Please use the enclosed envelope to make your tax-deductible donation to the Brother Benno Foundation.

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, case-worker support, nights of lodging, medical and mental health referrals, prescriptions, ID replacement, mail services, food packs, shelter for women and small children, men’s drug and alcohol recovery program, shelter for women in recovery, and assistance with rent, jobs, Social Security, and veterans’ issues. 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 Newsletter

“Uplifting The Dignity of Those We Serve”

July 2011

RECOVERY MEMBERS GET BOOST FROM “ALUMNI”

A group of men who found sobriety through the Recovery Program at Brother Benno’s have formed the Brother Benno Alumni Association in order to be of service to other alumni, as well as to current Program Members. “We had completed the Program,” one of the men said, “and now we want to help someone else. We had a good foundation in recovery and a new lease on life. We also knew we could help other guys by sharing our own stories—our failures as well as our successes.”

One of the greatest fears for almost all the Members is: How am I going to manage once I leave the Program? The Alumni often admit that they had the same fears, and they can give the new guys suggestions on ways to prepare. They can also mentor the newly sober while they’re still in the Program and after they’ve graduated. Brother Benno’s often becomes a family for the men. The love and support they receive from each other and from the volunteers helps them to succeed.

One of the ideas the Alumni group came up with has been very successful—sponsoring activities for current Members, Alumni, family members, and anyone else connected with Brother Benno’s. “It’s for anyone who has had the Brother Benno experience, even the guys who got kicked out of the Program,” another man said. “For them, the seed had been planted, and they did get sober later.”

A recent event was a trip to the USS Midway in San Diego, one of the most popular museums in the country. It was a huge success, with more than 40 people in attendance. The group also has barbeques, and some of the Alumni have formed a monthly meal-serving team at the Center.

One night a week, several of the Alumni attend a recovery meeting at Brother Benno’s Phase Two house, where they share their stories and offer support.

One Alumni member looks back on his ten-plus years of sobriety with a huge sense of gratitude. When he first came to Brother Benno’s, he’d been living in his car for a year. Very slowly, he gained back his life and found sobriety. During his tenure here, he worked with volunteer John Jarvie on various construction jobs at the Center and the Houses. He found he had a knack for the work; and he is now gainfully employed in that field, is married, and owns his own home.

Our services are the same for everyone without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability.

The Thrift Shop

3965 Mission Ave. (East of Albertsons) 760-967-7505

Shop open Mon-Sat 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. — Stop by to check out our Special of the Week Sales!!

Brother Benno Foundation, Inc.

P.O. Box 308, Oceanside, CA 92049

www.brotherbenno.org
EXPERIENCING THE BROTHER BENNO SCENE

by Barbara Ladwig

C’mon Along. I was wandering around the Center one Thursday morning, trying to track down this person and that for info for the newsletter. It suddenly occurred to me: Somebody must be handing out extra doses of happy pills this week! ’I’d been there on Monday and Wednesday, too, and the same lighthearted joyfulness had filled the air.

It wasn’t spring fever. Even though the calendar insisted spring had arrived, the weather was definitely stuck in winter. Black clouds, drizzles, gusty wind, and bone-rattling cold were still the order of the day. But inside the Center, sunlight ruled.

Laughter spilled out of the Intake Office, where Tom, Denise, Joe, and Diana were taking a break from servicing guests. Liz tried to introduce me to Kathy, who sits at the front desk when she isn’t running around doing anything anyone asks her to do. At first we pretended not to know each other, but then we had to admit to Liz that we’d already met. It was our accents that led us to each other—Kathy grew up in Milwaukee, and I in Sheboygan, 60 miles to the north. It must be the influence of Lake Michigan, because we both have that unmistakable Wisconsin accent. She’s younger than I am, but I tell her: After more than 50 years in California, I still can’t get the hang of sounding like a Californian.

Harold was unusually chipper that day, too. He was eager to share his memories of Rosemary Tucker, a long-time supporter who died recently. Dennis, another volunteer, visits with a man named Judy told him she’d been a stewards way back when. Then she said to him, “Can I get you anything? Coffee? Are you warm enough?” Harold said it was as if she’d slipped back into her job, taking care of others.

Dennis, another volunteer, visits with a man named Judy told him she’d been a stewards way back when. Then she said to him, “Can I get you anything? Coffee? Are you warm enough?” Harold said it was as if she’d slipped back into her job, taking care of others.

In Memoriam. It is with sadness that we learned of the death of Sam Doneneci. He was a 20-year member of the serving team from St. Elizabeth Seton Church in Carlsbad, and he also did tile work in several of the Brother Benno Houses. We offer our sympathy to his family.

