



PEOPLE WHO CARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

BROTHER BENNO'S NEWSLETTER

Uplifting the Dignity of Those We Serve

FEBRUARY 2026



YOU ARE THE LIGHT: How Your Generosity Helps Our Neighbors Emerge from Winter

BY V.C. SMITH, Volunteer Contributor

Every February 2nd, the rest of the country waits for a groundhog to predict spring's arrival, a tradition that feels charmingly distant when it's already 70 degrees and sunny here. But the deeper meaning transcends weather. It's a lighthearted tradition, that carries a more profound truth: we all need hope that brighter days are ahead. For many of our homeless neighbors and those who are struggling, you are the ones helping them emerge into the light.

In the movie "Groundhog Day," the main character relives the same day over and over until he transforms his life. Many we serve know what it feels like to be stuck in that loop with the same struggles, the same barriers, day after day. But because of donors and volunteers like you, Brother Benno's helps break those cycles:

- Your food donations and volun-

teer hours ensure no one faces another day of hunger.

- Your financial support funds our supportive services staff and addiction recovery program, which helps individuals rewrite their stories.
- Your contributions of clothing, hygiene items, and necessities lift the burden that keeps people from moving forward.
- Your time and presence remind our neighbors they are seen, valued, and worthy of dignity.

You are not waiting for predictions. You show up. You give. You serve. You are the warmth that helps our neighbors emerge from the shadows of homelessness, poverty, and addiction.

Because of your generosity, spring isn't just coming—it's already here. **Thank you for being the light our neighbors need.**

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IN MEMORIAM: DANIEL BOONE

UNPARALLELED PRESSURE

CITA

SERVING TEAMS CALENDAR

and more!



www.brotherbenno.org

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: Why we give

We invite you to read Mike and Mary Curtius' inspiring story of connection and purpose. Brother Benno's is blessed to share this perspective of giving from two of our generous supporters. There are many reasons someone might choose to donate to the Brother Benno Foundation. As you'll discover in their own words, their commitment to the Brother Benno Foundation's work—from providing essential meals to supporting addiction recovery—flows directly from the values built through their faith and personal experiences. If you are interested in sharing your own "why," please email Kathleen Diehlmann (kathleen.diehlmann@brotherbenno.org).

We were introduced to the ministry of Brother Benno not long after we moved to Carlsbad in 1995 and started attending St. Patrick Church. Matthew 25:40 reminds us that whatever we do to the least of our brothers and sisters, we do to Jesus himself.

Having raised four children, we now had more time and resources to devote to charitable organizations. We delivered grocery bags of food to struggling families in the parish. We went with Corazon groups to Tijuana to build houses for

the poor. We picked up day old foods from supermarkets.

Also, we became good friends with **Dick** and **JoAnne Shlemmer**, who were deeply involved with Brother Benno's in nearby Oceanside. Our concern increased for the homeless and those with mental health issues, including addiction, after visiting the facilities and reading the newsletters.

At the same time, Mother Teresa, now St. Teresa of Calcutta, inspired us to help the less fortunate. This one quote, in particular, resonates: "In these times...everybody's in a rush, and on the way there are people falling down, who are not able to compete. These are the ones we want to love and serve and take care of". We have been involved in pro-life efforts in our community, which includes caring for the disadvantaged.

In addition, Pope Francis emphasized this perspective, saying: "You pray for the hungry. Then you feed them. That's how prayer works." So, we decided that God was leading us to actively support various organizations with outreach to the poor, such as Brother Benno's and Fr. Joe's Villages.

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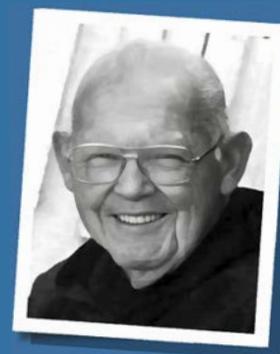
"I am a client of Brother Benno's for many years. They are God sent. I lost my whole family. I was homeless for 7 years, been in many shelters and programs but because of the caring staff, too many names of volunteers, just wanted to say thank you and God Bless."

