Brother Benno’s Newsletter

“Uplifting The Dignity of Those We Serve”

Volunteers Making a Difference

April 2018

REMEMBERING HAROLD AND KAY

Harold Kutler, the beloved founder of Brother Benno’s, died peacefully on March 6, 2018, at the age of 91, from complications following a fall. During the week prior to his death, countless family members, friends, and Brother Benno staff and volunteers had the privilege of spending time with Harold at his home. Although he was not always alert during these visits, it seemed obvious that he was hearing the prayers and good wishes being offered for him.

Harold and his wife Kay (who died in 2012) started a soup kitchen in October, 1983, in a small house in downtown Oceanside, in order to serve the homeless of the area. They named it Brother Benno’s Kitchen, in honor of Brother Benno Garrity, a Benedictine monk at the Prince of Peace Abbey.

In 1991, Brother Benno’s moved from the tiny house to a 12,000 square-foot warehouse in Oceanside in order to be able to offer many more services such as clothing, showers, haircuts, laundry facilities, and much more. They also ran an alcohol and drug recovery program for men, which was eventually expanded to include women.

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The services for Harold began with viewing at the mortuary on Friday, March 16, where family and friends gathered in an informal way to share memories or sit in the quiet of the chapel to think and pray.

On Saturday, the 17th, at St. Mary Star of the Sea Church in Oceanside, a rosary was recited at 12:30, followed by Mass at 1 o’clock. The church was filled with family members, friends, City officials, monks from the Prince of Peace Abbey, and staff and volunteers from Brother Benno’s. Abbot Charles Wright (retired), also from the Abbey, was the celebrant at the Mass; and he was assisted by several other priests, as well as Harold’s fellow permanent deacons from throughout the San Diego Diocese. Eight women—six who are volunteers at Brother Benno’s and two of Harold’s caregivers—were honored to serve as pallbearers.

Following the Mass, a reception with food and beverages was held at the Brother Benno Center for Brother Benno staff, volunteers, Board members, Recovery Program graduates, and special guests, some who were former volunteers. People in attendance were invited to come up to the microphone to share their experiences with Harold and Kay, and about twenty responded.

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Jo Grady. This is how I came to Brother Benno’s. I lived in Kansas, and when my husband Joe died after 43 years of a happy marriage, I needed to find a new purpose, something to dedicate myself to. I really wanted to enter a convent, but at 66 I didn’t find any group of nuns willing to take me. On retreat, I read a magazine, Response, that listed volunteer opportunities for Catholics all over the world. Two positions asked for talents I felt weren’t a good fit for me, but the one at Brother Benno’s was for a bookkeeper. That was perfect, since I had lots of work experience for that role; and I was certainly not opposed to living in California, either.

At that time, the Lay Minister Program (Servants of the Poor) at Brother Benno’s was very religiously oriented. Once a month we had a Holy Hour at St. Mary Star of the Sea Church, Mass and Rosary, and every First Friday Mass and lunch at the Prince of Peace Abbey, followed by a talk given by Harold. The Servants lived in two Brother Benno houses, and we had a combined dinner once a week with sharing and camaraderie. Harold and Kay always came to these dinners. It felt much like family.

Harold and Kay were at the Center every day. Kay sang people into the day and hugged everybody. Harold was always gentle and kind, and we all knew he wanted peace and harmony above all. We felt he was very close to God. They both were totally dedicated to helping people as much as they could, and they were equally dedicated to seeing that the volunteers felt appreciated and that we were an important part of the team.

I am still here after 20 years. I love the spirit of Brother Benno’s and am grateful for being part of something so good.

Mary Robinson. It’s time to say goodbye to my precious friend Harold. I shared a small office with him for ten years, and I knew this would be a volunteer job like none other. When we met, he asked me about my past experience in working with the poor. At the end of our discussion, he asked if I’d be willing to be his Assistant. I had no idea what a blessing that day would be for me. Early on, I noticed that everyone wanted to be in Harold’s presence, to have his calmness, love, wisdom, and sense of humor wash over them. He was a beautiful shepherd, leading so many to service, where we would all find that we got back so much more than we could ever give. I never took for granted how lucky I was to be in a position to learn from someone who had dedicated so much of his life to the poor. But with that, he also carried so much weight on his shoulders. He patiently mentored me over the years; and in turn, I did my best to relieve him of some of the stressors that come from running a non-profit that holds itself to the highest ethical and spiritual standards.

I’ve thought long and hard about how I would summarize Harold and Kay’s legacy once they left us. Now that it’s happened, it seems quite simple; but it’s something many of us find hard to do each day. Harold and Kay simply practiced all aspects of their faith—every day. And that, dear friends, is how powerful our faith can be if we strive to live it, too. Harold and Kay showed us that love and kindness can change the world. It all starts with us believing and reaching out to those around us who need a hand to hold.

Helen Parsons.
We both met Mother Teresa
We were touched by her missions
She touched both our hearts
Showing wretched conditions.

But it was Harold and Kay
That gave them a face
That made me so aware
They’re part of our race!

They loved each one
Never turned away
They fed and clothed them
Each and every day.

So forward I will go
Loving kindness leading the way
Asking myself often
“What would Harold say?”

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John Jarvie. He lives – wore out his old body, but his spirit lives all around us each and every day. His handprints are on so many people he saved from addiction, his inspiration of unconditional love toward our fellow man. Knowing him for five minutes, you walked away a better person. He lives. See you later ole, buddy.

