



PEOPLE WHO CARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

BROTHER BENNO'S NEWSLETTER

Uplifting the Dignity of Those We Serve

DECEMBER 2024



A GIFT OF HOPE: Your support rebuilds a life

BY STEVEN JELINEK

Alex had recently hit rock bottom. Just released from prison, he was wondering how to rebuild his life. Without any support system, Alex was all alone when he came to Brother Benno's.

From the get-go, Alex was trying his best to re-enter into society. With the help of community outreach, he was able to get a California ID and a birth certificate. He eventually found a job. Amidst all his achievements, he began reflecting on this chapter of his life.

Alex began by saying that if it were not for Brother Benno's, he had no idea what he would have done. He said, "I imagine I would be out there stealing stuff somewhere, or maybe I'd be locked up again." He continued, "Without Brother Benno's, I had no hope, but you guys gave that to me."

He said the kindness he experienced every day from the staff as well as the support available here at Brother Benno's fostered his desire to re-integrate into society. He emphasized that without Brother Benno's he felt it would

have been impossible to rebuild his life, and that without us he had no idea what he would have done.

Alex's story is a testament to the power of compassion and community. With the unwavering support of Brother Benno's, individuals like Alex are given a second chance to rebuild their lives. Thank you for making this vital work possible. Your generosity empowers us to continue providing essential services and support to those in need.

We do not use the true names of our guests to protect their identity and uphold their dignity.

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*All are invited
to share our holiday meal
Christmas Day
10:00 AM - 11:30 AM
at The Center*

RESERVATIONS NOT REQUIRED

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THE GIFT OF PARTNERSHIPS

URGENT NEEDS

SERVING TEAMS CALENDAR

and more!



www.brotherbenno.org

THE POWER OF A SHOWER: UPDATE

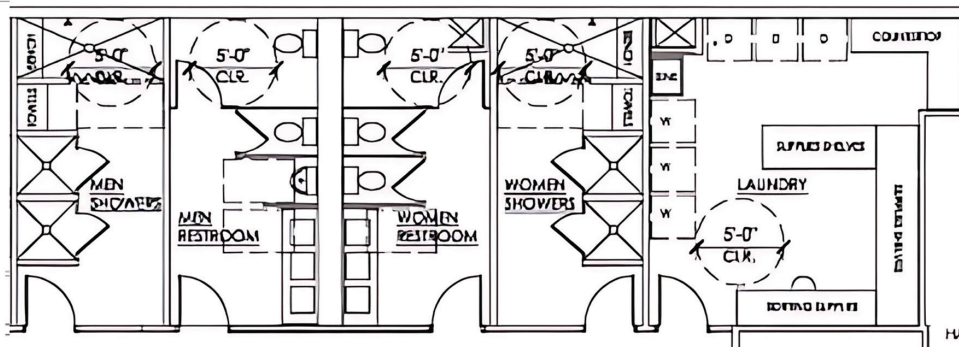
BY KATHLEEN DIEHLMANN

Brother Benno's wants to express its appreciation to those of you who made a contribution to our "Power of a Shower" campaign to remodel the showers and laundry room at the Brother Benno's Center. Thanks to your generosity, a local architect has been secured and we are able to share the design for the future renovation with you.

As stewards of your gifts, Brother Benno's recognizes the importance of keeping you updated on the progress of our various initiatives that we have going on at the Center. The showers are

me it was his first time here and he had just gotten his Benno's ID. He wanted to know if he could use the shower....

I got him directed towards the showers and my fellow program members got him situated with everything he needed. ...As I was in the process of cleaning up my coffee command center, I heard, 'Hey man, do you have a minute?' from behind me. I turned around to face that same guy, now freshly shaven and with a new pair of clothes. He was now looking me in the eye as he explained how he had been living in the riverbed for



Our new showers will have individual, closed door shower stalls for guest privacy and comfort and mens' and womens' wheelchair accessible showers. This remodel also includes a new, modern laundry facility.

in use daily, and this story relayed by a recovery program member on his first day at Brother Benno's illustrates how important and powerful a shower is:

"The experience that I had serving coffee that first day, is one that I will remember for the rest of my life. About 30 minutes, and a hundred or so coffee cups filled, a younger man walked up in line. We were about the same age, and he shared a STRIKING resemblance to my cousin who had tragically passed away from a fentanyl overdose. His outward appearance approaching the coffee station felt like a mirror to my own soul. This was a broken spirit who couldn't look me, or anyone else, in the eyes when he spoke. He quietly told

over a year and 'showering' each day in the ocean. He thanked me for helping him and told me that the shower at Benno's meant the absolute world to him. Then he said he felt like a human being again and that he loved me."

