



PEOPLE WHO CARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

BROTHER BENNO'S NEWSLETTER

Uplifting the Dignity of Those We Serve

AUGUST 2024



LOOKING FORE-WARD
09/18/2024

THANK YOU, PELON

BY KATHLEEN DIEHLMANN

Craig "Pelon" Mercer rises before the sun and drives in the dark to the Brother Benno's Center where he prepares breakfast for hundreds of hungry people each morning.

You might have seen him recently with a cane and a limp but also with the same fierce determination and dedication that has guided him as the chef of The Brother Benno's kitchen since 2008. Pelon will be hanging up his apron and retiring at the end of July after 20 years with The Brother Benno Foundation.

Jan Roberts sums up what many of those at Brother Benno's feel about Pelon. "He is a miracle, coming from where he comes from and blessing us with his service to the kitchen and his dedication to all who come across his path. It has been my honor to have worked with him for so many years."

Pelon's legacy includes cooking thousands of nourishing, warm meals for the unsheltered and working poor in North San Diego County. "If you want the help, it's freely given here," Pelon explained

in a 2010 video. "There is nothing like Brother Benno's around here."

In addition to cooking meals, Pelon has mentored numerous men and women who participated in the Brother Benno Foundation's drug and alcohol recovery program.

"Pelon is a guy who gains the respect of people and makes them feel comfortable," said his friend

Ben Meyer. "He has a special way of encouraging people to realize their full potential. When Pelon believes in you (and he has seen and mentored so many people), it's a special feeling - it's the real deal. He's seen a

lot, he knows a lot, and he'll encourage you to grow."

Pelon himself is in recovery and he is grateful for all it did for him personally. "What the recovery program has done for me is help me clean my life up, regain my self-respect and esteem. It brought my faith in God back in my life," Pelon shared.

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www.brotherbenno.org

LOOKING FORE-WARD TO SEPTEMBER 18TH

BY AMY SELEICH, GOLF COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR

Brother Benno's September 18th **Golf Tournament** will be here soon! Golfing spots are gone, but there is still time to show your support by sponsoring a Hole, sponsoring an active-duty military golfer or offering an item in our Silent Auction.

Don't miss Title Sponsor, Outer-Known's **VIP Shopping Event** on

Tuesday, September 17, from 5 to 7p.m. at their store at the Carlsbad Forum. 25% of sales will be donated to Brother Benno's.

Check out the **KOTC Spectrum interview** with Paul McNamara, Executive Director, and Chuy Reyna, Co-Chair of the annual Golf Tournament for more event details. Ω

Thank You Sponsors & Supporters



WIN BIG FOR THOSE IN NEED (AND MAYBE YOU TOO!)

BY DINAMARIE AHEE

Back by popular demand, our Golf Tournament Online Silent Auction opens to the public on Friday, September 13th and will end at the close of the Tournament, September 18th.

Generously donated by local and regional businesses that care about the work you help us do, our Silent Auction offerings include many phenomenal items, such as, surfboards, golf gear, exquisite restaurants, celebrity memorabilia, resort vacations, and elite gift baskets.

You can take a peek of this year's auction items and place your bids any time from September 13th to

September 18th using the **auction link** on our website. Because this is both online and open at the event, bidders do not have to be present to win an item.

The Silent Auction is a large part of Brother Benno's biggest fundraiser. Bidding generously and often ensures positive change in North County. Your participation means you will be making a difference in the lives of the many people who need our help.

For more information, visit **our website** or reach out to **DinaMarie. Ahee@brotherbenno.org** Ω

"I needed some rental assistance and Darryl was able to save the day! The staff here is so kind and caring. Everyone I met came from a different background but were all so nice. Brother Bennos has a lot of resources for the community! I highly recommend them!!!! Thank God for Brother Bennos!!!!"

Rochelle Diane
Unsolicited Google Business
Review December 2023



CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!

Join us at our Charity Golf Tournament at Goat Hill Park on 9/18/2024.

Various opportunities and time blocks available.

