

Please use the enclosed envelope to make your tax-deductible donation to the Brother Benno Foundation

Your donation is used each month at our main center and eight operational houses to provide: meals, clothing, personal hygiene items, blankets, showers, laundry facilities, bus vouchers, case-worker referrals, nights of lodging, medical and mental health referrals, prescriptions, ID replacement, mail services, food packs, shelter for women and small children, men's drug and alcohol recovery program, shelter for women in recovery, and assistance with rent, jobs, Social Security, and veterans' issues. We thank you for your continued support. 100% of your contribution goes directly to assist those we serve. Our modest administration costs are paid for by our Thrift Store revenues.

www.brotherbenno.org



Brother Benno's Newsletter

“Uplifting The Dignity of Those We Serve”

May 2011



GIVING AND RECEIVING

by Barbara Ladwig

“Jerome” was doomed to failure when he entered Brother Benno's Recovery Program almost a year ago. After spending 25 years, off and on, in prison, this 62-year-old man was damaged in ways that are difficult for most of us to fathom. Two men who also have prison backgrounds told me why.

Prison, they said, is a place where a man goes from having societal skills to simply trying to survive. There's no education. You don't read the kinds of things you'd read on the outside, and math consists of knowing how to bet and understanding clothing sizes. You can't stand crowds, hate to be in stores or buses. A man like Jerome, who spent so many years away from a normal life, came out of prison with almost no coping skills. Whatever he had learned in school before had been lost. And he had one more disability: he could not read or write.

“I'm not sure how he got into the Program at all,” said **Sean**, the current Program Director. “I think someone else must have filled out our paperwork, because we'd never let anyone in who can't read or write.” Much of the work done in the Recovery Program involves reading, and the men are required to keep a daily journal.

Jerome's roommate for the first three months was “Fred.” “I could hardly talk to him,” Fred said. “He couldn't sit still for one minute, and he was depressed and withdrawn. At meetings, he'd refuse to read from the book when it came his turn, he didn't do the homework, and he didn't journal. Finally it dawned on me. I bet this guy can't read.”

Fred knew that if anyone found out, Jerome would be asked to leave the Program, so

he told Jerome, “I'll teach you to read.” His own experience as a child with dyslexia led him to focus on teaching phonics. He also asked Jerome what his interests were so he could get books that addressed those topics. “He loves motors, bicycles, motorcycles—so I found books with those things,” he said. “And I used the reward system, too. Jerome got a lot of candy and gum from me!”

Because doing the Recovery reading and writing is vital to all the men in the Program, Fred also drilled Jerome on that material. “I'd take one paragraph at a time, read it to him over and over while he followed along, then make him read it after me. Over and over and over, every day. When he'd get impatient and say he didn't want to do it anymore, I'd bribe him with candy, I'd tell him he had to do it if he was ever going to get a decent life, and I'd keep telling him he could do it.”

Fred could tell that some of the vocabulary was going over Jerome's head, so he'd translate it into what he calls “street language.” When he saw that Jerome was getting the idea, he'd then reread the actual material and tell Jerome that both ways said basically the same thing, and in that way, he was getting a vocabulary lesson. Little by little, with infinite patience and loving concern, Fred turned Jerome into a reader—and a journal writer.

Darryl, a staff member involved with the Recovery Program, said that he saw Jerome go from being closed-off to being caring and fully engaged with others. “We were all better for having him here,” he said.

And what about Jerome himself? How did he view this experience?

I sat down with him one Saturday morning

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Brother Benno's Services:

	March 2011	Our 28th Year		March 2011	Our 28th Year
Meals	13,093	3,082,909	Loads of laundry	32	25,708
Nights of lodging	1,236	209,697	Food packs	2,271	159,295
Articles of clothing	4,086	861,179	Blankets	86	31,630
Showers	839	155,197	Prescriptions	53	6,373
Haircuts	101	12,375	ID Vouchers	18	8,121
Bus passes	146	74,224	HUGS	1,800	800,194

Our services are the same for everyone without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability.

