



Brother Benno's Newsletter

“Uplifting The Dignity of Those We Serve”

Volunteers Making a Difference

August 2017



THE HOMELESS PROBLEM IS EVERYWHERE, SOLUTIONS SEEM TO BE EVASIVE

Homelessness is very much in the news these days—locally, nationally, and even globally. Staff and volunteers at Brother Benno's deal with the problems every single day; but like all the other agencies and government entities, we don't have the magic wand to make it go away. The best we can offer is a listening ear, temporary alleviation of the most pressing needs, and the desire to find better solutions.

Several of our staff members and volunteers have put together the following articles that hopefully will give our supporters an inside look at how Brother Benno's continues to address this pervasive, often heart-wrenching situation here in North San Diego County. As you will see, most of this issue of the newsletter is devoted to this topic.

HOMELESSNESS AND MENTAL ILLNESS, HOW BROTHER BENNO'S DEALS WITH THESE TOUGH ISSUES.

Each year, Brother Benno's serves over 60,000 meals to the homeless and working poor. How many of these meals are fed to homeless people, especially those with mental health issues? Several research articles estimate that the number varies between 40 and 70 percent.

Can mental illness lead to homelessness? Yes. Can homelessness lead to mental illness? Yes. When people are homeless, the stress can lead to anxiety, fear, depression, self-medicating, and sleeplessness.

About six years ago, “**John**,” a staff member, decided he wanted to carry on one aspect of our services that our founder, **Harold Kutler**, had taught him. For three years, Harold and John worked together to attempt to assist guests with exceptional challenges in a kind and loving manner. Often the individual asking for help came away from the experience knowing that someone really cared about them, even if ultimately we were unable to help.

Although Harold is no longer able to be part of this outreach, John continues with the help of six volunteers who come from different backgrounds and who bring their unique talents to the task. Some of the services that are exceptions to the regular services we offer include: procuring birth certificates, providing rides to appointments, giving assistance to connect the person to mental health services and other organizations in the area, and helping with paperwork.

We see many “episodes” of people in crisis at the Brother Benno Center on an all too frequent basis. Usually, if emergency services are called, the person will be evaluated. If they refuse help, none is given. If they accept it, they are transported to the local hospital where they are again evaluated. Unless the person is verbalizing thoughts of suicide or homicide, they are usually released. It sounds straightforward, except now

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the homeless person is left without transportation or money for bus fare and is approximately ten miles away from the community and food source at the Center. Most of our Guests would rather deal with their episodes alone, rather than have to add one more challenge to the day-to-day survival.

Some men and women with mental health issues are not receiving help and treatment for these reasons: lack of transportation, inability to remember and keep appointments, and the excessive amount of energy it takes to go through the lengthy process of evaluation and treatment.

For most folks who are not homeless, seeking assistance is also tough, but they usually have the support of family, friends, and co-workers. The homeless do not have these basic ingredients for a possible success; they are just trying to survive each day.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Imagine waking up after a fitful sleep behind a dumpster or place of business, always having to be on the alert in case someone were to come by and harm you. And you have to get up very early before the business owners show up. Then your day begins.

You have to carry or drag everything you own, or stash it somewhere and hope it'll be there when you get back that way. You are hungry, so you need to panhandle, or try to make it to the local soup kitchen where you can eat and hopefully get a shower if you make it on time.

After breakfast, it's time to do some more walking, either to a park or a library. If you fall asleep at the park, it's quite possible you'll end up with a ticket for illegal camping and asked to move on. If you fall asleep at the library, you'll be asked to leave.

It is now time to start thinking about dinner. You have worked up quite an appetite with all the walking, and you are tired. You can walk another couple of miles to get to the other soup kitchen that serves dinner, but then you'll have a two-mile walk at dawn to get to breakfast. Or you can skip dinner and try to make it to the spot where you have decided to sleep.

Finally the day is over and it's time to bed down. You've carried your bedroll and a backpack all day, so you won't be too cold tonight. Thank goodness it's not raining!

You lay out your bedding in the shadows of a storefront and doze off about 10 o'clock. At midnight you sit bolt upright, because it sounds as if the world is coming to an end. You realize that it's a steam-cleaning crew here to wash the sidewalks. You jump up and try to grab all your gear—just a little bit too late. The crew didn't see you (or maybe they did), and now you and your gear are wet for the rest of the night. You are worn out, wet, and full of anger, fear, and hopelessness. You decide to walk back to the soup kitchen and camp out in front, even though you know it's not allowed, so you can at least get breakfast and a shower in the morning. Tomorrow is now today, and the process starts all over.

DEALING WITH AGENCIES BEYOND BROTHER BENNO'S

When Brother Benno's refers a homeless person to an agency that offers the services we are not able to give, it doesn't necessarily mean that you will finally be taken care of. Often the following scenario ensues.

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You fill out an application with some pretty personal questions. You are then told that they have no beds available, but they'll put you on a waiting list, and you need to call each morning at 8 a.m. to see if a bed is now available. Better yet, you are told someone will be contacting *you*. You start to laugh, and the interviewer asks what's so funny. You say you are HOMELESS and you don't have a phone! The rep says you can get a free phone a few miles away. Another walk. And you don't want a phone, you want real help.

And then there's the appointment eight miles away where you'll be evaluated for your mental health issues, which may qualify you for a bed through another program. If you had a dime for every time someone said "evaluated," you'd have enough money to buy your own place!