To sign up, please fill out the Google Form linked here:

tinyurl.com/golf24volunteer

For any further questions, feel free to reach out to Catherine Shaw at auction@brotherbenno.org



Brother Benno Center

Monday - Friday
6:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Saturdays
10:00 AM - NOON

Closed
Sundays
New Year's Day
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Kaye Turpin
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Alice Jacobson
Vice Chairperson

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BOARD MEMBERS

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Joe McDevitt
Michael Moskowitz
Helen Parsons
Gregg Prather
Father Charles Wright

HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS

Mary Holguin
Dr. Richard Shlemmer

DONOR'S CORNER

Dear Friends, Supporters, and Donors of Brother Benno's,

We received permission from the Board at their off site in June, to move forward with developing a plan to provide Level 2 of service, as described by Harold back in the year 2000. What that means is that we are going to try and put together a plan for having folks move into self-sustainment.

To make it all work there are elements that we need to put together, for example, housing, clothing, food, employment and training. And, if it is a working poor mother with children living out of a car, and we do have guests in that condition, we will need childcare as well. The good news is that we have some of the elements already but need to work on the others.

This is a big project with plenty of work for everyone. So, if you think you might want to help out, please don't be shy and let me know.

We are also moving forward in trying to improve our shower area to better serve our guests. It is in need of some TLC and I think we could all agree, a shower changes your attitude on life. So, we started a direct mail campaign to help raise the money. It is called the "Power of a Shower." I hope you received contact regarding this campaign. We haven't done one in a long time, so we would appreciate your feedback.

We have a lot of irons in the fire, so if you want more info on a particular topic, please don't hesitate to ask.

Finally, we couldn't do it without you, so, thank you and - God bless you all!

Mac



ICYMI: In Case You Missed It

We are blessed to have The Brother Benno Foundation's story, services and events shared with the broader public. In case you missed these, the links will take you to the programs so you can listen and watch.



Links to both of the above are on our website:
<https://brotherbenno.org/news-and-events/media/>



Volunteer of the Year, John Caterino was interviewed by ABC 10 News at the beginning of July for their *Positive-San Diego* feature. Thank you John for your dedication to helping others!

Watch it on YouTube at <https://bit.ly/3WhjyJl>

CAUGHT IN THE ACT! Community Supporters & Volunteers Making a Difference

We are incredibly blessed and thankful for the support of our community, volunteers and donors. Unfortunately, we only capture a small fraction of these good deeds. If you have a photo you'd like to share, please send it to us at bbnewsletter@brotherbenno.org. We'd love to include your story!



The metal community came together to raise 22 bags of clothes for families in Oceanside. (Picture from *San Diego Metal Family's* July 13th FB post.)



Thanks to the incredible handiwork of a dedicated volunteer, **Joe**, this beautiful door provides a much needed upgrade to our mail services. Harold Kutler wrote, "One of the least understood of our services by the general public is the provision of a mailing address. This allows our guests to receive important materials such as disability checks, letters from family, and veteran's notifications. It also helps them when they apply for a job; prospective employers are not interested in someone without a mailing address." Offering mail service removes one hurdle to overcome as our homeless guests work towards a brighter future. Joe's and your generous support for this, and all our Center's services, makes a world of difference. Thank you.

OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Paul 'Mac' McNamara

Executive Director

DinaMarie Ahee

Administration Manager

Kathleen Diehlmann

Development Manager

Darryl Harris

Outreach Services Manager

Marina Pozdnyakova

Clothing Services Manager

Rob Sanchez

Essential Services Manager

Jim Shlemmer

Recovery Manager

Elias Velazquez

Communications and Volunteer Coordinator

James White

Facilities Manager

Craig Yates

Grant Manager

FOR CONTACT INFORMATION

[visit our website](#)



“Thank God for Brother Benno’s. They saved my life with all the services and my son went into the rehab, graduated and now is sober.”

The recovery program helped my son get his family back and life back on track.”

CORA R.



“Being imprisoned by addiction is a living hell. By interacting with the men and women in our recovery program, we become part of the key that will open the gate to their freedom.”

HAROLD KUTLER

**Brother Benno
Foundation
Recovery Program**

(760) 439-1244 ext.101
recovery@brotherbenno.org

**Changing people’s lives
through the
12 Steps of
Alcoholics Anonymous**

BROTHERHOOD IN RECOVERY: Supporting Each Other Through the Journey

BY STEVE SCHUMM

At the heart of the Brother Benno’s Foundation recovery program lies a powerful force for change: the bonds formed between men as they navigate the challenging path to sobriety together, creating a brotherhood that becomes instrumental in their collective healing and growth.

