Brother Benno’s Newsletter

“Uplifting The Dignity of Those We Serve”

February 2011

GUESTS AT WOMEN’S HOUSES CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

Some Brother Benno supporters focus on our Women’s Houses, because they feel a special affinity for women and children who face difficult challenges in their lives. This past Christmas, many of those supporters saw to it that our guests at MAMI and DBRJ felt the love of the season in a way that perhaps they’d never felt before.

Jan Roberts, who manages both Houses, saw to it that each House was decorated and had a Christmas tree. The women who live in the Houses were invited to come to the Center before Christmas to pick out gifts for their children, or for nieces and nephews. Women from HOW (Helping Other Women), members of the Brother Benno Auxiliary, provided dinner, other delectable treats, and gifts for the women and children.

At the time of this writing, two children, ages 7 and 20 months, are living at MAMI with their mother full-time; and one, age 3, comes to be with his mother every other weekend. These mothers wrote the following about what Christmas meant to them this year:

“My Christmas at MAMI was better than I thought it would be. I was going through a lot and didn’t have very much money, so I figured that my girls wouldn’t have a Christmas. The staff of Brother Benno’s, and the volunteers, made my children’s Christmas a very special one. They had gifts to open and smiles on their faces and happiness in their hearts. Because of donations (from Brother Benno supporters), my kids had a warm, fun-filled holiday, and that’s all I could ask for. Thank you to Brother Benno’s staff, volunteers, and to everyone who donated this year.

K.R.”

Now that the holidays are over, Jan is making it possible for these two mothers to attend an eight-week parenting class put on by Lifeline in Oceanside (nclifeline.org). They can bring their children with them, so babysitting isn’t a problem.

Mary Robinson, Board member who oversees our Women’s Houses, said: “We’ve been trying to have the ladies at MAMI take self-improvement classes to prompt them into action in learning a little more so they can better deal with their situations.”

Jan is also testing out a change in length of stay at MAMI so the women have the time they need to get back on their feet.

“Christmas this year was a huge blessing. My three-year-old son got to experience it all. He had special people to share it with, joy, wonder, excitement, and gifts delivered by Santa Claus. He was thrilled! I could not have asked for a better Christmas, and it was all made possible by the generous works of Brother Benno’s. I am so grateful for all they have done to make Christmas 2010 the best it could possibly be. R.R.”

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

Helen Keller
SCHOLARSHIPS MAKE LIFE CHANGES POSSIBLE

Brother Benno’s started offering scholarships to high school students in 2008, then added college students as well. A total of ten scholarships are awarded every year.

Two women—one just starting her college career, the other ready to transfer from Palomar to Cal State San Marcos—wrote the following letters in response to their receiving a scholarship:

“I am very grateful that you chose me . . . to receive this scholarship. I am going to use the money to pay for my classes and textbooks as I begin college. “About a year ago, life was very terrible for me. My family was going through so many hardships, and it was really difficult for me to deal with. Lately, my life has changed for the better. I feel a lot more successful, now that I know I am strong enough to do whatever it is I want to do. And receiving this scholarship has a lot to do with that. I am attending my first semester at Palomar College and it is going very well. I am taking a full load of classes, which is difficult, but I am making the best of it by studying on track and studying a lot . . . .”

“I want to become a registered nurse, because I want to be able to give back to my community in every way imaginable, and I find nurses to be highly respected parts of their community. Thanks to this scholarship, I am all the more closer to accomplishing my goals . . . . I really appreciate all that you have done for me. K.P.”

“Thank you for allowing me to receive this wonderful, generous award. . . . I am honored and proud to be a Brother Benno recipient. I will be attending CSUSM for my B.A. in Business Administration, am pursuing a career in Business Management in the Medical Technologies field. I am really excited about where my life is headed . . . . I have big dreams, and I know they are obtainable as long as I work hard . . . . This will help fulfill my goals to be a self-supporting member of society and a healthy role model for my daughter . . . . I am a single parent and head of my household. I am also recovering alcoholic of four years. Some of my challenges are with balancing work, counseling, meetings, and raising my daughter. Receiving help from Brother Benno’s gives me strength when faced with all my everyday financial obligations. I am so grateful, and I thank God every day for having programs like this to help me better my life. I pray for the day when I can help people who are in my shoes. R.A.”

