



PEOPLE WHO CARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

# BROTHER BENNO'S NEWSLETTER

*Uplifting the Dignity of Those We Serve*

APRIL 2026



## THE STRENGTH BEHIND OUR SERVICE: Volunteers in Action

BY ELIAS VELAZQUEZ, Information Director

Over the past year, one constant has remained at the center of Brother Benno's work: the people who give their time to make it possible. While our programs have expanded and the number of services we provide has steadily increased, it is our volunteers who ensure that growth translates into meaningful support for every guest we serve.

In the last calendar year, we saw a measurable rise in demand across nearly all areas of operation, from daily meal services to clothing distribution and case management support. Meeting that demand required more than infrastructure; it required human capacity. Volunteers filled that need. Their consistency and willingness to step into evolving roles allowed us to maintain both the quality and dignity of our services, even as volume increased.

What distinguishes our volunteer base is not just participation, but adaptability. As new challenges emerged, volunteers adjusted alongside staff, often taking on unfamiliar responsibilities with minimal hesitation. Whether assisting in meal preparation during peak hours, organizing donations, or supporting administrative functions, their contributions directly impacted our ability to operate efficiently.

A significant milestone this year was the opening of our free indoor market in September. This new initiative represented a shift toward a more accessible, client-choice model of distribution, one that required careful coordination and sustained staffing. From its launch, volunteers played a central role in bringing the market to life. Many stepped in to help

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GET "FRAMED"**

**YOUR HEART  
HAS WINGS**

**SERVING TEAMS  
CALENDAR**

*and more!*



[www.brotherbenno.org](http://www.brotherbenno.org)

## ANGELA KUHN JOINS THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We are excited to share that Brother Benno's named U.S. Marine Corps veteran **Angela Kuhn** to its board of directors.

Kuhn spent 15 years in the U.S. Marine Corps as a communications officer and attorney. She represented service members in courts-martial and administrative proceedings and led teams. She received the Meritorious Service and the Navy-Marine Corps Achievement medals for her service.

Kuhn earned her juris doctor degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School and her bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Chicago. She is pursuing a Master of Business for Veterans degree at the University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business.

Kuhn, who spent nearly three years working for the Marine

Corps Recruit Depot Foundation as interim and deputy executive director, said she's at her best leading teams and turning ideas into action.

"I'm especially passionate about ventures at the intersection of innovation and social impact," she wrote. "My goal is to build organizations that are not only profitable, but also purposeful."

Kuhn has volunteered extensively at Brother Benno's thrift store; from this experience, she absorbed the nonprofit's mission.

"At the thrift store, I learned the importance of uplifting the dignity of all," Kuhn said. "I am especially humbled to serve on the board of directors."

Ω



We appreciate **Frontwave Credit Union** for their generous donation of blankets, shoes, and clothes. Your support helps us continue caring for those in need in our community.

*"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  
KAY KUTLER

APRIL 17, 1934 - FEB. 15, 2012



*"Hugs, songs and a heart full of love for our guests."*



THIS MONTH'S TOUR DATES



SATURDAY

APRIL

4 & 18

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**  
**Angela Kuhn**  
**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,

Last month I mentioned that "one of Harold's goals was developing a self-sufficiency program. Something that had wrap around services that addressed the issues and obstacles of the program participant but also the training necessary. Basically, not just feeding a person a fish but teaching them how to fish." I'm pleased to report that **Lileigh Waller** has been hired to lead the development and execution of this program. Lileigh comes to us with a strong leadership background from Clubhouse International, which if you are not familiar, has a mental health focus. When you stop by please say hello.

April is volunteer month. So, I think it is important that we acknowledge how important volunteers have been to this organization. The truth is that for over 42 years volunteers have sustained and grown this organization. We are going to have our annual recognition dinner on April 25th starting at 5 PM at the Center. At the dinner we

will be awarding service pins as well as recognizing the winners of our four volunteer categories: Volunteer of the Year, Volunteer with multiple years of outstanding service, longest serving volunteer and "rookie" of the year. We've had so many great volunteers that picking awardees is going to be difficult this year. No matter what the outcome, on a personal level and as a representative of the foundation, I want to offer our heartfelt gratitude to all of you for all that you have done.