Brother Benno's believes in uplifting the dignity of those we serve. The power of a shower, clean clothes, a warm meal, and kindness make a difference. You, through your support, volunteer efforts and donations help make this happen. Brother Benno's continues to raise funds for the renovation of our showers. Thank you for your support.

<https://tinyurl.com/BBFSHOWER>



If you would like to donate by check, please use the form on page 7.

"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 Benno's has a lot of resources for the community! I highly recommend them!!!! Thank God for Brother Benno's!!!!"

Rochelle Diane
Unsolicited Google Business
Review December 2023



SATURDAY

DECEMBER 7 & 21
9:00 AM

No reservation required.

COME & JOIN US

Center tours are held twice a month. You can see what's new, what's changed, and also learn more about volunteer opportunities.



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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DONOR'S CORNER

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

A former colleague of mine used to say that incremental improvement leads to greatness over time. Thanks to all of you, we are making those incremental improvements. And quite candidly we need those improvements because unfortunately the need for our services is ever increasing.

As we make these small improvements, I continue to be impressed by the volunteers, supporters and staff who come up with some great ideas. In some cases, they are brilliant in their simplicity. It is also exciting to see the level of participation of our team trying to make things better. It makes working here a great job because one is surrounded by people who care about other people.

As a short update, we are still moving down the path of expanding our self-sustainment efforts. Harold

called self-sustainment our second level of service. There are a number of elements one needs to have in place to transition to self-sustainment from dependency. One of them is housing, and we think that opportunity is knocking. If it works out, we will really be changing/improving the service we can provide.

On a smaller but still important level, a piano was donated to us. We need to get it tuned but once done we would like to provide live music for our guests. So, if you can play the piano or have a family member who does and would like to give our guests a "concert" especially during this holiday season, please let me know.

So let me close with one of the great truths of our organization, we couldn't do it without you, so, thank you and -

God bless you all!

Mac



”

"the greatest gift that I've received from Brother Benno's has been this absolute blessing: I don't have to live one minute at a time, I GET to live one minute at a time. I have been given the gift of sobriety and the gift of ~~so~~ deep, meaningful, connection with the people around me."

~ Recovery Program Member

ICYMI: In Case You Missed It



Photo courtesy of the Hammond Climate Solutions Foundation

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at the Center on October 24th celebrating the installation of our solar power system. Dignitaries included representatives from **Pre-serve Calavera**, the **Hammond Climate Solutions Foundation**, **Aloha Solar**, **Senator Blakespear's office**, **Congressman Levin's office**, and **Assemblywoman Davies' office**. Learn more: <https://tinyurl.com/BBFSOLAR>

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

We deeply appreciate the support of our community partners, volunteers, and donors. Sadly, we only manage to document a small portion of these acts of kindness. If you have a photo or story you'd like to share, please send it to us at bbnewsletter@brotherbenno.org. We'd be delighted to feature your story! This month, we caught several **Thrift Shop Volunteers**. (Thanks **Jerry W.** for the pics!)



Inventory control is a never ending task at the Thrift Shop. That's where we caught **Cindy Wharton** helping out. Cindy has been a volunteer at the Thrift Shop for **8 years**. Our Thrift Shop can be gold mine for gifts, decorations and collectables, but without the warm-hearted and conscientious work of volunteers like Cindy, our Thrift Shop couldn't be.

We caught **Linda Baird** making certain the Thrift Shop clothing racks are well organized. Need a holiday outfit or ugly Christmas sweater - check out our Thrift Shop. Linda, in her **first year** with us, is one of our newest volunteers. We love her "good vibes" and willingness to step in and lend a hand to any project.



We caught **Linda Sweeney** helping to transform the Thrift Shop into a "winter wonderland." Starting with beautifully decorated Christmas trees, her talent is obvious. Linda has been a volunteer at the Thrift Shop for **13 years!** Her time, talents, and experience are invaluable and her contributions, priceless. What a shining star!

Making certain donated dinnerware sparkles and shines, **Nita Rodriguez** was caught cleaning recently donated home goods. Nita has been volunteering with Brother Benno's for **9 years**. In addition to the Thrift Shop, she also volunteers at the Center and serves on the Golf Committee. Her cheerful, team-positive, get-it-done work style is an inspiration.



OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Paul 'Mac' McNamara

Executive Director

DinaMarie Ahee

Deputy Executive Director

Kathleen Diehlmann

Development Manager

Darryl Harris

Outreach Services Manager

Marina Pozdnyakova

Clothing Services Manager

Rob Sanchez

Operations Manager

Jim Shlemmer

Recovery Manager

Elias Velazquez

Operations Deputy Volunteer Coordinator

Craig Yates

Grant Manager

FOR CONTACT INFORMATION

[visit our website](#)



CONGRATULATIONS TEAM!

