Christmas was seven days away when Brother Benno’s hosted its yearly Children’s Christmas Party on December 18th 2022. The celebration took place outside of the Brother Benno’s Thrift Shop. Santa came to town to meet with over 400 beautiful boys and girls. This event did not just magically happen out of nowhere, though. It took many months of preparation. Coordinating the event once again was Helen Parsons. Helen, a member of the Board of Directors of the Brother Benno Foundation, has been a strong asset giving back to the community for many years. This year she even dressed up as Mrs. Claus for the day and helped put smiles on everyone’s face.

At this year’s event the line may have been long, but families anticipated with excitement Christmas starting a bit early for the children of Oceanside. What was waiting for them seemed to be a small part of the North Pole itself. With a live DJ on scene playing only the best Christmas songs, decorations everywhere, and hot chocolate being handed out to anyone who wanted it. This truly had one using all five of his human senses feeling the Spirit of Christmas. The walk from the start of the line to the end included so many amazing adventures for the children to feel the warmth of Christmas time. With games of throwing rings around Christmas trees, hand crafted racecars being handed out, wrapped and sized up pajamas, age-appropriate filled stockings, age determined toys, a $25 gift card to Walmart for each child that registered for the event, and finally the chance to meet Santa Claus and his sleigh with some of his trusty friends.

Walking around and being a part of this event truly reminds you of the purposes of the holidays. Purpose in my eyes of making everyone happy, loved and cared for. Throughout the entire event, I can recall looking around at the children, their families, volunteers and even Santa Claus always having a huge smile on and truly passing the love to everyone around them. Yes, of course the children were getting presents because that’s a small part of it too. Brother Benno’s really went the extra mile this year and created happiness for the community. This was my first year participating in the event and I am beyond humbled by the efforts put forward. I cannot wait to contribute more next year and continue the traditions.

Ω

Thank You, North Coast Church

As part of our holiday celebrations, The Brother Benno Foundation has a special party before Christmas for our recovery program members. Each individual is given a $25 gift card and treated to a special meal for the day. This year, North Coast Church and its outreach coordinator Mary Bishop, provided the gift cards. In addition, they made a contribution to support the recovery program. We have been blessed to receive this support that helps to acknowledge the work the program members are doing one day at a time.

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Children’s Christmas Party Photos
SPOTLIGHT: MEET MONICA REYES

By Steve Oetting

Monica Reyes is the Food Rescue Manager at Brother Benno’s. Since assuming that role last May, she has worked as a liaison with organizations such as Feeding San Diego and the North County Foodbank, as well as local government entities, to ensure that useable food is “rescued” rather than sent to the landfill. Six days a week, Monica organizes a team of volunteers to make pickups from big box stores such as Walmart, Albertsons, and Target. She also coordinates with programs, including Produce Good, which provides excess produce from local growers.

Monica has also participated in school resource events at Mira Costa Community College’s Learning Center.

Monica recognizes and appreciates the “beautiful position” she is in. “I see the generosity of the community and am able to witness the gratitude of the guests when they are served wholesome food.” She is continually amazed by the heart and kindness of our community. She sees food rescue as an essential long-term component of both building a healthier community and protecting the environment.

As a graduate of the Brother Benno’s recovery program, Monica shares that the Brother Benno Foundation “gave me a new life.” In her spare time, Monica operates a pet care business and is studying to become a Pilates instructor. She is also in the process of organizing a grassroots effort to ensure that menstrual products are made available to those who need them. Monica is an invaluable part of the Brother Benno’s team.

The food received from the rescue program provides the lion’s share of the meals served at Brother Benno’s soup kitchen and its sack lunch program. Excess food is made available to church pantries, local rehabilitation facilities, and programs such as “Got Your Back,” which provides back-packs of food to some elementary school children.
Volunteer of the Month –
John McCaffrey

On December 14th, long-time volunteer John McCaffrey was recognized by the Oceanside Pacific Kiwanis club for his service to the Brother Benno Foundation. John helps format and produce this newsletter, monitors the info@brotherbenno.org email box, and writes grants for the Foundation. John and his wife have been serving the Thanksgiving meal for 20 years. This is how John got started volunteering at Brother Benno’s. We appreciate all of John’s hard work and dedication.

If you know a special Brother Benno’s volunteer, we are accepting nominations for volunteer of the month! Please email volunteers@brotherbenno.org and let us know what makes this volunteer special. If you would like to volunteer, please join us at our Volunteer Orientation and Tour on the first Saturday of each month at 9 a.m. at The Brother Benno Center. The next orientation/tour is on January 7, 2023.

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The PJ Angels Deliver

Once again, a group known as the “PJ Angels” generously donated 534 cozy, new jam-mies for our Children’s Christmas Party. These brand-new pajamas are wrapped and given out to children 15 and younger at our annual Christmas party. The PJ Angels have been providing new pajamas to Brother Benno’s for nine years. We are truly grateful for their support.

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Information & Online donations: brotherbenno.org
Follow Brother Benno’s online:
Facebook.com/BrotherBenno
Twitter.com/brotherbennos
Instagram.com/brotherbenno

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.
Memorials


All we have lost this year

Get Well
Pete Saraceno

Gently used furniture  Blankets  Baseball caps  Needs  Diapers size 5 and 6  Adult Unisex Diapers  Women’s underwear, sizes 4 and 5  Men’s 2x and 3x t-shirts  Baby wipes  Travel-size toothpaste  Travel-size shampoo  Travel-size body wash  Travel-size deodorant

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<td>San Luis Rey Mission</td>
<td>St. Thomas More</td>
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January 2023  Brother Benno’s Newsletter
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 Donate. We’ve expanded your donation options to include bank transfers, Venmo, Apple Pay, and Google Pay in addition to PayPal.

Brother Benno’s Services:

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<th>November 2022</th>
<th>Our 39th Year</th>
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<th>Our 39th Year</th>
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<td>Meals</td>
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Your donation is used each month at our main center and seven recovery and sober living 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.

Please Note Our Mailing address:
The Brother Benno Foundation
Post Office Box 308
Oceanside, CA 92049-0308

If you wish to drop off donations or deliver donations in person, our physical address is:
3260 Production Avenue
Oceanside, CA 92058

www.brotherbenno.org