Omega

“I know the world is filled with troubles and many injustices. But reality is as beautiful as it is ugly. I think it is just as important to sing about beautiful mornings as it is to talk about slums. I just couldn’t write anything without hope in it.”

~ Oscar Hammerstein II

Brother Benno's Furniture Sales
3242-B Production Ave.,ceanside (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.
Each Servant of the Poor brings his or her unique gifts to Brother Benno’s. **Diana Shields** is no exception.

Unlike most Servants, Diana came to us by way of being a Guest. After 25 years in the business world, the last nine with a good job and a comfortable salary, she joined the ranks of the unemployed due to the recession. After much searching, she was unable to find another job; and she decided she needed to go back to school to get her bachelor’s degree in business in order to be more competitive. But first, she came to Brother Benno’s to get help to meet the day-to-day needs for herself and her children.

She didn’t want to take help without giving back, she said, so she came in to volunteer. What she experienced changed the way she looked at her life, and also the lives of those whose needs were greater than hers.

As a Servant of the Poor, Diana helps Guests who find themselves unable to pay their rent or utility bills. She also fills in in the Intake Office. In both positions, she says, she can offer her own experiences. “When I needed help, I did a lot of research about where and what kinds of help are out there,” she said. “Now, if we are unable to help someone here at Brother Benno’s, I can refer them to other programs where they will be able to find what they need.” And being bilingual, she can step in when other volunteers can’t communicate with some of the Guests.

Diana still wants to go back to school, but now she’ll major in social work rather than business. “I know what they (our Guests) are feeling,” she said. “I know how to help them. People come in feeling so desperate, and I tell them, ‘It’s OK. Let’s take this one step at a time.’ I ask them, ‘Do you need help taking those steps?’” And she urges them to come back and let her know how things are going, and to see how she might follow up with what they’re doing.

She also said she feels it’s important to ask the Guests to be part of the solution. If they need $100 to solve a problem, and Brother Benno’s can give them only $50, what can they do to make up the difference? She said that, given a choice, they almost always find a way to participate in the solution. “I encourage people to be more proactive. They have to put forth the effort.”

Diana cited two examples of ways in which Brother Benno’s was able to change the lives of two Guests with a very small outlay of money, but a great deal of care and support.

A man who’d been homeless only a short time came in with an unusual problem. His teen-aged son was being removed from his mother’s house because of her drug problem, and the father would be awarded custody, except that he didn’t have a place to live. Diana referred him to Solutions for Change, which houses people for up to one year, while helping their clients find jobs and deal with some of their issues. They gave this man a two-week hotel voucher but said that the housing wouldn’t be available for another week.

At that point, the man came back to see Diana, and she was able to give him the extra one-week hotel voucher he needed, plus a bus pass so the son could get to school. They are now living at Solutions for Change. “It was just that little extra he needed that made all the difference,” Diana said.

The other person Diana—and several others at Brother Benno’s—helped was a woman on disability who’d been kicked out of the apartment she was sharing. “First we retrieved her walker and scooter from the man who kicked her out,” Diana said. “Then we put her up in a hotel for one night and told her to come back the next day, when we were able to contact her brother, who came to get her. Just that one night in the hotel made her feel such a sense of relief. We could see it in her face when she came back.”

**Continued on page 4....**
**AUXILIARY NEWS**
by Vikki Ramey

WHAT A TRIP! On June 3, 28 Auxiliary members and guests boarded the Royal Caribbean Rhapsody of Sea for a seven-day cruise to Alaska. Ports visited were Juneau, Skagway, Tracy Arm Fjord, and Victoria, BC. The weather was absolutely beautiful, and the sights were breath-taking. Many were able to see bears and whales; excursions included ziplining, dogsledding, hiking, kayaking, helicopter rides, and train rides. Our cabin winners, Chela Ortiz and Sharon Castano, had a wonderful time, best trip ever.

Father’s Day bags were distributed at the Center on June 18, with all men present receiving a bag of goodies, thanks to Claire Carter and Alicia Sullivan.

There might be a few seats still available for the Outback Steakhouse fundraiser on July 9. Proceeds will go for the purchase of backpacks and school supplies. Please contact Vicky Squires (760-724-7371). We will assemble the backpacks on August 12 in the warehouse, and they will be distributed to the children on August 13.

We still need a theme for this year’s luncheon on December 3. Give your ideas to Vera Bayliss; the winner will receive a prize. Also, don’t forget to come to our meetings and be eligible to take part in the taste-testing for the luncheon.

Opportunity baskets and money trees/frames are needed for the luncheon. Please let Sharon Tasker know the basket theme and amount donated.

Our next meeting will be on July 27.

**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__________________________ Donations $________________
Address__________________________________________________________
City, Sate, Zip Code__________________________________________________

**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

Ω