



Brother Benno's Newsletter

“Uplifting The Dignity of Those We Serve”

Volunteers Making a Difference

December 2020



2020: A REFLECTION

by Kathleen Diehlmann

The word *pivot* comes to mind when we reflect on the Brother Benno Foundation in 2020. Like many of you, we have had to do things a little differently this year.

Our essential staff members have gone above and beyond their job descriptions to keep Brother Benno's going. The Recovery Program members have stepped up in a huge way to support the Center and the people we serve. And even though Covid-19 has required us to limit the number of volunteers in order to keep everyone safe, we still have several dedicated volunteers helping out at the Center and the Thrift Shop.

At the Center, we continue to provide our Guests with a robust meal Monday through Saturday with brown-bag take-and-carry meals. Food boxes continue to be distributed on Thursdays via drive-through in collaboration with Feeding San Diego. With a combination of on-site and remote work, our caseworker and Board Member, **Mary Holguin**, provides rental and utility assistance to those who need it. And our community outreach team now meets with Guests at an “outside of-fice” on Wednesdays to help them solve problems that arise.

Mail distribution continues, but outside in front of the Center, to those who list the Brother Benno Center as their address. Showers are available on Tuesday and every other Thursday in collaboration with Humanity Showers, which provides portable shower facilities. **Carol Muehe** has been able to provide clothing for our Guests in the parking lot. “New” clothes make such a

difference after a shower, and especially during these colder days.

Our Thrift Shop is back to regular hours after being forced to close temporarily earlier in the year. What an amazing group of people we have helping us at the Thrift Shop! They've been able to incorporate all the safety protocols required for a safe opening and continued operation. As you might be aware, in addition to helping the working poor and anyone looking for a bargain in gently-used furniture, clothing, and other treasures at reasonable prices, the funds raised at the Shop help the Brother Benno Foundation cover our operational costs.

While we have had to pivot, the Brother Benno Foundation learned a lot this year about how to make lemonade when life gives you lemons. We know there will be more challenges in the coming year. The impact of Covid-19 on our community from lost jobs, financial pressures, and increased food insecurity makes our work even more important/critical.

We will continue to provide support and services to our community's most vulnerable. Brother Benno's mission continues with the support of you, our friends and donors. Thank you.

(Kathleen is President of the Brother Benno Foundation Board.)

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SOMETIMES IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Frequently our poor and homeless guests have very limited support when they have issues or challenges. This is especially true now when so many of the providers of services are restricted during the pandemic.

Sheila had such a challenge recently. She could no longer afford the rent for the room where she was living in Oceanside. Her social worker found transitional housing for her in downtown San Diego, but Sheila had no money and no resources to make the move. She's a senior citizen and uses a walker to get around.

She came to the Brother Benno Center, where she first met **Carmelina**, a volunteer who meets people at the door to hand out sack lunches and mail. Carmelina kindly and compassionately referred her to our Guest Outreach Services office.

Since we can't allow guests into the Center right now, **Darryl Harris**, our Operations Manager—thinking outside the box and with the blessing of our Board of Directors—decided to set up a canopy in front of the building so that Outreach volunteers can continue to help several days a week. (Both the volunteers and the guests wear masks.)

Sheila came to our makeshift "office" and told volunteers **Douglas** and **Kelley** of her predicament. They spent about an hour with her, and Douglas told her that he and "**Mark**" would pick her up two days later. When the men arrived at her room, they found that she had done her best to get ready to move; however, there was still quite a bit of packing to do. "We'll be back shortly," they told her.

Mark called **Helen Parsons**, the Board Member who oversees the Brother Benno Thrift Shop, for help. **Brenda**, a Shop employee, cheerfully gave them all the packing boxes they needed. They headed back to Sheila's room, packed up everything, and took her to her new place in San Diego.

During the drive, Douglas and Mark were treated to a special gift. It turned out that Sheila had known Brother Benno himself, and she shared great stories of his fun-loving spirit while he assisted others.



Douglas and Sheila

Thank you to everyone at the Foundation for making this happen. You all are the best!

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A CHRISTMAS STORY

As Christmas approaches, we'd like to share a story from Harold Kutler's book, *Soup Soap Hugs Hope, the Story of Brother Benno's Life-Changing Soup Kitchen* (p. 94):

"Five-year-old Scott, accompanied by his dad, knocked on our door at home one evening, holding what looked like a yogurt cup filled with change. He told Kay and me that he was a friend of Anne's, who's also a friend of ours. I thought, no matter what he's collecting for, it'll be impossible to turn this cute little guy down.

