a box spring, no mattress, and very uncomfortable. Voila! The Brother Benno guys found a donated sofa-bed in good condition, plus sheets and blankets.

"That woman could not stop crying," Diana said. "She just kept thanking us and crying!"

A look of joy lit Diana's face as she remembered these two experiences. "This is what we're here for," she said. "This is why I love to come in every day. I know it's where God wants me."

EXPERIENCING THE BROTHER BENNO SCENE

by Barbara Ladwig

Artistic Benefactor. Donors have so many creative ways of giving to Brother Benno's! I learned recently that **Walter Bruning**, an Oceanside resident and prolific watercolor artist, is donating all the profits from the online sales of his paintings to Brother Benno's. I scrolled through his impressive "gallery," and I'll be buying several of them as gifts, as soon as I can make up my mind which ones to choose.

I met Walter on the phone years ago, when he agreed to be one of the readers for the manuscript of **Harold Kutler's** book, *Soup Soap Hugs Hope, the Story of Brother Benno's Life-Changing Soup Kitchen*. As a writer himself, he was able to give us many practical suggestions for improvements to the text—and now I've learned he has another artistic skill.

To see Walter's artwork, go to abigbrushwithnature.com

Walter's wife, **Joanne Larato**, is also a big supporter of Brother Benno's. We met years ago when we both served on an education committee, and now I see her whenever I visit Prince of Peace Abbey, where she manages the gift shop.

More Good News. **Julie Petrie** in our Intake Office gave me an update on a man we featured in last month's newsletter. He had written a letter of appreciation for all the help he received from Brother Benno's following his release from prison, including the contact he was able to make with his sister. Julie adds:

"He has now been able to connect with his son after 14 years. . . . He is so thrilled and thanks God every day for this wonderful miracle. He came in today and said that he texted his son, and it was such an amazing grace to receive a text back that started, 'Hi, Dad!'"

Extended Hours. **Stew Morrow** in our Production Avenue furniture warehouse wants everyone to know that furniture sales will now take place from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday through Saturday. There are lots of bargains to tempt buyers, and new items come in almost every day.

Valuable to Someone. Several important documents were found with some donated clothing. After several unsuccessful attempts to locate the owners of those papers, we are hoping one of our readers can help us. The names on the documents are **Helen E. Nelson** and **Gayle E. Nelson**, and they appear to have been drawn up in the state of Michigan. If you know either of these women, please contact **Dan Boone** in our Accounting Office (760-439-1244, ext. 120).

Happy Birthday! The new Brother Benno Thrift Shop has been in business for one year, and the staff and volunteers celebrated the milestone on March 15 with a huge sale. They even marked down the brand new items that had been donated by Kmart from \$2 to 25 cents each. "We had the second highest sales day in (our) history, making \$5,300!" said Shop Manager **Michelle Hoppe**. Customers were treated with ice cream cones and popcorn on the sidewalk in front of the store. Kudos to everyone connected with our fabulous Thrift Shop!

P.S. Michelle is still hoping someone will be able to donate a stackable washer and dryer and a small portable dishwasher for the Shop. (Please see the back of this newsletter for hours, address, and phone number.)

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She says she's gone too far to give up now, and she is confident that justice will eventually prevail.

Those of us who live "ordinary" lives hardly ever have the privilege of meeting people who are overcoming unbelievable odds, people whose inspiring examples prove the strength and resiliency of the human spirit. Many who serve at Brother Benno's, one of God's vineyards, do have that extraordinary privilege.

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BROTHER BENNO'S HELPS WOMAN PUT HER LIFE BACK TOGETHER

Brother Benno's has certain criteria for accepting women into one of their Houses. What happens, then, when a woman comes to us with an obvious need for help, but she doesn't qualify?

Giovanna Vinsconi was one of those women. She didn't need help for substance abuse, and she wasn't a typical homeless person. She did need a place to live, however; and she had suffered greatly by being incarcerated for more than three years for a crime she did not commit.

Gio's arrest came as the result of her employment with a company that was found to have been involved in fraud. Even though she herself had no connection with the fraudulent actions, she found herself caught up in the mess—and was subsequently put in prison.