Frank Doherty. When I try to describe Harold, I am inevitably led to Mother Teresa. Harold’s unconditional love and humility define who he was. He gave all of himself to loving and serving the poor and needy.

Harold was always there for people; so when anyone, including the Brother Benno staff and Program Members, had a problem, they turned to Harold. He was always the “court of last resort” when the Foundation was faced with impossible cases that truly needed God’s love and understanding.

One such case was a mother with two children, one of whom was autistic. They’d been living in their car, which eventually broke down. After providing hotel coverage for many days, and paying a large sum of money to fix her car (which still wasn’t fully functional), the Foundation had come to the end of the amount of money it could afford to help this family. The only alternative would have been to turn them out on the street.

Harold made the determination that he was going to help them, using an emergency fund. In that way, the Foundation was able to help with hotel costs, and the Staff got her top priority on a waiting list for a family winter shelter. The mother was given a much better car that had been donated to Brother Benno’s, and the family was eventually transitioned into Solutions for Change, where they gained self-sufficiency.

This is just one example of many hundreds of people Harold helped. He was the guiding light in helping the Staff address the needs of people who did not have good alternatives, and who were most in need of help and unconditional love.

On Sunday, the 18th, Harold was laid to rest next to Kay at Eternal Hills Memorial Park in Oceanside.

As is to be expected, copious tears, smiles, and stories were shared about both Harold and Kay in the days before his death and throughout the three days of services. Many people expressed the belief that, in spite of their absence, the work they started in 1983 and carried out with so much love and commitment will continue in the same spirit that has always been the hallmark of the Brother Benno family.
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___________________________________       Donation $______________
Address_________________________________           Number of copies__________
City, State, Zip Code________________________
## Memorials

Ron Alexander  
Dixie & Lou Bales  
Frank Barnet  
Brother Benno  
Edith Blaiser  
Andrea Boersma  
Roland Bond  
Bill Boster  
Agnus & Joan Boyd  
Bill Buckner  
Deacon Art & Mary Carr  
Anna Correia  
Don & Dorothea Daybell  
Phyllis H. Dierlam  
Frank S. Dolley  
Anita H. Donahue  
Dorothy M. Donahue  
Fr. Luke Dougherty  
Roseanne Dreibelbis  
Fr. Abbot Claude Ehinger, OSB  
Myron Eichen  
Richard Farquhar  
William & Vennita  
Flanagan  
Louise Foussat  
Joe & Ida Friend  
Mary Gerrity  
Bob Gleason  
Chance Hales  
Tom Hayward  
Elizabeth Holms  
Alice Jordan  
Ben Kouns  
Richard Kurtz  
Carole Kutler  
Harold & Kay Kutler  
Bill & Louise Lakoff  
Ben E. Lewis  
Helen Lucas  
Bill & Joan Maloney  
Helene McGill  
Michael & Monty  
Nares  
Zeferino & Dancy  
Nares  
Mary Nordstrom  
Nysewander Family  
Bud & Blanche Ogle  
Ben Osgrove  
Kathryn D. Pent  
Mary Peterson  
Jane Pfau  
Ruth Hazel Pierson  
Alan Port  
Mary Pullman  
Catherine L. Quinlan  
Dora Ramirez  
Dick & Terry Riley  
Margaret Rossini  
Ann Sauer  
Mary Shankle  
Naomi Shelton  
Bernice, Samuel & Milton Silver  
Will Skinner  
Ann Grier Smith  
Squirrell Family  
Mike Stendahl  
Margaret Stephan  
Virginia Sylvestrzak  
Harold Thompson  
Carol & Herb Thornberg  
Rosemary Tucker  
Walter Ulloa  
June Williams  
Fred Williamson  
Gilbert Brown  
Rebecca Anderson  
Louise & George Casperson  
Jack Gillen  
Lawrence Hadland  
Margaret Beitey  
Clayton & Helen Beckman  
Robert Buchach  
Louise Hayward  
W. Ross Sr.  
Evelyn Mazzella  
Michaelene Stasio  
Bob Strawbridge  
Curt Love

## Needs

- Gently used furniture
- Q-tips
- Disposable razors
- Mouthwash (no alcohol)
- Neosporin

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<tr>
<th>April 2018</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
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<th>Saturday</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>St. Elizabeth Seton #1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>St. John The Evangelist</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Brother Benno’s Auxiliary</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>North Coast Methodist</td>
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<td>Riverview Church</td>
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<td>Fairwinds</td>
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<td>Sunrise Kiwanis of Vista</td>
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<td>Christ the King Lutheran</td>
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<td>Christ Church</td>
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<td>San Luis Rey Methodist</td>
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## Furniture Sales at the Center

3242-B Production Ave., Oceanside  760-529-5481 ext. 200  **Open Tues. - Sat. 9 am to 1 pm**

We welcome your saleable furniture items. Please call 760-439-1244 ext.102 for free pickup.
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, men and women’s drug and alcohol recovery program, 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 2018  Our 34th Year

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<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
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<tr>
<td>Meals</td>
<td>12,187</td>
<td>4,175,387</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nights of lodging</td>
<td>862</td>
<td>293,681</td>
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<td>Articles of clothing</td>
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<td>Showers</td>
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<td>Haircuts</td>
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<td>Loads of laundry</td>
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