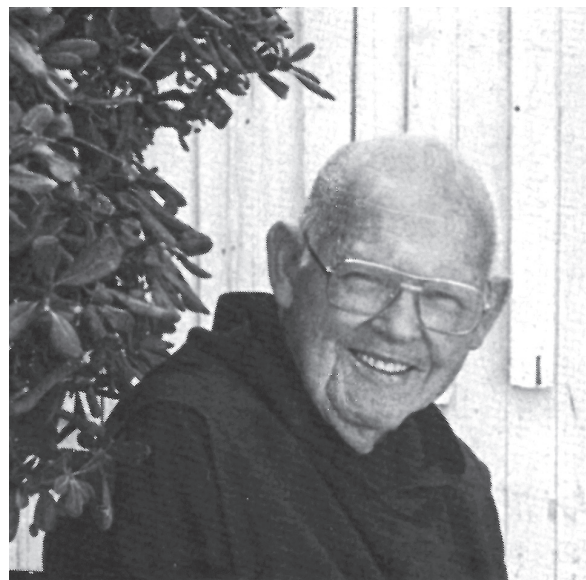
The Thrift Shop

3965 Mission Ave. (East of Albertsons) 760-967-7505

Shop open Mon-Sat 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. -- Stop by to check out our Special of the Week Sales!!

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

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EXPERIENCING THE BROTHER BENNO SCENE

by Barbara Ladwig

Update. Our story in last month's newsletter, "Failing Grace," by **Mary Robinson**, has generated a great deal of interest. Mary suggests that anyone who wants to find out more about the problems inherent in homelessness coupled with mental illness can contact the local chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). I'd like to add that letters and calls to our elected state and federal representatives might be another avenue toward making a difference, since they make the laws that give the mentally ill the "right" to opt out of needed care.

Connection. Long-time supporter and Auxiliary member **Marilyn Prado** called to tell me about an experience she had when her car wouldn't start. "I called AAA," she said, "and a very nice man came out to help. When he was finished, he came into the house, and he noticed a Brother Benno Angel plaque I have. 'May I ask how you happen to have that?' he asked. So I told him about my connection to Brother Benno's, and he said, 'They are the ones who turned me around. In fact, I had breakfast there this morning.'"

Marilyn went on to say how rewarding it was to meet this nice-looking man with good manners who had been helped by Brother Benno's and was now servicing other people. "It really touched me," she said.

Givers. A recent donation brought tears to more than one person at Brother Benno's. It was from a former Guest who sent us his entire first month's pay at his new job, which is enabling him to be on his own once again. Along with the money was a card, thanking everyone "for all the warmth and love you put in all you do."

Another heart-warming experience came with the response to our request in March for help in buying a new \$3,000 coffee maker. Three women called almost immediately after receiving the newsletter—one offered to donate \$2,000, another \$1,000, and the third, the entire \$3,000. We now have the new coffee maker, plus other high-priced items that were on our wish list. Many thanks!

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and tried to visualize the man who had been described to me before his time at Brother Benno's, but I couldn't see him. Instead, I saw a man who looked me straight in the eye, reached out to shake my hand, and spoke with quiet dignity about his past life and his new life.

He was adopted at birth when his 16-year-old mother was forced to give him up by her strict father. His adopted parents were good to him, he said, but his father was an alcoholic who introduced his son to beer at age seven. His older brother took a different path; he became a drug addict. "My sister was a straight-A student, and my mother was a good woman; but my brother and I took the wrong path and we both spent many years in prison," he said. He added that his brother finally got clean in 1991, but he died recently.

School was always difficult for Jerome, but he kept getting passed on to the next grade in spite of his inability to read. "I think I had a learning disability," he said. "And when I got frustrated, I knew I'd feel better with a drink." As an adult, he decided he was better off in prison than out in the world, trying to survive with no skills. "I'd come out, try to get a job, fail at everything, and pretty soon I was right back in," he said.

When he was 60, a man who'd gone through the Brother Benno Recovery Program took Jerome under his wing and convinced him to give the Program a try. Fred said he couldn't count the times that Jerome was on the verge of leaving. Sean and Darryl agreed that they were often sure they'd be losing him any day. But all the guys in the Program gave him their support and kept encouraging him to hang in. "He had a really good work ethic," Darryl said. "He worked in the laundry room, where he had to interact with other guys and the guests, and he was eventually made the 'afternoon man,' a job at the Center that required someone who could be trusted."