Because of over-crowding, there was no room for her at a minimum-security facility, so she was sent to a maximum-security prison for the first four months of an eight-year sentence. She said she lived in extreme fear the entire time because of frequent brawls among the inmates, many of whom were murderers. She also saw the results of a lack of health care—a simple infection sometimes led to the amputation of an arm or leg, and a cold might turn into pneumonia.

When she was moved to a minimum-security prison, basic conditions improved; but hers was still a life of fear and deprivation. She did, however, have access to their law library, where she spent as much time as possible, learning about and building up her case to have her conviction reversed. During that time, she said she wrote letters to everyone she could think of, who might be able to help her—including the President. Two women came to her aid: State Senator **Carol Liu**, and **Cynthia Chandler**, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Justice Now, a human rights organization working with women in prison.

Gio was released from prison in April, 2012, but she still had the wrongful conviction hanging over her head. And she had no money, and no place to live.

Her first “guardian angels” came from Serenity House in Escondido. Even though they serve women with addiction problems, they agreed to give

her a place to live while she began to put her life back together. During her ten months there, Gio went to school to get a license in esthetics (skin care).

When Serenity House could no longer house her, they referred her to **Jan Roberts**, Brother Benno's Manager of our Women's Houses. Again, Gio didn't qualify, and again the rules were relaxed so she could continue to receive help.

“Serenity House gave me the opportunity to go to school,” she said. “And Brother Benno's took away the stress so I could move forward and put my life back together. For a year, I didn't have to worry about a place to live, and how I'd feed myself, and how I'd have the energy to go out and find a job. I was in ‘life recovery,’ and that's what Jan and **Brittany**, (**Poor**, former Assistant House Manager) and **Mary (Robinson**, Board member), gave me—my life.”

Whenever Gio mentions Brother Benno's and the women responsible for giving her the help she desperately needed, she tears up. Because the rules were relaxed, a woman with nowhere else to turn is once again a confident and productive member of society. She has a good job, is in the process of finding a place to live, and is still working hard to have her conviction overturned.

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Your donation enables us to do all the wonderful things we do

My enclosed tax-deductible gift is: \$ _____
(make payable to: Brother Benno Foundation)

In memory of: _____

Please send a card to:

(name) _____
(address) _____

For a special occasion (birthday, anniversary, etc.): _____

Send a card to: (name) _____
(address) _____

Or, donate online at <http://brotherbenno.org>

AUXILIARY NEWS

A big thank you to all the officers and members who helped to make our New Member Drive a success. The tour went well, and our meeting was good. We presented **Harold Kutler** with a check from the Auxiliary to the Foundation for \$26,000. Very well done to all Auxiliary members who helped in every way to make this happen. We will gain a few new members, too, from that day. Also to all the staff at the Thrift Shop, thank you for being so helpful and generous in letting this event happen. We appreciate everyone, especially **Michelle Hoppe** and **Helen Parsons** for all their help.

A thank you, too, goes to all the members who helped with our Applebee's Fundraiser. We had fun serving a delightful breakfast to our guests—it was delicious! Every event helps the Auxiliary—can't thank you enough.

Next event will be an outing to Prince of Peace Abbey on May 1. We'll have more discussion at our next meeting.

The next meeting will be at the Center on April 23, starting at 1 p.m. for our social time, meeting at 1:30. Please come and enjoy some time together and hear what is new. We'll also talk about **our Annual Luncheon to be held on Saturday, November 1 – please put it on your calendar!**

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Information & Online donations:
brotherbenno.org

Follow Brother Bennos online:

 **[Facebook.com/BrotherBennos](https://www.facebook.com/BrotherBennos)**

 **[Twitter.com/BrotherBennos](https://twitter.com/BrotherBennos)**

SMOOTHIES COME TO BROTHER BENNO'S

by Dennis Pinnick

A new service is being provided to our Guests each Saturday morning by Project Raw, headed by **Dr. John McGuire** and **Cole Liniak**. These fine folks set up shop behind the dining room, where they make smoothies. Our Guests can pick up a freshly made smoothie with their meal.