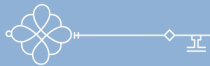
11/19/24 HEALTH INSPECTION

Score: 100% Grade: A

“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**

THE GIFT OF OPPORTUNITY: Donor Supported Scholarships Empower Students

BY V.C. SMITH

Twenty-three MiraCosta College and seventeen Palomar College students, all part of the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), recently received \$500 scholarships. This generous gift, made possible by your donations to the Brother Benno Foundation, is a testament to our shared commitment to empowering students from backgrounds that make pursuing a college education especially difficult.

Brother Benno’s scholarships are more than just money, they are a powerful tool for overcoming obstacles and achieving dreams. This year’s recipients have faced challenges such as poverty, homelessness, and addiction, yet their commitment to education is strong, and their perseverance is evident. As one Palomar recipient, **Skyler** shared in his thank you letter to the committee

“...I am incredibly honored and appreciative of your support in my

educational journey at Palomar College. Your recognition of my accomplishments and the challenges I have faced means a great deal to me. This scholarship will significantly alleviate my financial burdens and allow me to focus more on my studies and personal development.

Thank you once again for your generosity and belief in my potential. I am committed to making the most of this opportunity and hope to contribute positively to my community in the future.”

The scholarship program has been instrumental in supporting EOPS students’ educational dreams and career goals since 2008. Thanks to the generosity of your donations and the tireless efforts of the scholarship committee members **Joyce Cerimele, Kristal Cerimele, Belinda Smith, and Jerry Weseloh**, this initiative continues to empower students and strengthen our community.

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THE GIFT OF PARTNERSHIPS: Community Making a Difference This Holiday Season

BY V.C. SMITH

As we enter the season of Christmas joy and giving, our hearts are filled with gratitude for the partnerships illuminating our path. While many of us gather around festive tables, it’s also a time to remember that not everyone is so fortunate. Food insecurity remains a pressing issue, yet through our collective efforts we can bring hope to those in need.

Maria’s story embodies the spirit of our mission at Brother Benno’s. A senior living alone, Maria was struggling to make ends meet. The rising cost of living left her choosing between paying her bills and buy-

ing food. With a heavy heart Maria, reached out to us.

Thanks to our partnerships with **Feeding San Diego, The Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank**, and many local grocers and restaurants, we were able to step in. Our trucks, filled with bread, meat, dairy, and produce, arrive daily from generous businesses as far south as San Diego and as far west as Escondido. You may recognize many of them. They include **Albertson’s, Chick-fil-A, Costco, Chipotle, Produce for Good,**

[continued on page 6...](#)

....continued from page 5

San Diego Grocery Outlet, Sprouts Farmers Market, Target, Trader Joe's, Vons, Walmart and many

more. Once inspected to ensure it is safe this food is used for breakfast, shared in bagged lunches, and made available in our market.

With the help of our volunteers, Maria received enough food to see her through the holiday season. She no longer had to choose between heating her home and feeding herself. Maria experienced the warmth of community support and the joy of knowing she was not alone.

But Brother Benno's work doesn't stop with Maria. We share donated food with 31 community organizations. These include local food pantries, recovery houses, school PTAs, and even organizations in

Ensenada and Tecate, Mexico. As the wise saying goes, "Abundance is best enjoyed when it is shared with those in need."

As we embrace this season of giving, let's remember that food insecurity is a year-round challenge. By supporting Brother Benno's meals programs and our [Center market project](#)- whether through volunteering, donating goods, contributing funds, or being mindful of our consumption habits - each of us can make a tangible difference in the lives of our neighbors facing food insecurity.

**We change guests' names and combine some experiences to protect the dignity of those we serve. For this article, Maria is a composite of several guests. Maria may not be "real," but her experiences are.*

Ω



Oceanside Pacific Kiwanis

♥♥♥ DECEMBER 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
2 St. Elizabeth Seton #1	3 St. John The Evangelist	4 Stephanie's Team	5 Oceanside Pacific Kiwanis	6 San Luis Rey Mission	7 St. Thomas More
9 North Coast Methodist	10 Riverview Church	11 Carlsbad Hi-Noon Rotary	12 Servers R Us	13 St. Patrick's	14 San Rafael Parish
16 Sunrise Kiwanis of Vista	17 OPEN	18 Friends of Brother Benno	19 Ernest Packaging	20 St. Elizabeth Seton #2	21 Girlfriend's Care
23 OPEN	24 Rotary Club of Vista	25 Christmas	26 Signal	27 Oceanside Sanctuary	28 La Costa Valley Volunteers
30 Oceanside Pacific Kiwanis	31 Brother Benno's Volunteers and Staff				

THIS MONTH'S URGENT NEEDS

PLEASE DROP ITEMS OFF AT THE THRIFT SHOP

UNDERWEAR

men's & women's - new

SOCKS

men's & women's - new & gently-used

BLANKETS

VIEW ADDITIONAL ITEMS ON OUR [WEBSITE](#)



Beginning Dec. 1

↔ **NEW** ↔
THRIFT SHOP HOURS

& OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK!