From the moment a new member enters the program, they are welcomed into a community of men who understand the struggles of addiction firsthand.

As members progress through Phase 1, they develop a routine of shared experiences. Daily volunteer work at the Brother Benno’s Foundation center provides opportunities for teamwork and mutual encouragement. Men work side by side, sharing stories, offering advice, and sometimes just lending a listening ear. These shared tasks foster a sense of purpose and camaraderie among the program members.

While each man works individually with his sponsor, the group dynamic plays a crucial role in this process. Members often gather informally to discuss their progress, challenges, and insights gained from working the 12 steps of AA. These conversations create an atmosphere of openness and vulnerability, allowing men to break down the walls of isolation that addiction often builds.

One of the most powerful aspects of peer support comes during moments of crisis. When a program member struggles with cravings or faces personal setbacks, his brothers in recovery rally around him. They offer words of encouragement,

share their own experiences of overcoming similar challenges, and sometimes simply provide a steady-ing presence. This support becomes a crucial lifeline, often making the difference between relapse and continued sobriety.

As members transition into Phase 2, the nature of their support evolves. Those who have been in the program longer become mentors to newer members. This act of giving back not only helps newcomers but also reinforces the mentors’ own commitment to recovery. Increased independence in Phase 2 also allows for deeper friendships to form, as men have more opportunities to connect outside of structured program activities.

Progress to Graduate Housing and Transitional Living, the bonds formed earlier continue to play a vital role. Graduates often return to share their successes and challenges, offering hope and inspiration to those still in the earlier phases. Lifelong friendships that extend far beyond their time in the program, create a support network that endures through the ups and downs of life in recovery.

By supporting each other through every stage of recovery, these men increase their chances of long-term sobriety and rediscover the joys of genuine human connection. This brotherhood becomes a foundation upon which they can rebuild their lives, one day at a time, surrounded by others who truly understand the journey.

Ω

...continued from page 1

Board member, **Jeff Bizzack**, shares his admiration for Pelon and what he has accomplished during his time at Brother Benno's. "He has served the community of Oceanside well and is a great example to others on how to give back in a loving way."

What's next for Pelon? He will continue to feed and care for a very special someone in his life, his mother. Brother Benno's wishes Pelon the best and he will be missed. Ω



Harold Kutler and Pelon



Serving Team from Mission San Luis Rey

♥♥♥ AUGUST SERVING TEAMS ♥♥♥

Thank you serving teams! The gifts of your time and caring service are received with heartfelt thanks.

MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			1 Oceanside Pacific Kiwanis	2 San Luis Rey Mission	3 St. Thomas More
5 St. Elizabeth Seton #1	6 St. John The Evangelist	7 Stephanie's Team	8 Servers R Us	9 St. Patrick's	10 San Rafael Parish
12 North Coast Methodist	13 Riverview Church	14 Carlsbad Hi- Noon Rotary	15 Ernest Packaging	16 St. Elizabeth Seton #2	17 Girlfriend's Care
19 Sunrise Kiwanis of Vista	20 <i>OPEN</i>	21 Friends of Brother Benno	22 Signal	23 Oceanside Sanctuary	24 Camp Pendleton Ortho. Dept.
26 <i>OPEN</i>	27 Rotary Club of Vista	28 San Luis Rey Methodist	29 <i>OPEN</i>	30 King of Kings	31 Nativity Men's Group

AUGUST NEEDS

CLOTHING & ACCESSORIES

- Men's pants (all sizes)
- Men's athletic shoes
- Men's belts
- Hoodies
- Hats (caps/beanies)
- Underwear - Men's & Women's (new)
- Socks - Men's & Women's (new & gently-worn)

- Adult Backpacks & Dufflebags (gently-used)
- Blankets
- Reusable Water Bottles

- Baby diapers - size 6

HYGIENE & PERSONAL CARE

- Disposable razors
- Neosporin - individual packets
- Travel-sized soap, shampoo, conditioner, lotion & tissue packs

FOOD & BEVERAGES

- Bottled waters, sodas, & juices
- Ziplock sandwich & snack bags



BROTHER BENNO'S

NEWSLETTER TEAM WANTS YOUR FEEDBACK!