Project Raw's special blends are tasty as well as healthy; and they are now using vegetables, fruits, and nuts that are donated to the Center. Project Raw even provided blenders for the kitchen and the prep area at the Center. Blenders were also made available to one of the Men's Recovery Houses, one of the Staff Houses, and one of the Women's Houses as part of an effort to offer the opportunity for better nutritional choices. They have also offered to educate our Program Members and Staff on nutrition.

A healthy lifestyle is a big part of recovery, and this new service can certainly contribute to that goal.

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Auxiliary Tour

Soup...Soap...Hugs...Hope:

The Story of Brother Benno's Life-Changing Soup Kitchen

This book is offered as a gift to donors who contribute whatever their budget allows...The important thing... is that you have one...

Name _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip Code _____

Donation \$ _____
Number of copies _____

Memorials

Brother Benno	Ron Alexander	Helen Lucas	William & Vennita
Pope John Paul II	Mary Peterson	Bill & Joan Maloney	Flanagan
Mother Teresa	Frank Barnet	Dora Ramirez	Mike Stendahl
Kay Kutler	Frank S. Dolley	Dick & Terry Riley	Jack Brown
Ann Sauer	Phyllis H. Dierlam	Bill Buckner	Alan Port
Joe & Ida Friend	Monty Nares	Mary Shankle	Tullio Giudici
Mary Nordstrom	Margaret Rossini	Walter Ulloa	Leo & Grace Hutter
Myron Eichen	Dorothy M. Donahue	Fred Williamson	Gilbert Brown
Alice Jordan	Mary Teresa Carr	Carole Kutler	Barbara Duke
Roseanne Dreibelbis	Ruth Hazel Pierson	Will Skinner	Raymond & Stella
Richard Farhquar	Elizabeth Holms	Fr. Abbot Claude	Thill
Deacon Art & Mary Carr	Edith Blaiser	Ehringer, OSB	Basil & Gloria Lester
Don & Dorothea Daybell	Ben Kouns	Fr. Luke Dougherty	Patricia Miller
Catherine L. Quinlan	Bill Lakoff	Naomi Shelton	Robert Brower
Kathryn D. Pent	Bernice, Samuel &	Rosemary Tucker	Anna Sotelo
Mary Pullman	Milton Silver	Ben E. Lewis	Dancy & Zeferino
Joan Boyd	Anita H. Donahue	Roland Bond	Nares
Agnus Boyd	Margaret Stephan	Anna Correia	Rose Batis
Harold Thompson	Bill Boster	Geraldine Howard	John Hanus
Bud & Blanche Ogle	Louise Foussat	Helene McGill	
Bob Gleason	Tom Hayward	Andrea Boersma	
Jane Pfau	Richard Kurtz	Ben Osgrove	

Needs

Gently used furniture
 Individual water bottles
 Tarps....9x12 is our usual size but appreciate all

Diapers
 Coffee...regular not instant

Disposable razors
 Bags of rice and beans

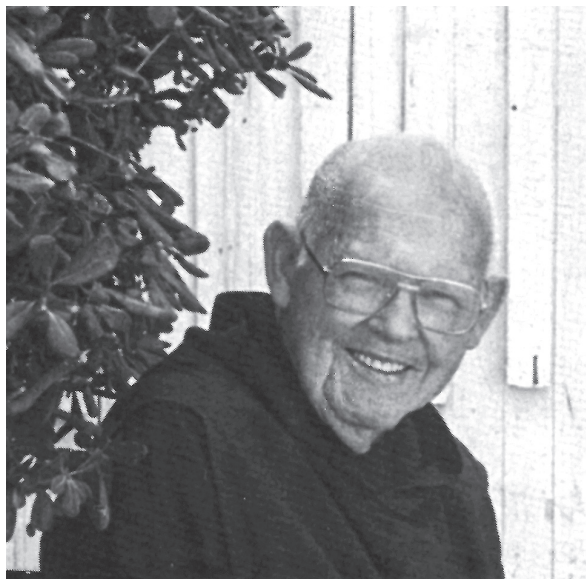
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
April 2014 Monthly Serving Team Schedule		1 St. John The Evangelist	2 Brother Benno's Auxiliary	3 Oceanside Pacific Kiwanis	4 San Luis Rey Mission	5 St. Thomas More
	7 St. Elizabeth Seton #1	8 Hawkes Home	9 Stew's Crew	10 Oceanside Civitans	11 St. Patrick's	12 DeMasi Family
	14 North Coast Methodist	15 Christ the King Lutheran	16 Grace Anglican	17 Carlsbad Rotary	18 St. Elizabeth Seton #2	19 Girlfriend's Care
	21 Sunrise Kiwanis of Vista	22 St. Mark's San Marcos	23 San Luis Rey Methodist	24 Pilgrim Creek	25 Sonrise Christian Fellowship	26 Catholic Daughters
	28 Christ Church & Zion Lutheran	29 Welk Resort	30 Soroptimist Internationa			