MON. - SAT.
10:00 AM - 8:00 PM
and

SUNDAY
10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

HOLIDAY CLOSURES
Dec. 15, Dec. 25, Jan. 1

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
 Phyllis H. Dierlam
 Frank S. Dolley
 Anita H. Donahue
 Dorothy M. Donahue
 Fr. Luke Dougherty
 Roseanne Dreibelbis
 Fr. Abbot Claude
 Ehringer, OSB
 Myron Eichen
 Richard Farhquar
 William & Vennita
 Flanagan
 Louise Foussat

Joe & Ida Friend
 Mary Gerrity
 Bob Gleason
 Chance Hales
 Tom & Louise Hayward
 Elizabeth Holms
 John Jarvie
 Dorothy & Walter Jellig
 Alice Jordan
 Ben Kouns
 Richard Kurtz
 Carole Kutler
 Harold & Kay Kutler
 Barbara Ladwig
 Bill & Louise Lakoff
 Ben & Ozelle Lewis
 Helen Lucas
 Bill & Joan Maloney
 Helene McGill
 Douglas E Milovicz
 Rich Miro
 Peggy & Beverly Miville
 Monty, Natalie, &
 Michael Nares
 Zeferino & Dancy Nares
 Mary Nordstrom
 Nysewander Family

Jim O'Connell
 Bud & Blanche Ogle
 Ben Osgrove
 Kathryn D. Pent
 Mary Peterson
 Jane Pfau
 Ruth Hazel Pierson
 Alan Port
 Mary Pullman
 Catherine L. Quinlan
 Dora Ramirez
 Dick & Terry Riley
 Margaret Rossini
 Ann & Nick Sauer
 Ron Schmid
 Mary Shankle
 Naomi Shelton
 Bernice, Samuel &
 Milton Silver
 Will Skinner
 Ann Grier Smith
 Alva & Frances Snider
 Squirrell Family
 Jeanne St. Amant
 Mike Stendahl
 Margaret Stephan
 Virginia Sylwestrzak

Harold Thompson
 Carol & Herb Thornberg
 Rosemary Tucker
 Walter Ulloa
 June Williams
 Fred Williamson
 Andrew & Jane Yandura

Ron Beckman
 Frank Beeson
 Rick Blomberg
 Donna J Brown
 Aliliot Claude OSB
 Bill Daley
 Deacon Ron Diem
 Timothy Diem
 Diana Garot
 Toni Keane
 Larry and Basel Lester
 Dr. Mike McCarthy
 Tim McCoy
 Carl Montage
 Marie Pry
 Virginia and Ray Walz

IN HONOR OF

Harold and Kay Kutler

Brother Benno's would be profoundly grateful for an online or mailed donation to our **Indoor Market Project** this **Giving Tuesday, Dec. 3rd**. Make it possible for guests to select the food they need that fulfills their unique nutritional requirements and family needs.

You can make this happen.



CLICK ON THE IMAGE TO DONATE ONLINE or <https://tinyurl.com/BBFMARKET>

GIVING TUESDAY MARKET PROJECT

CUT AND MAIL WITH YOUR CHECK TO

THE BROTHER BENNO FOUNDATION
 P.O. BOX 308, OCEANSIDE, CA 92049

YOUR NAME

STREET ADDRESS

CITY

ZIP CODE _____

EMAIL (optional)

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

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 Oceanside, California
PERMIT NO. 166



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)

NEW HOURS!

Monday - Saturday
 10:00 AM – 8:00 PM
Sunday
 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM

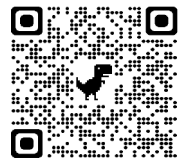
DONATE

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

	OCTOBER 2024	OUR 41st YEAR		OCTOBER 2024	OUR 41st YEAR
Meals	8,403	5,063,920	Blankets	95	54,622
Market Visits	3,628	6,493	Tarps	100	9,527
Clothing	4,378	1,580,793	ID Vouchers	22	11,243
Showers	347	293,803	Lbs. of Food Rescued	163,000	5,266,787
Bus Passes	237	92,076	HUGS	1,000	1,034,244