CHRISTMAS “MAGIC” AT BROTHER BENNO’S

You never know how the magic of Christmas will play out at Brother Benno’s. Something special always happens, and this year was no exception.

The “big event” started on December 18, when about 40 volunteers filled bags with toys for approximately 600 families. The parents had been given vouchers after Thanksgiving, on which they could write the age and sex of their children. On the 18th, they handed over their voucher to a volunteer, who walked through the warehouse loaded with toys that had been placed on tables according to “boy” or “girl,” and the appropriate age. An estimated two thousand toys were distributed. The process worked like clockwork, but the joyful chatter of the volunteers was just as evident as the precision of their work.

While toy bags were being filled, the parents and their children were treated to cookies* and punch, as well as entertainment.**

According to Denise Seymour, our Volunteer Co-ordinator, several families came to the Center the following day, saying they’d been unable to come on the 18th. “One mother ended up with a musical guitar that I felt would be appropriate for her little boy,” Denise said. “She told me, as I walked her out to her car, that he had been asking for a guitar—and she was so pleased!”

Christmas Day, about 250 people came for the traditional dinner of turkey, dressing, potatoes, gravy, broccoli, rolls, pie, cake, coffee, and punch. Instead of the regular Wednesday serving team, the Guests were served by a group of various Christmas volunteers. Suzy Martinek, one of our faithful long-time volunteers, shared this story: “I had a middle-aged woman and her mother volunteer. It was their first time here. At the end of the meal, the mom said to me, ‘I am 88 years old, and I have always wanted to do something like this. This has been my most blessed Christmas of my whole life.’ She signed up for next year. I guess she is a positive thinker!’”

The music on Christmas Day was provided by an extended family of 15 who range in age from three to eighty, and who have been entertaining our Guests for the past several years. They are of Hawaiian heritage, and they play Christmas music on a variety of instruments.

As Denise summed up the Christmas experience at Brother Benno’s, she said, “It’s one of our busiest events, involving many people on many levels, who contribute much effort in bringing it all together. There are always so many different experiences and emotions that (everyone) receives from (being involved).”

(* and ** – Please see page 2)
**Stars.** A group of approximately 20 home-schooling families in Vista formed a Cookie Ministry last year in an effort to bring Christmas cheer to the less fortunate in our midst. Led by Joy Highley, Yvonne Hamquist, and Janette Mcintosh, they bake cookies, package them, and deliver them to the Brother Benno Center for distribution to the families who are picking up new toys before Christmas.

This year, the Home Schooling Group baked more than 4,800 cookies! “We ask how many they think they’ll need,” Joy said, “and then we double the number.” After they were distributed at Brother Benno’s, the group was able to give quite a few to Solutions for Change as well.

The families bake the cookies at home, then they gather at the Vista Masonic Lodge to package them. “The moms put them in bags and tie them with a ribbon,” Joy said, “and the kids put stickers and labels with a Bible verse on the outside. It’s really quite a production!” The parents remind the children that Christmas is every day, and not everyone has the advantages they have.

**More Stars.** The entertainment for the families picking up toys on December 18 was provided by Robbie Furman and Eddie Medrano. Robbie was one of our lay ministers back in 2000. When he left Brother Benno’s, he moved back east to start a successful “balloon animal” business. Each year he comes back to share his talents with our Guests and to visit with many of our staff members and volunteers. Eddie is a professional entertainer going by the name of Funny Eddie. He’s a former clown with the Ringling Brothers Circus, and his skills include magic, balloon art, juggling, and comedy.

What a treat it was for everyone to have these talented men share their gifts with us!

**Bless the Bikers!** Two sober motorcycle clubs, the Pioneers and Messengers, hold a yearly benefit ride for the homeless through St. Vincent de Paul’s and Brother Benno’s. The bikers meet for breakfast and registration (a $10 donation) at San Diego Harley in San Diego, then have a party after the ride at Kennedy’s Custom Cycle located very near our Center. In addition to the Clubs’ donations of blankets and jackets, Brother Benno’s was the recipient of an additional $1,000 donated anonymously during the event.

**Shop Sales Translate to Help.** The Brother Benno Thrift Shop on Mission Avenue in Oceanside made a few dollars shy of $5,000 on Small Business Saturday recently. “With everything 20% off, that’s a lot of inventory!” said Shop Manager Michelle Hoppe. Denise Seymour let the Shop staff know how some of that money helped our Guests: It kept a mother of three safe in a hotel for a week from an abusive father, and buy diapers for her little ones. It paid back a staff member who helped a woman living in her disabled car to get the car repaired so she could drive to Atlanta where a job was waiting for her. And it provided diapers for another mother of three whose husband wasn’t able to support his family that week. These stories are just a few examples of what happens at Brother Benno’s six days a week, all year long.