M.E. Lopez, Guest
Brother Benno Center



REMEMBERING
BROTHER BENNO
GARRITY

FEB. 25, 1910 - OCT. 29, 1992



SATURDAY

FEBRUARY

7 & 21

9:00 AM

*No reservation
required*

Brother Benno Center

Monday - Friday
6:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Saturdays
Brunch
9:30 AM - 11:30 AM

INDOOR MARKET
6:30 AM - 10:00 AM

Closed
Sundays & Federal
Holidays*

* Breakfast & sack lunches will be available on most holidays. Exceptions are:
New Year's Day
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day



Board of Directors

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Jeff Epp
Chairperson

Joe McDevitt
Vice Chairperson

Gregg Prather
Secretary

Peter Joyce
Treasurer

BOARD MEMBERS

Jeff Bizzack
Tara McGrath
Father Charles Wright
O.S.B.

HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS

Dr. Patrick Gilligan
Helen Parsons

DONOR'S CORNER

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

As you all know it takes time, talent and treasure to run Brother Benno's. The first two are almost easy to achieve based on the strength of our volunteers, and dedication of our full-time and part-time staff. The third, treasure, is always what I worry about as the Executive Director. Do we have enough money to support our programs and provide the services our community needs?

Well, the good news is that we reached the halfway point of this fiscal year and we are doing well. That's because of the generosity of our wonderful supporters – you. A big thank you is in order and a big pat on the back.

An interesting fact is that during our 42 years of existence less than 1% of our revenue comes from government funding. I personally think that is really an exceptional compliment to the Brother Benno family and is in keeping with Harold's

dream of creating a community to help the "least of these."

Our new year is off to a great start. We are currently refurbishing the Firestone house and making good progress. It is a bit of an inconvenience to our program members living there, but they are co-existing with the work and its inconvenience without complaint.

Our Capital Campaign is also on the verge of kicking off. Once we get that rolling our Brother Benno's capacity will be significantly expanded. One of the elements of that campaign is to make significant in-roads to complete Harold's vision of not only supporting our guests but making them self-sufficient. It is pretty exciting around here as we get closer to that goal.

Finally, let me close once again with one of the great truths of our organization, we couldn't do what we do without you, so, thank you and -

God bless you all!
Mac



Can you help us find the perfect fit?

Brother Benno's is looking for energetic, experienced and compassionate individuals for our Indoor Market. Two positions are available - a full time assistant manager and part-time associate. Help us find the perfect fit! Share our *Indeed* employment platform link for more information <https://www.indeed.com/>.

IN MEMORIAM: Daniel Boone

BY KATHLEEN DIEHLMANN, Director of Development

Former Treasurer and Former Board Member, **Daniel Boone**, died on December 26, 2025. He was 96 years old.

Dan was a dedicated servant of the Brother Benno Foundation and a devoted volunteer. He volunteered with Brother Benno's for over 30 years.



Funeral services were held on January 13, 2026, at the San Luis Rey Mission. During the Gospel, at Daniel's funeral service, the priest read Matthew 25:31-46. The Brother Benno Foundation's mission is based upon this passage in the Bible. Including this reading was moving to those members of his Brother Benno's "family" who attended the service.

He is survived by the love of his life, **Alma Boone**. Both Dan and Alma supported Brother Benno's in many ways, including their volunteer work at the Thrift Shop and as members of the Auxiliary. Dan also served as the head of the ac-

counting department for many years until he stepped down in 2020.

"Over ten years ago, there was a time when I would give Daniel a ride early in the morning when his car was out of service," a staff member reflected. "He was in his '80s at the time. These rides at 5:00 a.m. became the highlight of my day. Daniel would tell me stories about his life.

The stories that made the biggest impact were always about his wife Alma. Daniel and Alma met when they were barely adults. Every time Daniel told a story about Alma the eighty something year old man would disappear, and a young man would shine and sparkle through his eyes from the depths of his soul. During those conversations something inside of me healed. That is the gift Daniel (and Alma) gave to me."

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OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Paul 'Mac' McNamara

Executive Director

DinaMarie Ahee

Deputy Executive Director

Kathleen Diehlmann

Development Director

Darryl Harris

Supportive Services Director

Emily Hasting

*Grants Director
Food Recovery and
Redistribution 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](#)



“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



At The Brother Benno Foundation, we respect everyone who comes to us for help – and many are working toward a fresh start in life. So while their stories are true, guest names and images may have been changed to protect their privacy. Thank you for understanding.

UNPARALLELED PRESSURE: Your Generosity Makes All the Difference

BY V.C. SMITH, Volunteer Contributor

When **Steven Jelinek** joined Brother Benno's Supportive Services team in August 2023, he watched something remarkable happen each month. Thanks to donors like you, rental assistance funding would last several weeks—sometimes stretching nearly to the end of the month, giving families the breathing room they desperately needed.