Furniture Sales at the Center

3242-B Production Ave., Oceanside 760-967-2742 **Open Mon. - Sat. 9 am to 1 pm**
 We welcome your saleable furniture items. Please call 760-439-1244 ext.115 for free pickup.

Brother Benno Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 308, Oceanside, CA 92049

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 Oceanside, California
PERMIT NO. 166



Brother Benno's Thrift Shop

(Helping the poor, one sale at a time)

Clothing, Household Goods, Furniture

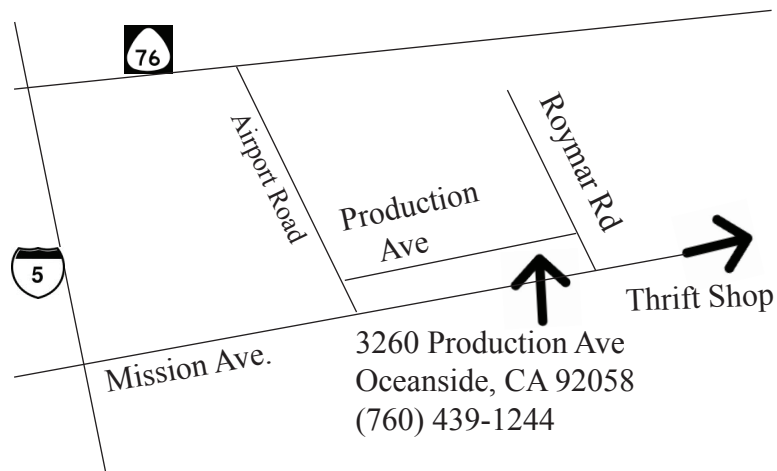
Shop open Mon-Sat 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. -- Stop by to check out our Daily Specials!!

3955 Mission Ave. (East of Albertsons) 760-967-7505

Please use the enclosed envelope to make your tax-deductible donation to the Brother Benno Foundation. If you are viewing this online you can donate by going to brotherbenno.org and click on Donations. This will allow you to make a secure donation using PayPal or a Credit Card.

Your donation is used each month at our main center and eight operational houses to provide: meals, clothing, personal hygiene items, blankets, showers, laundry facilities, bus vouchers, nights of lodging, medical and mental health referrals, prescriptions, ID replacement, mail services, Social Security, and veterans' issues, food packs, shelter for women and small children, men's drug and alcohol recovery program, shelter for women in recovery, rent and utility assistance when funds are available. We thank you for your continued support. 100% of your contribution goes directly to assist those we serve. Our modest administration costs are paid for by our Thrift Store revenues.

www.brotherbenno.org



Brother Benno's Services:

	February 2014	Our 30th Year		February 2014	Our 30th Year
Meals	12,544	3,540,464	Loads of laundry	23	26,664
Nights of lodging	838	247,622	Food packs	3,553	247,851
Articles of clothing	5,119	1,047,510	Blankets	190	36,184
Showers	962	189,181	Prescriptions	4	7,202
Haircuts	135	16,656	ID Vouchers	11	8,527
Bus passes	74	77,809	HUGS	1,800	868,144