EXPÉRIENCING

by Barbara Ladwig

Random Kindness. A volunteer who arrived at the Center early one cold January morning walked past a woman waiting to see someone in the Case Management office. She was early for her appointment, she said, as she stood shivering, obviously not dressed for the weather. The volunteer gave the woman her warm scarf.

Several hours later, I noted that the volunteer had not gotten her scarf back. “Oh, I don’t care about the scarf,” she said. “That woman was just so cold . . . .”

Open Mike. Carrying on with a tradition started by Kay Kutler from Day One, we are looking for volunteers who would like to entertain our guests during their morning meal. Kay sang her heart out every day, much to the delight of everyone within earshot, and then she invited anyone who wanted to, to come up on stage to sing, play an instrument, or entertain in any other way. If you have a talent you’d like to share (even joke-telling is a talent!), please call DENnIS (760-681-2616) and let him know you’re interested. He said it could be a 15-minute spot, or longer. Breakfast is served from 6:30 to 8:00, Monday through Friday, and 10:00 to 11:30 on Saturdays.

A Mouth-Watering Invitation. Be sure to check out the Flapjack Breakfast being put on by the Auxiliary in March (details on page 4). Anyone who enjoys that first meal of the day, and knows to get it at an unbelievably low price, will want to be part of this special fundraiser.
Many churches, other companies, and individuals gave us their time and treasures, including the City of Oceanside. We couldn’t have done it without all of you!

Not to be forgotten are all the regular staff members and volunteers who make up the core “A” team every day of the year: Harold, Bear, Sean, Joe, Tom, Suzy, Dennis, Denise, Mary, Liz, Kathy, Virginia, Thomas, Paul, Greg, another Dennis, Pelon, Senator, Darryl, Pat, Diane, and all the Program Guys. A heartfelt thanks to every one of you!

At the end of the day on December 22, a young, very wet guy came into the warehouse asking for a ride. His car had broken down in front of the Center, and he needed to be driven to a friend’s house to borrow a car. As I drove him to Vista, he shared his story with me. He was an ex-Marine and had just lost his civilian job a few weeks earlier. His girlfriend was expecting a baby soon, and his mom and sister were barely making ends meet.

They had all come to the Center earlier that day, and he said they so enjoyed the refreshments, Christmas carols, Santa, gifts, and loving atmosphere that they left with a feeling of hope. “Yeah,” he said. “Today was our Christmas!”

All these Angels accomplished what they set out to do!

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

My enclosed tax-deductible gift is: $_______
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In memory of: ________________
Please send a card to:

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

Send a card to: (name)__________________________________________
(address)______________________________________________________

Or, donate online at http://brotherbenno.org
Welcome back, Members! We hope everyone had an enjoyable Christmas and expect the very best for the New Year.

An informal meeting was held on January 15 for new Board members and Committee Chairs. The gathering was to prepare the calendar of events, inform new Chairs of their duties, and do some brainstorming for fundraising ideas.

The first meeting of 2011 was held on January 26. New Board members and Committee Chairs were introduced and a calendar of events was distributed. We will not have a regular meeting in February, due to the Membership Drive Luncheon on Saturday, February 26, at Shadowridge Country Club in Vista. All members are encouraged to bring neighbors, friends, relatives—anyone who might be interested in becoming a member of the Auxiliary. Please contact Thelma Hendrix (760-758-2949). Also, the winner of the Alaska cruise trip for two will be announced.

On March 12, we will have a new fundraiser—a Flapjack Breakfast at Applebee’s in Oceanside from 8 to 9:30. The meal will include pancakes, scrambled eggs, sausage, bacon, milk, juice, and coffee. All that for only $10! We need Auxiliary volunteers for greeters, servers, and bussers. Call Judy Harris (760-724-0227) for more information.

The next regular meeting will be on Wednesday, March 23. Hope to see all of you then, and at the Luncheon and Breakfast.

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...

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