On another note, we continue to make progress improving the Center and the Thrift Store. The entire team has improved the look of the spaces and processes we use. Next time you are able, stop by and I'll give you a tour!! I think you will be pleasantly surprised.

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 -

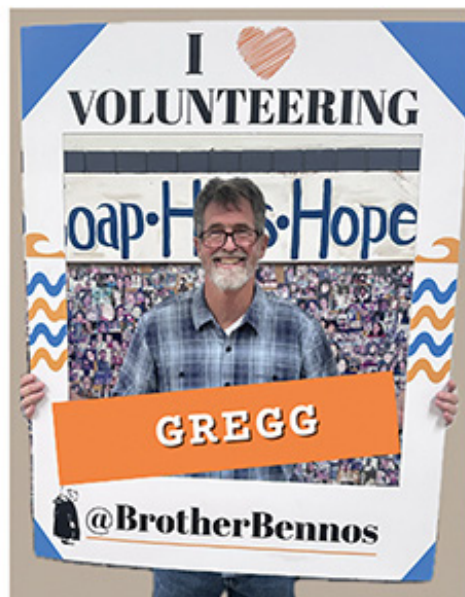
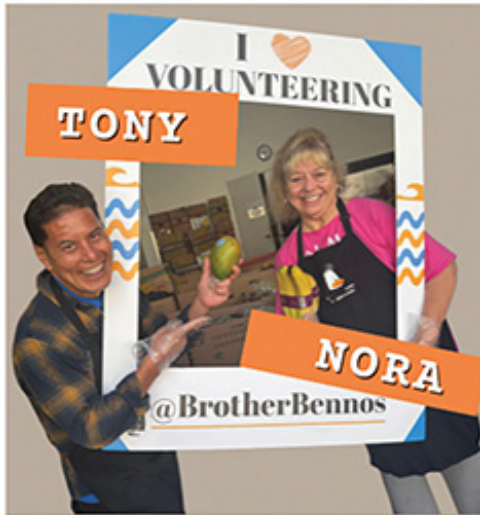
God bless you all!  
Mac



“Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.”

-Author Unknown

Each smile captured represents countless hours given, challenges overcome, and lives touched through service.



## LEADERSHIP TEAM

**Paul 'Mac' McNamara**

*Executive Director*

**DinaMarie Ahee**  
*Deputy Executive Director*

**Alycia Anthony**  
*Volunteer 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*

**Lileigh Waller**  
*Self-Sufficiency Director*

**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**

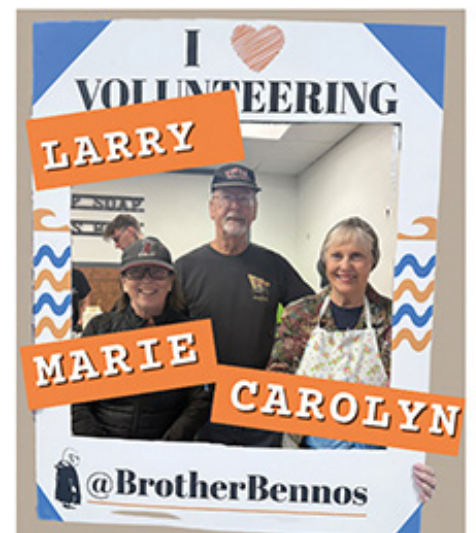
(760) 439-1244 ext.101  
[recovery@brotherbenno.org](mailto:recovery@brotherbenno.org)

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.*

**YOU are the heart and soul of Brother Benno’s. We couldn’t do what we do without you. Thank you!**





## YOUR HEART HAS WINGS

BY KATHLEEN DIEHLMANN, Development Director

*Guardian angel: a spirit that is believed to watch over and protect a person or place.*

If you donate four or more times a year, you are known as a [Guardian Angel](#) at Brother Benno's. Guardian Angels are loyal and dedicated supporters who keep **Harold** and **Kay's** mission going. In March, some of our Guardian Angels were invited for a special tour of the Brother Benno's Center to see where their contributions are making an impact.