"I finally knew I wanted a better life," Jerome told me. He said all the help he got from the other guys made him believe he could have it. And when he graduated from the Program after a year, his ailing mother asked him to move back

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Memorials

Brother Benno
Pope John Paul II
Mother Teresa
Ann Sauer
Joe & Ida Friend
Mary Nordstrom
Myron Eichen
Alice Jordan
Roseanne Dreibelbis
Richard Farhquar
Deacon Art & Mary Carr
Don & Dorothea Daybell
Catherine L. Quinlan
Kathryn D. Pent
Mary Pullman
Joan Boyd
Agnus Boyd
Harold Thompson
Bud & Blanche Ogle
Bob Gleason
Jane Pfau
Ron Alexander
Mary Peterson
Frank Barnet
Frank S. Dolley

Phyllis H. Dierlam
Monty Nares
Margaret Rossini
Dorothy M. Donahue
Mary Teresa Carr
Ruth Hazel Pierson
Elizabeth Holms
Edith Blaiser
Ben Kouns
Bill Lakoff
Bernice, Samuel & Milton Silver
Anita H. Donahue
Margaret Stephan
Bill Boster
Louise Foussat
Tom Hayward
Richard Kurtz
Helen Lucas
Bill & Joan Maloney
Dora Ramirez
Dick & Terry Riley
Bill Buckner
Mary Shankle
Walter Ulloa

Fred Williamson
Carole Kutler
Will Skinner
Fr. Abbot Claude Ehringer, OSB
Fr. Luke Dougherty
Naomi Shelton
Gilbert Brown
John Ciganko
Ann & Tom Witherow
Stanley LaMonte
Colleen Stoll
Mary Jo Hodges
William Flanagan
Thomas Dockery
Richard Kurtz
Floyd & Rose Caldwell
Doug Faught
Anna Covila
Sylvia & Lorraine Rockett
Josephine & Charles Campbell

Margaret Zachan
Lois Jones
Squirrell Family
Nysewander Family
Rosemary Tucker
Larry & Jeffrey Fish
P.J. Danheim
Maria Stassi
Irma Peck
Bud Maloney
Ben Lewis
Arthur & Estelle Couturier
Agatha Johnson
Sr. Martha Vega

In Honor Of:
George McCartney

Birthdays
Kay Kutler

Get Well
M/M Joseph Opatkiewicz

Needs

For our new nursing home outreach:

Men's and Women's sweatpants with stretchy waists & Socks Large-print Books (or funds to buy them)
Coffee-table Books with pictures of scenery, geography, historical subjects

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
May	2 St. Elizabeth Seton #1	3 St. John The Evangelist	4 Brother Benno's Auxiliary	5 Oceanside Pacific Kiwanis	6 San Luis Rey Mission	7 St. Thomas More
2011	9 North Coast Methodist	10 Friends from Vista	11 Naval Hospital	12 Oceanside Civitanis	13 St. Patrick's	14 TVIA
Monthly	16 Sunrise Kiwanis of Vista	17 Christ the King Lutheran	18 Grace Anglican	19 Carlsbad Rotary	20 St. Elizabeth Seton #2	21 Girlfriend's Care
Serving	23 5/11 Marines	24 St. Mark's San Marcos	25 San Luis Rey Methodist	26 Pilgrim Creek	27 Fallbrook Presbyterian	28 Catholic Daughters
Team						
Schedule	30 Memorial Day CLOSED	31 Vista Community Clinic				

Brother Benno's Furniture Sales

3242-B Production Ave., Oceanside (next to Center) 760-967-2742 **Open Mon. - Sat. 9 am to Noon**

To view photos of our wonderful used furniture: go to brotherbenno.org, click on Thrift Store, then click on the 3 >>> above Thrift Store, scroll down to view photos. We welcome your saleable furniture items. Please call 760-439-1244 ext.115 for free pickup.

PAJAMA PROJECT NEEDS HELP

Children in warm snuggly pajamas conjures up a vision of contentment and safety, but not all kids have the luxury of being part of such a scene. Organizations like Brother Benno's try to fill in the gaps, and we have recently been blessed with unexpected help.

Lee Zook of San Marcos has donated more than 2,000 children's one-piece-with-feet pj's to Brother Benno's as part of her non-profit outreach called LEEZ PJ's 4 Kids, Inc. She got them from an online retailer who was looking for someone to take their stock of damaged goods—one foot of each pair of pj's was damaged in the fire-retardant process and needs to be replaced.

Several regular Brother Benno volunteers have started doing the replacements, but they need a lot of help. **Kathy Christensen** says that anyone with a sewing machine that sews straight and also zig-zags can do the job. She has patterns for the replacement foot, as well as some tips she's learned along the way.

"The pj's are well made and seem to be of good quality," she said. "They should keep the little ones warm. . . . When the pj's are available in our Clothing Room, they are popular with the mothers." She suggests that there might be sewing or quilting guilds interested in such a project, or maybe women's church groups.