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF OUR NEW LOOK?

WHAT STORIES DO YOU WANT TO HEAR MORE ABOUT?

EMAIL US AT:

bbnewsletter@brotherbenno.org

LEAVE A MESSAGE AT:
(760) 231-1674

MEMORIALS

Ron Alexander
 Dixie & Lou Bales
 Frank Barnet
 Brother Benno
 John & Edith Blaiser
 Andrea Boersma
 Roland Bond
 Bill Boster
 Agnus & Joan Boyd
 Bill Buckner
 Deacon Art & Mary Carr
 Anna Correia
 Don & Dorothea Daybell
 Don & Lael Dewhurst
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 Ehringer, OSB
 Myron Eichen
 Richard Farhquar
 William & Vennita
 Flanagan
 Louise Foussat
 Joe & Ida Friend

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 Bob Gleason
 Chance Hales
 Tom & Louise Hayward
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 Alice Jordan
 Ben Kouns
 Richard Kurtz
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 Harold & Kay Kutler
 Barbara Ladwig
 Bill & Louise Lakoff
 Ben & Ozelle Lewis
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 Bill & Joan Maloney
 Helene McGill
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 Peggy & Beverly Miville
 Monty, Natalie, &
 Michael Nares
 Zeferino & Dancy Nares
 Mary Nordstrom
 Nysewander Family
 Jim O'Connell
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 Kathryn D. Pent
 Mary Peterson
 Jane Pfau
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 Mary Pullman
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 Ron Schmid
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 Milton Silver
 Will Skinner
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 Virginia Sylwestrzak
 Harold Thompson
 Carol & Herb Thornberg
 Rosemary Tucker

Walter Ulloa
 June Williams
 Fred Williamson
 Andrew & Jane Yandura

Ida Acuna
 Ron Beckman
 Frank Beeson
 Donna Brown
 Bernadette Butler
 Timothy Diem
 Sister Mary Bernadette
 Janning
 Nick Jellison
 Ronald J. Kaye Colonal
 Marine Corps. Ret.
 Carolyn McCullogh
 Bill Pry
 Ronald Turner
 Virginia Vandermel
 Joan Zerkie

IN HONOR OF
 Emily Mead
 Amy Selich



Richard

1 review • 0 photos

★★★★★ 17 hours ago

I love Brother Bennos ! I was blessed to be there when Kay and Harold Kutler were there. 16+ years ago I'm still working and staying clean. Working at our own Day Center in El Centro it model's BBF. Been open for 1yr now

Shaping a future, one gift at a time.

Preserve your legacy and ensure the continuation of The Brother Benno Foundation's mission and services through a planned, future gift.

For more information about Planned Giving Basics, Gift Types, Benefits and more, contact Kathleen Diehlmann, (760) 888-7986 or send an email to

kathleen.diehlmann@brotherbenno.org



Brother Benno Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 308, Oceanside, CA 92049

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Harold & Kay Kutler - Pictured, Brother Benno

BROTHER BENNO THRIFT SHOP

“Helping the poor, one sale at a time”

3955 Mission Avenue
Oceanside, CA 92058

(Mission between Douglas and Rancho Del Oro)

SHOP

Tuesday - Friday

10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Saturday

10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

DONATE

Tuesday - Friday

10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Saturday

10:00 AM – noon

We welcome your sale-able furniture items. Please call 760-967-7507 for free pick up.

Please use the enclosed envelope to make your tax deductible donation to The Brother Benno Foundation or donate on-line under ‘How to Help’ at brotherbenno.org. Use your preferred service - Apple Pay, Google Pay, Venmo, PayPal, credit card or bank transfer. **Please note the Brother Benno Foundation’s mailing address:**

The Brother Benno Foundation, P.O. Box 308, Oceanside, CA 92049-0308



By the numbers: Your gifts are meeting needs

	June 2024	OUR 40th YEAR		JUNE 2024	OUR 40th YEAR
Meals	9,503	5,028,487	Blankets	160	54,364
Lodging	2,160	372,509	Tarps	102	9,125
Clothing	3,388	1,565,599	ID Vouchers	24	11,122
Showers	280	292,229	Lbs. of Food Rescued	154,192	4,672,022
Bus Passes	166	91,136	HUGS	1,000	1,030,244