Brother Benno's will host another tour for our Guardian Angels

on **Wednesday, April 22nd at 10 a.m. at the Brother Benno's Center.** Please join us to see how you are making hearts soar through your generosity. Email [Kathleen.diehlmann@brotherbenno.org](mailto:Kathleen.diehlmann@brotherbenno.org) or call (760) 888-7986 to RSVP for the tour.

If you are not already a Guardian Angel and would like to become one, please consider becoming a recurring donor today! We can always use more spirits to watch over Brother Benno's.



Thank you San Rafael Parish Serving Team!

## APRIL SERVING TEAMS

MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		1 Stephanie's Team	2 Oceanside Pacific Kiwanis	3 San Luis Rey Mission	4 St. Thomas More
6 St. Elizabeth Seton #1	7 St. John The Evangelist	8 Carlsbad Hi-Noon Rotary	9 <b>OPEN</b>	10 St. Patrick's	11 TVIA
13 North Coast Methodist	14 Riverview Church	15 Friends of Brother Benno	16 Ernest Packaging	17 St. Elizabeth Seton #2	18 Girlfriend's Care
20 Sunrise Kiwanis of Vista	21 St. John The Evangelist	22 San Luis Rey Methodist	23 Signal	24 Oceanside Sanctuary	25 La Costa Valley Volunteers
27 St. Joseph Academy	28 Rotary Club of San Marcos	29 <b>OPEN</b>	30 <b>OPEN</b>		

# URGENT NEEDS

EMERGENCY BLANKETS

ADULT DIAPERS

BABY DIAPERS - SIZE 6

MEN'S & 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

Joyce Cerimele

John Louie Montanez

## IN MEMORY OF

Harold  
Ron Beckman  
Frank Beeson  
Daniel Boone  
Ream & Erik Braegger

Donna & Gilbert Brown  
Bill Foran  
Nick Jellison  
Ben & Ozelle Lewis  
Bert Manuel Jr.

Nathan Meyers  
Richard Shlemmer  
Mary Camille “Sue” Stiger  
Andrew & Jane Yandura

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

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design workflows, stock inventory, guide guests through the space, and ensure the environment remained welcoming and orderly.

Notably, this expansion also brought new faces into our volunteer community. Individuals who had not previously engaged with Brother Benno’s found an entry point through the market and quickly became integral to its daily function. Their presence not only strengthened operations, but also reinforced the sense of shared ownership that defines our approach.

As service numbers increased, so did the complexity of meeting those needs. Volunteers helped bridge that gap. Their time enabled us to extend hours, streamline processes, and reach more individuals without compromising care. In practical terms, this meant more meals served, more clothing distributed, and more consistent

support for those navigating homelessness and poverty in our community.

Beyond logistics, volunteers contribute something less quantifiable, but equally critical, stability. For many of our guests, familiar faces create a sense of trust and continuity. That relational element cannot be replicated by systems alone. It is built through repeated presence, through showing up.

The past year underscored a simple reality, growth is only sustainable when it is supported by people willing to invest in it. Our volunteers have done exactly that. As we continue to expand our reach, their role remains foundational.

From all of us at Brother Benno’s, thank you for making that work possible.

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Thank you **Church of St. Francis of Assisi** for donating essential service items and canned goods to our community!

**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**

*Donate! Shop! Volunteer!*

**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

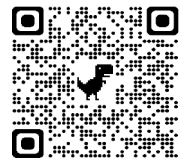
**Saturday**

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](http://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**

	<b>FEBRUARY 2026</b>	<b>OUR 42nd YEAR</b>		<b>FEBRUARY 2026</b>	<b>OUR 42nd YEAR</b>
Meals	7,503	5,195,451	Blankets	138	57,427
Market Visits	3,059	61,669	Tarps	91	11,167
Clothing	4,577	1,644,530	ID Vouchers	73	11,857
Showers	405	299,525	Lbs. of Food Rescued	132,302	7,691,712
Bus Passes	178	96,098	HUGS	1,000	1,050,244