Wisdom comes to us at different stages of our lives and from a wide variety of sources. Brittany Poor, at age 24, seems to have been given a large dose of wisdom through what seemed at the time to be the worst possible set of circumstances. She started drinking when she was 16, was kicked out of her home by her parents at age 23, and now is the Assistant Manager at Brother Benno’s House of Martha Ann Mary and Ida (MAMI) for homeless women and women with children under the direction of Manager Jan Roberts.

“My parents were both in the military,” she said, “so they believed that tough love was the best way to go when I refused to give up drinking.” Her drinking got really bad when she was 20, and by the time she was 23, her parents had had enough. As she was shown the door, all she took with her was a backpack full of underwear and a blanket.

For six months, Brittany went from one friend’s couch to another to sleep, and she often spent her days sitting on a bench by the beach. She was in AA at the time, and one day as she sat on her bench, she had a revelation, like “seeing a fork in the road,” she said. She could continue doing what she was doing (drinking) and she would die. Or she could stop drinking, realizing that such a decision would make her life very uncomfortable. “I was all about being comfortable,” she said. “Drinking numbed me, and I believed that stopping would take a long time and be very painful.”

That night she slept on the couch at her sponsor’s home. This woman knew someone at Brother Benno’s, and she offered to introduce Brittany to her. That meeting opened up a whole new possibility—getting sober with the help of a group of people who were committed to being there for her through all the difficulties of conquering her alcoholism.

In October, 2011, Brittany moved into MAMI; then a few weeks later she went to DBRJ (Dorothy Barbara Rosemary and Joan), Brother Benno’s sober-living house for women. One of the requirements for living at DBRJ is to get a job. She was afraid that would be impossible, given her recent past, but she was quickly hired by an Oceanside natural foods store, where she is now one of the managers.

Just one year later, in October, 2012, she was made the Assistant Manager at MAMI, where one of her duties is to do the intake for potential new residents and then follow up with case management. Something she commonly hears from these women is, “I’m sure you don’t understand (what I’m going through.)” At that point, Brittany usually shares a little of her own story so that they know she does understand only too well.

continued on page 3....
We have many people to thank for all the special things they’ve done for us during the Christmas season. We will try to acknowledge as many as possible, beginning in this issue and continuing in the coming months; but even though we might miss some of you, please know that our appreciation extends to every person who has shown care and concern by providing for others.

First, there was the Rotary Club of Carlsbad, whose members came through with 500 pairs of new socks even before our request was made known in the December newsletter. The generosity of these good men and women translated into warmth for our male Guests, homeless and otherwise, in the gift packs that were given out on December 8.

Then there was the kindness of people who had never heard of Brother Benno’s until one of our volunteers contacted them in order to make a purchase. Bear (Peter Ashton) told Dennis Martinek, one of our Operations Managers, that we needed a hundred new cafeteria-style trays to replace the ones that have been broken or damaged. Dennis contacted Cambro Manufacturing where the old trays had come from and found that new trays sell for $7 each. He asked if non-profits could get a discount; the woman at Cambro asked what Brother Benno’s does. Dennis gave a brief overview and referred her to our website. After behind-the-scenes consultations, the company remembered that they had some “obsolete inventory” that we could have for nothing—in fact, we could have 436 trays for free if we didn’t mind bright orange. “We love bright orange!” Dennis told them.

Dennis said that when he and his wife Suzy (another B.B. volunteer) picked up the trays in Huntington Beach, “the manager and the men who loaded them had big smiles of satisfaction that come with giving. You could see they were proud of their company for doing a good thing. Two lessons come from this: 1. It’s nice to deal with good people, and 2. Our website does a good job of letting people know what Brother Benno’s does.”

Another story is about a business that went beyond the norm to help someone less fortunate. One of our Guests, “a feisty 62-year-old woman who has colon cancer,” according to volunteer Tim Marlin, uses a scooter to get around. When the scooter broke, Tim tried to help her by finding replacement parts—only to learn that none were available. He went to SoCal Engineering, an Oceanside welding shop, to see if they could fix it. They could. Tim left the scooter at the shop, saying he would pick it up the following Monday.

On Thanksgiving Day he brought his mother Bonnie to eat at Brother Benno’s. As they passed SoCal, he noticed that they were open, so he stopped in to check on the scooter progress. It was already finished and reassembled. After the meal, Tim said, he and his mom and all their friends at Brother Benno’s went to Joyce’s house to drop off her scooter.