Fast forward to late 2025, the need exploded in ways he never could have imagined. Those same funds that once lasted weeks began disappearing in just 2-3 days as desperate families came to Brother Benno's for help. Recently, Steven shared something that's never happened before: every available dollar was claimed in a single day—gone before many families even had a chance to apply in the final months of 2025.

The reality is sobering. More families in our community are facing eviction than ever before. The numbers from 2025 tell a stark story of just how much the crisis has intensified:

- ▶ July - 65 applicants
- ▶ Aug. - 64 applicants
- ▶ Sept. - 54 applicants

- ▶ Oct. - 90 applicants
- ▶ Nov. - 110 applicants
- ▶ Dec. - 150 applicants

That's nearly triple the need in just six months. We're seeing working families, retirees on fixed incomes, and people who've been self-sufficient their entire lives suddenly unable to make rent.

Here's the truth: **Because of your faithful giving, we've been able to maintain our level of rental assistance support.** But the need is outpacing even the most generous months we've ever seen. Each application represents real people—a grandmother on Social Security who can't keep up with rent increases, a family still recovering from a medical emergency, a neighbor who's worked hard their whole life but hit an unexpected crisis they can't overcome alone.

You are the only reason Brother Benno's can answer these calls for help. Your donations have kept roofs over heads and families together through some of the most challenging situations our community has ever faced. Without your continued

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CAUGHT IN THE ACT!

A few of the many volunteers who served up warmth, laughter, love & a hot holiday meal this past Christmas. Brother Benno's is truly blessed. You are true gifts!



♥ ♥ ♥ FEBRUARY SERVING TEAMS ♥ ♥ ♥

With heartfelt thanks, we accept your gifts of your time & loving service.

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 San Rafael Parish
16 Sunrise Kiwanis of Vista	17 St. John The Evangelist	18 Friends of Brother Benno	19 Ernest Packaging	20 St. Elizabeth Seton #2	21 Girlfriend's Care
23 San Luis Rey Mission	24 Rotary Club of San Marcos	25 San Luis Rey Methodist	26 Signal	27 Oceanside Sanctuary	28 La Costa Valley Volunteers

WE HAVE OPENINGS! Every orange "OPEN" in the calendar is an opportunity to serve. Interested? 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



MEMORIALS



IN HONOR OF

Marcy & Richard
Bernier
Joyce Cerimele

Holy Family Ministry
Ron Lamb
Alice M

Jan Roberts
Pete Schultz
Jake Watkins

IN MEMORY OF

Joe Balm
Ron Beckman
MaryAnn George
Michael Chapa
Susan Chitwood
Charlie (Frederick H.) Brown
John Edward Culbertson
Peggy Collins
Will Daley
Joe Galizio
Lew Gary
Chance Hales

Dick Newell
Althea Hartig
William Justus
Thomas Kennedy
Marilyn Linehan
Mary M. Looker
Joseph Lutwack
Bert Manuel Jr.
Helen, Walter & Beau McEwen
Mom & Dad dear friends of
BB
Howard Noack

Our Parents
Ervin Poka Jr.
Paige Ritchie
Dr. Richard Shlemmer
Milton Silver
Samuel & Bessie Silver
Jack & Bobbie Thill
Family & Friends who passed
in 2024/2025

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

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Finally, our hope is that other people like us, hoping to make a direct impact on people in need who may not have had the loving families we had, or are burdened with serious physical and mental conditions, will realize Brother

Benno's is deserving of our generosity as they show love and compassion for these people, our neighbors.

May God bless you all.

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... continued from page 5

support, many of these families would have nowhere else to turn.

Thanks to you, thousands of households have avoided homelessness and held onto the stability every family deserves. That's thousands of stories where fear turned to relief, where a helping hand arrived just in time. But right now, we need that helping hand more

than ever.

The need may be unprecedented—and frankly, overwhelming at times, but so is your kindness. The crisis is real, the numbers are staggering, and families are counting on us. Together, we're the safety net ensuring that no family in our community has to choose between keeping a roof overhead and putting food on the table.

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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

	DECEMBER 2025	OUR 42nd YEAR		DECEMBER 2025	OUR 42nd YEAR
Meals	8,290	5,180,581	Blankets	224	57,108
Market Visits	2,980	56,348	Tarps	123	11,028
Clothing	4,230	1,635,286	ID Vouchers	33	11,745
Showers	515	298,647	Lbs. of Food Rescued	129,382	7,439,575
Bus Passes	344	95,671	HUGS	1,000	1,048,244