If you'd like to help with this "little feetsy pj project," please contact Kathy (760-805-4805, or kathy46@rocketmail.com). For more information about Lee Zook's organization, go to leezpjs4kids.com. or call her (760-889-2730).



Your donation enables us to do all the wonderful things we do

My enclosed tax-deductible gift is: \$ _____

(make payable to: Brother Benno Foundation)

In memory of: _____

Please send a card to:

(name) _____

(address) _____

For a special occasion (birthday, anniversary, etc.): _____

Send a card to: (name) _____

(address) _____

Or, donate online at <http://brotherbenno.org>

IN MEMORY OF ROSEMARY TUCKER

Long-time Brother Benno supporter **Rosemary Tucker** died on March 20, 2011, at the age of 87. She and her husband **Will** were involved at our original Kitchen in downtown Oceanside; and when we moved to our new Center on Production Avenue, they donated all the tables and seats in the dining room.

They knew we'd also need more income to take care of our increased overhead, so Rosemary started the Brother Benno Thrift Shop in 1992. She personally managed the Shop for several years, while Will did the bookkeeping. "She was not only a very capable woman," said **Harold Kutler**, "but she was also charming and well-loved by her volunteers and all of us here at Brother Benno's."

Board members **Daniel Boone** and **John Blasier** also had great admiration for Rosemary. "She was successful because she was fair," said Daniel. John added, "She had warmth, and she was very smart."

Daniel said that when Rosemary proposed the Thrift Shop to the Board, they turned her down at first. "We had no experience with running a business like that," he said, "but Rosemary was not going to be deterred. She said she'd pay for everything to get it started, and if she didn't make money, we wouldn't owe her a thing. If it was successful, we could reimburse her. Well, in three months she was turning a good profit, and it's been a big money-maker ever since."

John mentioned that he was doing all the bookkeeping for the Foundation in the early days, and he had a Servant of the Poor helping him. When the Servant left, John was overwhelmed. Rosemary heard about his plight and stepped in. "She could do it all," he said.

Brother Benno's House of Dorothy Barbara Rosemary and Joan (DBRJ) attests to Rosemary's importance to Brother Benno's. And her humility was evident in the following note she wrote to Harold and Kay several years ago: "Please settle an argument for us. Will thinks the "Rosemary" in the name of the House is me. I'm certain it is not. I'm so glad that this House is going to be a reality. Some of us know how much this is needed." Ω

AUXILIARY NEWS

by Vikki Ramey

Our March fundraiser at **Applebee's** in Oceanside netted \$1,310! Thanks to all who came to enjoy breakfast, and to all the members who helped. Then in April, the fundraiser at the **Claim Jumper** in Carlsbad saw members and their guests having a wonderful dinner and a good time.

At our meeting in April, we assembled Mother's Day and Father's Day bags to be distributed to Guests on the Saturday before each of the holidays. **Claire Carter**, Chairperson, had items ready to assemble, such as toiletries, candy, and coffee mugs.

On May 14, members and other volunteers will be at the **La Costa Post Office** for the annual National Association of Letter Carriers Food Drive. This Post Office has designated Brother Benno's as the recipient of all the canned goods collected on this day. We will transfer the donated goods from the P.O. trucks to a Brother Benno truck, which will then take everything to the Center. Thank you to the La Costa Post Office!

SAVE THESE DATES:

- May 7 – Mother's Day bags distribution
- May 14 – NALC Food Drive at La Costa Post Office
- May 25 – Auxiliary meeting
- July 9 – Outback Steakhouse Fundraiser
- December 3 – Annual Luncheon at the Carlsbad Sheraton

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in with her. She saw the transformation, and she wanted him back.

"She's 89," he said, "and her driving is terrible. I have to take care of her now, and I'm glad to do it. And on Saturdays I like to come back to Brother Benno's and help out. Whatever they need me to do, I'm happy to do it."

This success story exemplifies the way things work at Brother Benno's. Jerome's transformation didn't come about just because he was admitted to the Recovery Program; it was facilitated by all the men who were on the same path. Fred was able to see what Jerome needed, and more importantly, was willing to give so much of himself, even while he was struggling with his own needs. Sean and Darryl offered their own experiences to all the men, and those men were then able to give of themselves. Everyone involved was both giver and receiver.

"Give, and it shall be given to you, a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap." *Luke 6:38*

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Information & Online donations

brotherbenno.org

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The Story of Brother Benno's Life-Changing Soup Kitchen

This book is offered as a gift to donors who contribute whatever their budget allows...The important thing... is that you have one...

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