



PEOPLE WHO CARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

BROTHER BENNO'S NEWSLETTER

Uplifting the Dignity of Those We Serve

JUNE 2025



In Tribute to Dr. Richard Shlemmer: A Founding Heart of Brother Benno's

BY JOE MCDEVITT, CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We are deeply saddened to share the passing of **Dr. Richard “Dick” Shlemmer**, one of the original founders of Brother Benno's and a guiding presence in our mission for over four decades. Just months after the loss of his beloved wife, **JoAnne**, Dick passed away; rejoining the partner with whom he shared not only a beautiful life, but a legacy of compassion and service that has shaped this Foundation from the very beginning.

Dick's impact on Brother Benno's cannot be overstated. From his early leadership on the Board

of Directors to his years as an honorary board member, Dick combined thoughtful vision with a humble heart. He was never one to seek the spotlight, but his wisdom, faith, and quiet strength influenced every major chapter of our growth.



He had a remarkable gift: the ability to lead without fanfare and serve without condition. Whether offering encouragement to volunteers and recovery program members, sharing insights during critical decisions, or simply listening with deep attention to our guests, Dick selfless service made an impact wherever

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ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

A SPECIAL
VOLUNTEER

DONOR'S
CORNER

CITA

WOODNEXT GIFT

RECOVERY
CAMPING TRIP

SERVING TEAMS
CALENDAR

and more!



www.brotherbenno.org

A Reflection On A Special Volunteer: Mary Holguin

BY KATHLEEN DIEHLMANN AND CARMELINA REYES-RODRIGUEZ

On April 2, 2025, **Mary Holguin**, an outstanding Brother Benno's volunteer earned her angel wings. Mary passed away at the age of 84.

Mary volunteered at Brother Benno's for over 20 years. She mostly served in the Outreach Office. She helped save many people from homelessness through her work providing rental and utility assistance. In 2022, she was named Volunteer of the Year. In addition, she served on the Board of Directors from 2019 to 2022.

A friend of Mary's recently shared a remarkable story. Volunteering at Brother Benno's, Mary helped assist people with many resources, including purchasing one-way bus tickets for individuals to return home.

One day, as Mary was helping a guest and arranging to buy her a bus ticket, she looked down at the woman's bare feet. It turns out that as the guest got

on the bus, she was wearing Mary's shoes. Mary was now barefoot, waving goodbye with a huge smile.

Mary's beautiful smile is one of the things all of us at the Brother Benno Foundation will remember. Mary was part of the Brother Benno family. She was close friends with many volunteers. However, she was especially close to those in the accounting

department since she worked hand-in-hand with them to provide financial support to those we serve.

Mary, affectionately known in her family as "Grandma Shamu" and "Grandma Ocean" is survived by her two daughters **Margaret** and **Carmen** as well as many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and even great-great grandchildren. Mary Holguin will be missed by all of those who knew and loved her.

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"I am a client of Brother Benno's for many years. They are God sent. I lost my whole family. I was homeless for 7 years, been in many shelters and programs but because of the caring staff, too many names of volunteers, just wanted to say thank you and God Bless."

M.E. Lopez, Guest
Brother Benno Center



**SATURDAY
JUNE 7 & 21
9:00 AM**

*No reservation
required*

*"The personal
satisfaction I receive
from seeing firsthand
what Brother Benno's
does for the homeless
makes it all
worthwhile."*

~

John Jarvie

Brother Benno Center

Monday - Friday
6:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Saturdays
Brunch
9:30 AM - 11:30 AM
Warehouse
9:00 AM - 11:30 AM

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



Board of Directors

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Joe McDevitt
Chairperson

Jeff Epp
Vice Chairperson

Gregg Prather
Secretary

Peter Joyce
Treasurer

BOARD MEMBERS

Jeff Bizzack
Father Charles Wright
O.S.B.

HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS

Dan Boone
Dr. Patrick Gilligan
Helen Parsons

DONOR'S CORNER

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

As I'm sure you've experienced, we have a good staff and quality volunteers working the various aspects of the organization. As a friend of mine often said, incremental improvement leads to greatness over time. That has been a philosophy that the staff and volunteers have adopted. And I would offer we have slowly improved our capacity to serve our guests due to this philosophy. As an example, the Newsletter has received incremental improvement. The editors have made changes over time to the structure, size and content of the Newsletter. And we've received some very positive comments to those changes.

Yet despite those changes, our feedback is that our readers want more information about what is going on at the organization. And so after reviewing the structure of the Newsletter, we are going to make some

improvements. The following is a summary of those improvements:

1. The names listed on the Memorial page will be permanently transferred to the Memorial Plaque at the Center.
2. Only recent losses of our Brother Benno family members will be listed in the Newsletter.
3. The November Newsletter will have a remembrance theme and all family members who have been lost will be listed along with selected stories about their impact and growth of the organization.

Your input is important to us. So please continue to give us your input as we strive to give our supporters the best service and product possible.

Finally, let me close once again 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



*"We are going to love you until you can love yourself."
~ A Recovery Program Mentor*

Often those who are in the grips of an addiction have such a loathing for themselves that they don't believe anyone could ever love them again. Having been there themselves,

program mentors know that experiencing love from someone else can eventually bring a person to the point where self-love is again possible. **Thank you for making this possible.**

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!



Pants and socks and underwear, oh my! We caught an early morning clothing distribution led by volunteers from **Grace Chapel**. Thank you for bringing much needed clothing items (and dignity) to those in need!

OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Paul 'Mac' McNamara

Executive Director

DinaMarie Ahee

Deputy Executive Director

Kathleen Diehlmann

Development Director

Darryl Harris

Outreach Services Director

Marina Pozdnyakova

Clothing Services Director

Rob Sanchez

Operations Director

Jim Shlemmer

Recovery Director

Elias Velazquez

*Information Director
Volunteer Coordinator*

Craig Yates

Accounting Director

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

WoodNext Foundation's Support Benefits Brother Benno's

By Kathleen Diehlmann and Susan Somers

For the fourth consecutive year, the Brother Benno Foundation received a \$50,000 gift from the **WoodNext Foundation**, which Roku founder and Chief Executive Officer **Anthony Wood**, and his wife, **Susan**, created.

The grant to Brother Benno's fits with the organization's focus on addressing the root causes of homelessness and systemic mental health problems.

"The WoodNext Foundation gift will help Brother Benno's provide more critical need services to our community's most vulnerable citizens. We're grateful for their support," said Brother Benno's Executive Director **Paul "Mac" McNamara**.

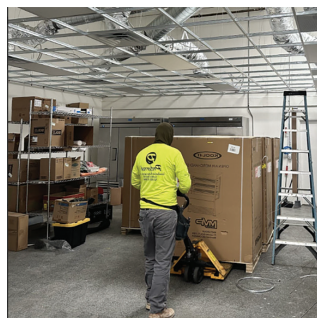
The WoodNext Foundation's philanthropic efforts are guided by its overall mission to advance human progress and remove obstacles to a fulfilling life.

The WoodNext Foundation makes grants and investments in a variety of areas, including scientific and biomedical research, mental health, homelessness, education, nature conservation, disaster recovery, and economic opportunity, with a focus on addressing root causes. For more information, please visit www.woodnext.org.

There are many ways to support Brother Benno's mission. Cash donations, volunteering, clothing donations, shopping at the thrift shop, hosting a clothing or donation drive, funding a college scholarship for an educationally or socially disadvantaged student, donating a vehicle and planned giving are just a few ways to get involved.

For more information, please visit <https://brotherbenno.org/how-to-help/>

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Focused & Making Progress!

With a generous donation for a commercial refrigerator for the Indoor Market, the **San Diego County Employees Charitable Organization (CECO)** has gotten us closer to completion! **Thank you CECO!**

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A First for Many: Recovery Members Go Camping at Dixon Lake

BY ROB SANCHEZ, OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

Earlier this month, members of Brother Benno's Recovery Program took part in their first annual camping trip at scenic Dixon Lake in Escondido.

It was a weekend filled with nature, new experiences, and meaningful connections.

For many of our participants, this was their very first time camping and fishing. Surrounded by the quiet beauty of the lake, tall pines, and wide-open

skies, they experienced a sense of peace and joy that's hard to find in day-to-day life. Campfires, shared meals, and laughter created lasting memories and a renewed sense of community.

The trip wasn't just about recreation, it was a powerful reminder of the growth and healing that's possible through recovery. Time outdoors

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San Rafael Parish Serving Team

♥♥♥ JUNE SERVING TEAMS ♥♥♥

Thank you serving teams! The gifts of your time and compassionate 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 OPEN	13 St. Patrick's	14 OPEN
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 San Rafael Parish	24 Rotary Club of Vista	25 San Luis Rey Methodist	26 Signal	27 Oceanside Sanctuary	28 La Costa Valley Volunteers
30 Oceanside Pacific Kiwanis	Would you like to serve? Email servingteams@brotherbenno.org				

THIS MONTH'S URGENT NEEDS

MEN'S UNDERWEAR
small and medium

WOMEN'S UNDERWEAR
small and medium

SOCKS



Kindly deliver your donations to the Thrift Shop

MONDAY - FRIDAY
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

SATURDAY
10:00 AM - NOON

VIEW our Donation Guide



JUNE MEMORIALS



Antonio and Perla Dimapilis
Robert Hendrix
William Boyle
Dr. Richard and JoAnne Shlemmer

The Perpetual Memorials
list can be viewed here
<https://tinyurl.com/BBFMemorials>

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he was. His presence was a steadying force, especially during times of change, and his love for the mission never wavered.

JoAnne was his steadfast partner in all things, including their work at Brother Benno's. While we honor them both, we lift up Dick's extraordinary devotion and the legacy he leaves behind: a Foundation stronger, kinder, and more faithful because he helped build it.

To the Shlemmer family, we offer our love, prayers, and heartfelt thanks. Dick's life reminds us what it means to serve with grace, to lead with humility, and to love without limits.

His memory will continue to guide us quietly, faithfully, and always.

Rest in Peace our friend.

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provided space for reflection, gratitude, and hope for the journey ahead.

We would like to express our gratitude for the generosity of our supporters and those who donated items for the trip. Thanks to you, we were

able to offer this unforgettable experience to those rebuilding their lives.

We look forward to making this trip an annual tradition, continuing to build bonds, celebrate milestones, and create new stories of transformation.

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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)

OPEN EVERY DAY!

Monday - Saturday

10:00 AM – 8:00 PM

Sunday

10:00 AM – 6:00 PM

DONATE

Monday - Friday

10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

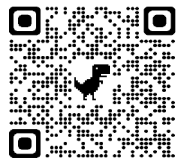
Saturday

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

	APRIL 2025	OUR 41st YEAR		APRIL 2025	OUR 41st YEAR
Meals	7,943	5,111,157	Blankets	226	55,824
Market Visits	3,908	28,241	Tarps	95	10,131
Clothing	3,810	1,603,439	ID Vouchers	37	11,435
Showers	278	295,551	Lbs. of Food Rescued	264,734	6,355,160
Bus Passes	208	93,488	HUGS	1,000	1,040,244