**Abundant Roses.** Speaking of the Thrift Shop, we had to hold over one of Helen Parsons’ “Roses” recipients in the December newsletter because we ran out of space. So here it is: “To our Thrift Shop staff and volunteers: A life surrounded by flowers for all of you each day! Our mission statement, to serve the poor one sale at a time, is a reality because of your unwavering devotion. You do what needs to be done, no matter what, including washing floors, scrubbing bathrooms, washing windows, baking goodies for special events, attending events that let people know who we are, embracing students who want to do community service. You are simply the best! You are the wind (spirit) beneath my (Brother Benno’s) wings!”
Eddie Medrano, Magician

Robbie Furman, The Balloon Man

Christie Sahar, The Grinch and Denise Seymour

Line at Christmas Giveaway

Santa with guest

Toy Giveaway

Guests enjoying Christmas Meal

Diana Fairbanks-Shields, Minerva Anderson and Mary Holquin

Pioneers & Messengers at Blanket Giveaway
Congratulations to the following Board Members for 2014: Isobel Haring, Vice-President; Bonnie Gjerde, Secretary; Joan O’Connell, Treasurer; Vikki Ramey, Advisor; Thelma Hendrix, Parliamentarian. We are still looking for members interested in becoming Co-Presidents or chairing a committee. Please contact Vikki Ramey (760-803-6267) for more information.

Thanks to all Auxiliary members who volunteered in serving refreshments at the Christmas Toys gathering on December 18. And many, many thanks also to everyone who donated socks for the children—we collected more than 375 pairs. Vicky Squires chaired this sock drive.

Our first meeting in 2014 will be on January 22. I’m looking for three members to volunteer to bring refreshments (please call me). Social time is at 1 p.m., meeting at 1:30.

Our Membership Drive will be in February, date to be announced.

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Information & Online donations: brotherbenno.org
Follow Brother Bennos online: Facebook.com/BrotherBennos Twitter.com/BrotherBennos

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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

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

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
Kathryn D. Pent
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 Holms
Edith Blaiser
Ben Kouns
Bill Lakoff
Bernice, Samuel & Milton Silver
Anita H. Donahue
Margaret Stephan
Bill Boster
Louise Foussat
Tom Hayward
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
Gilbert Brown
Phillip Larson
Robert McMath
Bob Tupa
Joy Whitman
Mary Ann Mowery
Rosalie Ryan
Jeanne Nickel
Eunice Bourque
Bill Pollock
Andrew & Jane Yadura
Dorothy Barnell
Zeferino & Dancy Nares

Frank Trujillo
Bill Combs
Marshall Button
Paul Sperrazza
Nysewander Family
Squirrell Family
Douglas Faught
Pete Kopcak
Fred & Helen Briscoe
Lorna Kroeger
Laurie Batchelor
Alan Jay
Dorothy & Walter Jellig
Elaine Dillon
Bernard & Virginia Jaeger
Helen, Walter, & Beau McEwen
Bernie Weiler
Lorraine Ybarra

Birthdays
Frank Forthoffer

In Honor Of
Andrew & Meg
Alma & Dan Boone

Needs

Gently used furniture  Diapers  Ladies underwear
Coffee (the larger the cans, the better, but we’ll take whatever)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>January 2014</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>Monthly</td>
<td>St. Elizabeth Seton #1</td>
<td>St. John The Evangelist</td>
<td>Brother Benno’s Auxiliary</td>
<td>Oceanside Pacific Kiwanis</td>
<td>San Luis Rey Mission</td>
<td>St. Thomas More</td>
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<td>Hawkes Home</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Oceanside Civilians</td>
<td>St. Patrick’s</td>
<td>3rd MAW Medical</td>
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<td>Team</td>
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<td>Christ the King Lutheran</td>
<td>Grace Anglican</td>
<td>Carlsbad Rotary</td>
<td>St. Elizabeth Seton #2</td>
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<td>Schedule</td>
<td>Christ Church &amp; Zion Lutheran</td>
<td>St. Mark’s San Marcos</td>
<td>Soroptimist International</td>
<td>Grace Anglican</td>
<td>King of Kings Lutheran</td>
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Furniture Sales at the Center

3242-B Production Ave., Oceanside  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.
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 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.

Brother Benno’s Services:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>November 2013</th>
<th>Our 30th Year</th>
<th>Loads of laundry</th>
<th>November 2013</th>
<th>Our 30th Year</th>
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<td>Nights of lodging</td>
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<td>Articles of clothing</td>
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<td>862,744</td>
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Brother Benno Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 308, Oceanside, CA 92049