“She loves to be active, and she loves that scooter,” Tim said. “I am just happy to be of service, and all the glory goes to God.”

Our final thank-you for this issue goes to Girlfriends Care, a local non-profit whose members volunteer with organizations that serve women and children. For the fifth year in a row, 70 women, men, and teens came together on the second Saturday in December for the Annual GFC Christmas at Brother Benno’s.

Gini Craig, a long-time GFC member, had this to say about their day here: “It was a huge success according to those being served and those who served. From the food-serving line to the Reading Room, to the greeters/huggers and gift givers, to those who created gift bags for the women in transitional housing, to toy sorters, placemat artists, rice and beans baggers, personal shoppers and gift wrappers for the Program Guys, to the singing of traditional Christmas songs led by Pam Shattuck—EVERYONE did a great job!”

House Manager of MAMI and DBRJ Jan Roberts sent GFC a note after they delivered the gift bags to the Houses: “Thank you! It’s so thoughtful of you to think of our women and to take the time to put gift bags together for them. Thank you to GFC for always making our ladies feel so special!”
Besides her work at MAMI and her job at the store, she will be receiving her Associate Degree in Liberal Arts and Humanities, with a focus on social work, at MiraCosta College this spring. She is also in the process of applying for scholarships so she can transfer to Cal State San Marcos next fall.

As Brittany looks back on the past, she sees two providential events in her life. The first is that, although she was shocked when her parents kicked her out of the house, she now realizes that she wouldn’t have been able to make such a dramatic change in her life if she hadn’t been forced to have everything taken away—her family, home, car and possessions. She now has a good relationship with her family, and she gets together with them once a week for dinner.

The second thing for which she is grateful is the fact that Jan was willing to take a chance with her, even though at the time she didn’t meet all the criteria for residence at DBRJ. “I also want to thank everybody who works at Brother Benno’s” she said. “I am a miracle today, but without them, it wouldn’t have been possible.”

Brittany points to the Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi as her new way of living her life: “Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love; for it is in giving that we receive. . .”

“Now I appreciate things,” she said. “Now it’s not all about me and my comfort; it’s about being concerned for and helping others.”

Ω

Being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, forgotten by everybody, I think that is a much greater hunger, a much greater poverty, than the person who has nothing to eat.

~ Mother Teresa

Information & Online donations

brotherbenno.org

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
by Vikki Ramey

More than 500 people attended the Auxiliary’s Annual Luncheon on December 1. We can’t say “Thank You” enough to members and supporters who made this event such a huge success: Vera Bayliss and Mary Vernaci, Luncheon Coordinators/Ticket Sales; Sharon Tasker, Opportunity Baskets; Mary Vernaci, Centerpieces; Edith Jones and Karen Gallagher, Silent Auction; Pamela Langness, Programs; Claire Carter, Angel page and Photographer; Judy Harris, Name Game ticket sales; Maureen Tutino, Opportunity ticket sales; Ruth Mortenson, Centerpiece numbers; and to all who helped these ladies.

Brother Daniel Sokol from the Prince of Peace Abbey told a story about Kay Kutler, in whose memory the luncheon was dedicated, and he asked all of us to give hugs to each other. (Kay was the original Master Hugger at Brother Benno’s). Harold Kutler gave a beautiful invocation. Jan Roberts and Brianna Cedillo spoke to us on behalf of the Women’s Houses and to tell us about how Brother Benno’s and the Auxiliary’s HOW Committee continue to support the women residing there while they are on their road to recovery.

We thank the Angel page and prize donors who helped us financially, and also Southern California Edison (SONGS) for donating the first-aid kits for our thank-you favors.

As of the middle of December, we made over $17,000 on the Luncheon, and there are additional donations yet to be received. It was truly a success!

We hope the holidays brought everyone happiness being with family and friends, and we pray that those less fortunate in our communities will find happiness in the near future. We welcome home our troops, who can now be with their loved ones.