"The little boy handed us the cup. 'Scott saw a TV program about starving children in Ethiopia,' his father said, 'and it moved him so much that he decided to save his money to help feed them. I told him there are a lot of hungry people

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SPOTLIGHT: MEET JOHN JARVIE

by Gregg Prather

Few people have given so much of their life to the Brother Benno Foundation as John Jarvie. John has been with Brother Benno's so long that even he can't remember how long exactly. The best he recalls, it's since 1994—more than 26 years. He must be forgiven, though, as he has a lot to remember. John is over 96 years old.



(John Jarvie made this flower box for Board President Kathleen Diehlmann. Her smiling eyes tell us how happy she is with it.

This picture was taken by Ron Lamb, one of John's proteges, who continues to beautify the Brother Benno Center with his own brand of mastery and creativity.)

Born in Rock Springs, Wyoming, John has three older sisters. After a short stint in the gold mines of Nevada, he entered the Marine Corps. He served in WWII in the South Pacific, including the Marshall Islands, Guam, Okinawa, and China. In the early 1950's, he served in Korea, building roads and bridges for an Engineering Battalion. During that time, John married **Billie**, his wife of 46 years, and they had four children: **John, Jeff, Janet, and Joe**. After 22 years, in 1964, John retired from the Marine Corps a Master Gunnery Sergeant.

Brother Benno's had not found John yet.

After the Marine Corps, John began his second career, doing contract work. He was a traveling builder for International Vendors. He also did con-

tract work for the Base Club System. This work continued until a twist of fate led him to meet **Harold Kutler**, the Founder of Brother Benno's.

The two men were introduced to each other by **Mary Nordstrom**, one of Brother Benno's benefactors, with the hope that John would build a serving line at the Brother Benno Center. John agreed, and that project was the beginning of his third career. Since that time, he has built innumerable projects at the Center, including a chapel and a laundry room, plus bathroom, kitchen, and dining room remodels, new flooring, office space – and that just scratches the surface.

John is a master craftsman, and he's also a no-nonsense guy. When he started these projects, he became aware of the Men's Recovery Program, and he told Harold he could use one of these men as his assistant. Harold agreed, and thus began a long line of men learning the trades such as carpentry, electrical, plumbing, drywall, tile setting, painting, and many more, to countless men over the years. At the same time, he and his assistants were transforming the Center into a thriving facility for the Foundation members to do their good works.

Today John works with the Brother Benno Thrift Shop, restoring old furniture to new condition. He has slowed down a bit, as any 96-year-old would. But he's as tough as ever, and his spirit has never shined more brightly.

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Information & Online donations:
brotherbenno.org

Follow Brother Bennos online:

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

Brother Benno Foundation
Recovery Program for Men and Women

760 439 1244 ext. 101

Changing people's lives through the 12 Steps
of Alcoholics Anonymous.

BLESSINGS FOR HOLIDAYS

The following note was received at the Brother Benno Center in November.

*“Dear Brother Benno’s Staff,
I cannot even explain what an amazing blessing is was to find Brother Benno’s rental assistance program in our time of need. Thank you all SO much for all you do. Thanks to you, my daughter and I will be able to stay in our apartment. The overwhelming stress of unforeseen financial burdens was a great weight that Brother Benno’s helped lift. Thanks to you all and your wonderful programs and generous donors, we will be able to enjoy the holiday season and focus on life’s many gifts to be grateful for. Keep up the good work!!! Thanks again. And again and again. Sincerely, A. and V.”*

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in Oceanside, too, and he could help feed them by donating his money to Brother Benno’s Kitchen.

Scott’s cup held pennies, nickels, and dimes—plus a black plastic film cylinder. ‘This has the big money in it,’ he told us, as he took the cylinder out of the cup. In it we found 15 quarters. Altogether, he had saved \$5.74 for the hungry children.

“‘Scott, would you like to come down to the Kitchen and personally hand out something that we buy with this money?’ Kay asked.

“That Saturday, Scott, along with his mom and dad and little sister, gave each guest a lollipop for dessert. Then he got up on the stage and sang ‘Jingle Bells.’”