Membership Drive Luncheon – March 2 (note the date change)
Memorials

Brother Benno
Pope John Paul II
Mother Teresa
Kay Kutler
Ann Sauer
Joe & Ida Friend
Mary Nordstrom
Myron Eichen
Alice Jordan
Roseanne Dreibelbis
Richard Farquhar
Deacon Art & Mary Carr
Don & Dorothea Daybell
Catherine L. Quinlan
Mary Pullman
Joan Boyd
Agnus Boyd
Harold Thompson
Bud & Blanche Ogle
Bob Gleason
Jane Pfau
Ron Alexander
Mary Peterson
Frank Barnet
Frank S. Dolley
Phyllis H. Dierlam
Monty Nares
Margaret Rossini
Dorothy M. Donahue
Mary Teresa Carr
Ruth Hazel Pierson
Elizabeth Holmes
Edith Blaiser
Ben Kouns
Bill Lakoff
Bernice, Samuel & Milton Silver
Anita H. Donahue
Margaret Stephan
Bill Boster
Louise Foussat
Richard Kurtz
Helen Lucas
Bill & Joan Maloney
Dora Ramirez
Dick & Terry Riley
Bill Buckner
Mary Shankle
Walter Ulloa
Fred Williamson
Carole Kutler
Will Skinner
Fr. Abbot Claude
Ehringer, OSB
Fr. Luke Dougherty
Naomi Shelton
Rosemary Tucker
Ben E. Lewis
Roland Bond
Anna Correia
Geraldine Howard
Helene McGill
Andrea Boersma
Ben Osgrove
Edward Raymond
Donald Burt
Carolyn Halsey
Robert Crawford
Robert McCoy, Jr.
Fran & Lee Desmond
Lora Kroeger
Phillip Larsen
Bill Severy
Martin Lilley, Jr.
Dorothy Jellig
Steven Lilley, Jr.
Hilda Dailey
Bernie Weiler
Roxane Walker
Janice Harmon
Franklin Hoffer
Squirrell Family
Tim & Blanche Keane
Tony & Wilma Derrigo
Nysewander Family
Rose & Floyd Caldwell
William & Vennita Flanagan
Douglas Faught
Mike Stendahl
Joe & Margie Opatkiewicz
Art & Mary Hau
Bill & Mary McCarthy
Sarah Diet
Kay Parker
Andrew & Jane Yandura
Helen, Beau, & Walt McEwen
Richard Ryan
Bob, Naim, & Rick Provost
Stanley LaMonte
Dancy & Zeferino Nares
Paul Sperrazza

Needs

Mens boxer underpants
Warm clothes like coats, jeans & sweaters
Diapers (All sizes, especially 4 & 5)
Rain gear, ponchos, gloves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 St. Elizabeth Seton #1</td>
<td>8 Friends from Vista</td>
<td>9 Naval Hospital</td>
<td>10 Oceanside Civitans</td>
<td>11 St. Patrick’s</td>
<td>12 Oak Hills</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 North Coast Methodist</td>
<td>15 Christ the King Lutheran</td>
<td>16 Grace Anglican</td>
<td>17 Carlsbad Rotary</td>
<td>18 St. Elizabeth Seton #2</td>
<td>19 Girlfriend’s Care</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 Sunrise Kiwanis of Vista</td>
<td>22 St. Mark’s San Marcos</td>
<td>23 San Luis Rey Methodist</td>
<td>24 Pilgrim Creek</td>
<td>25 Fallbrook Presbyterian</td>
<td>26 Catholic Daughters</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 Christ Anglican</td>
<td>29 Welk Resort</td>
<td>30 Soroptimist International</td>
<td>31 Grace Anglican</td>
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Brother Benno’s Furniture Sales

3242-B Production Ave., Oceanside (next to Center) 760-967-2742 Open Mon. - Sat. 9 am to Noon
We welcome your saleable furniture items. Please call 760-439-1244 ext.115 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, 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

The Thrift Shop
3965 Mission Ave. (East of Albertsons) 760-967-7505
Shop open Mon-Sat 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. -- Stop by to check out our Special of the Week Sales!!

Brother Benno’s Services:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>November 2012</th>
<th>Our 29th Year</th>
<th>November 2012</th>
<th>Our 29th Year</th>
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<td>Meals</td>
<td>13,721</td>
<td>3,340,895</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26,265</td>
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<td>Nights of lodging</td>
<td>1,159</td>
<td>232,589</td>
<td>2,868</td>
<td>210,870</td>
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<td>Articles of clothing</td>
<td>6,171</td>
<td>955,542</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>33,766</td>
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<td>Showers</td>
<td>972</td>
<td>173,610</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7,099</td>
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<td>Haircuts</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>14,727</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8,352</td>
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<td>Bus passes</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>76,102</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>839,344</td>
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Our services are the same for everyone without regard to race, religion, national origin, age, sex, or disability.