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AUXILIARY PRESENTS ANNUAL DONATION TO BROTHER BENNO FOUNDATION



Nita Rodriguez, Kathleen Diehlmann, Joyce Cerimele

(Nita and Joyce are Auxiliary officers, Kathleen is Foundation President)

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>

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

Ron Alexander	Bob Gleason	Mary Pullman	Rosalie Najera
Dixie & Lou Bales	Chance Hales	Catherine L. Quinlan	Sandy Bulmer
Frank Barnet	Tom & Louise	Dora Ramirez	David & Mary Ann
Brother Benno	Hayward	Dick & Terry Riley	Mowery
Edith Blaiser	Elizabeth Holms	Margaret Rossini	Alva & Frances
Andrea Boersma	Alice Jordan	Ann Sauer	Snider
Roland Bond	Ben Kouns	Nick Sauer	Ann Craig
Bill Boster	Richard Kurtz	Mary Shankle	Albert Manuel, Jr.
Agnus & Joan Boyd	Carole Kutler	Naomi Shelton	
Bill Buckner	Harold & Kay Kutler	Bernice, Samuel &	
Deacon Art & Mary Carr	Bill & Louise Lakoff	Milton Silver	
Anna Correia	Ben E. Lewis	Will Skinner	
Don & Dorothea Daybell	Helen Lucas	Ann Grier Smith	
Phyllis H. Dierlam	Bill & Joan Maloney	Alva & Frances	
Frank S. Dolley	Helene McGill	Snider	
Anita H. Donahue	Michael & Monty	Squirrell Family	
Dorothy M. Donahue	Nares	Mike Stendahl	
Fr. Luke Dougherty	Zeferino & Dancy	Margaret Stephan	
Roseanne Dreibelbis	Nares	Virginia Sylwestrzak	
Fr. Abbot Claude	Mary Nordstrom	Harold Thompson	
Ehringer, OSB	Nysewander Family	Carol & Herb	
Myron Eichen	Bud & Blanche Ogle	Thornberg	
Richard Farhquar	Ben Osgrove	Rosemary Tucker	
William & Vennita	Kathryn D. Pent	Walter Ulloa	
Flanagan	Mary Peterson	June Williams	
Louise Foussat	Jane Pfau	Fred Williamson	
Joe & Ida Friend	Ruth Hazel Pierson	Albert & Beverly	
Mary Gerrity	Alan Port	Miville	

Needs

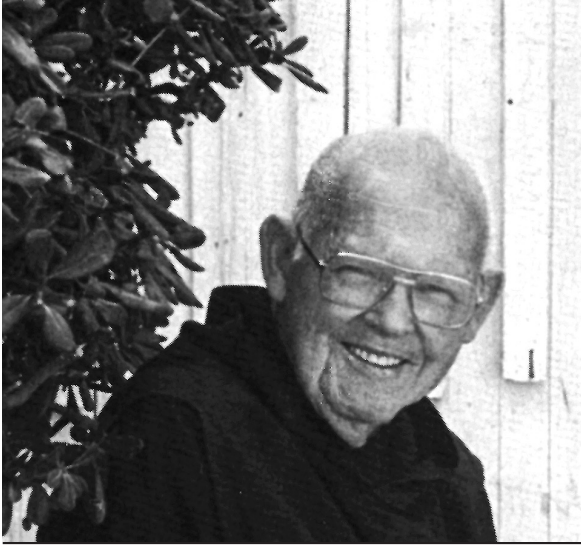
For the children at our "Christmas Party" -- stocking stuffers for all ages and **new** pj's in all sizes including teens. Items can be dropped off at the Thrift Shop, 3955 Mission Avenue, Oceanside, Wednesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Snack foods, small juices, and bottled water for our daily sack lunches.

Please consider contributing to the Brother Benno Foundation by way of your Will, Living Trust, Designated Beneficiary Account, Stocks, Life Insurance, Mutual Funds, or Real Estate. For more information, contact Suzy Martinek, 760-941-1876 or smartinek@miracosta.edu

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

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 Oceanside, California
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Brother Benno's Thrift Shop

(Helping the poor, one sale at a time)

Clothing, Household Goods, Furniture

Store Hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10-5; Donation Hours Tuesday-Friday 10-4, Saturdays 10-2

We welcome your saleable furniture items. Please call 760-967-7507 for free pick up

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, 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:

	October 2020	Our 37th Year		October 2020	Our 37th Year
Meals	9,941	4,555,668	Loads of laundry	0	28,628
Nights of lodging	891	322,840	Food packs	429	357,026
Articles of clothing	2,084	1,424,810	Blankets	87	48,774
Showers	0	271,036	Tarps	23	6,135
Haircuts	0	22,827	ID Vouchers	8	9,969
Bus passes	7	86,066	HUGS	0	1,011,244