The frustration and the gap between you and the social service worker grows larger and larger with each interaction, and you realize you live on an entirely different planet than the person in front of you. You give up and resign yourself to another day in hell, hoping for a few easy moments—that is, if you have any hope left.

This is just a small snapshot of the enormity of the issues faced each day by our homeless. Add mental illness to the pot and it's an almost insurmountable challenge. What if you are Pregnant? Physically disabled? Senior citizen? The problems grow exponentially with these added issues.

Brother Benno's does its best to walk through these challenges with an individual when they reach the point where they say "Enough. I want help." We are kind and loving, and we sit in our office with them to help them make calls. We remind them of their appointments. Sometimes we take them to their appointments. We advocate for them when they miss those appointments so that the process doesn't have to start all over.

We listen to them when they feel like their world is falling apart and that no one cares about

them. We love them no matter what happens so they feel like they have some sort of community on their side. We do our best to make them feel like they are special. Sometimes that's all we have to give.

The interesting thing is that when we do these things, we realize that they are just like us. There really is no "them"; it's all "us." We all go through the same emotions, and "life happens" for all of us. Some of us are fortunate enough to have skills we've been taught in order to deal with day-to-day issues. Some of us do not have these skills for various reasons. Let's hope those of us with skills are always willing to lend a hand to those without.

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Third Saturday Serving Team Girlfriends Care



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>

AUXILIARY NEWS

by Karen Gallagher & Nita Rodriguez

Christmas in July. You did it! You're going to make 200 needy children's wishes come true at our Christmas Party at the Center in December. Thank you for helping us reach our goal of 200 gift cards. And thanks for **Marilyn Candler** for coordinating this event.

Cruisin' to Cabo. The cruise will be October 7-14. Thanks to **Liz Nixon** Travel and those who are cruising with us, the Auxiliary has qualified for a free cabin. We will have a drawing for this cabin for two at \$20 per ticket, and only 250 tickets will be sold. (Please note that tours, tips, round-trip transportation—Oceanside/Long Beach—are not included.) Drawing will be at the August 23 membership meeting; winner need not be present. For more information, please contact Vikki Ramey (760-803-6267). You can view and/or download ticket information at <http://bit.ly/2togDNC>

Annual Luncheon Fundraiser will be on Saturday, December 2, at the Carlsbad Sheraton. The theme is "A Legacy of Love and Service, honoring our founder, **Harold Kutler**. Tickets for Auxiliary members will go on sale August 23, and to the public on August 29.

Information & Online donations: brotherbenno.org

Follow Brother Bennos online:

 [Facebook.com/BrotherBennos](https://www.facebook.com/BrotherBennos)

Luncheon Planning Committee



Penny Sallee, Anne Speraw, Teresa Keith, Nita Rodriguez, Terri Keyes, Karen Gallagher, Janetha Bailey-Long, Helen Parsons

August Meeting. You're invited to join us on Wednesday, August 23, in the Center Dining Room: social time and snacks at 1, meeting at 1:30. It's a great way to get started helping Brother Benno's.

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Please consider contributing to the Brother Benno Foundation by way of your Will, Living Trust, Designated Beneficiary Account, Stocks, Life Insurance, Mutual Funds, or Real Estate. For more information, contact Suzy Martinek, 760-439-1244, ext. 116 or smartinek@miracosta.edu

Soup...Soap...Hugs...Hope:

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...

Name _____
 Address _____
 City, State, Zip Code _____

Donation \$ _____
 Number of copies _____

Memorials

Ron Alexander	Joe & Ida Friend	Catherine L. Quinlan	Ceil Skrukruud
Dixie & Lou Bales	Mary Gerrity	Dora Ramirez	Marie Smeltzer
Frank Barnet	Bob Gleason	Dick & Terry Riley	Beth Weber
Brother Benno	Tom Hayward	Margaret Rossini	Dorothy & Ford
Edith Blaiser	Elizabeth Holms	Ann Sauer	Seeuus
Andrea Boersma	Alice Jordan	Mary Shankle	Robert Buchach
Roland Bond	Ben Kouns	Naomi Shelton	Bruno Acosta
Bill Boster	Richard Kurtz	Bernice, Samuel &	John Flynn
Agnus & Joan Boyd	Carole Kutler	Milton Silver	Bob Porter
Bill Buckner	Kay Kutler	Will Skinner	Andrew & Jane
Deacon Art & Mary Carr	Bill & Louise Lakoff	Ann Grier Smith	Yandura
Mary Teresa Carr	Ben E. Lewis	Mike Stendahl	Tom Grier
Anna Correia	Helen Lucas	Margaret Stephan	John, Helen, &
Don & Dorothea Daybell	Bill & Joan Maloney	Virginia Sylwestrzak	Matthew Hagan
Phyllis H. Dierlam	Helene McGill	Mother Teresa	Molly & John
Frank S. Dolley	Michael & Monty	Harold Thompson	Samuelsen
Anita H. Donahue	Nares	Rosemary Tucker	Vera Bayliss
Dorothy M. Donahue	Mary Nordstrom	Walter Ulloa	John Cheatham
Fr. Luke Dougherty	Bud & Blanche Ogle	June Williams	Bernie Weiler
Roseanne Dreibelbis	Ben Osgrove	Fred Williamson	Bob Strawbridge
Fr. Abbot Claude	Pope John Paul II	Zeferino & Dancy	Bruce Tillman
Ehringer, OSB	Kathryn D. Pent	Nares	Roy Timmerman
Myron Eichen	Mary Peterson	Nysewander Family	Donald Deffenbaugh
Richard Farhquar	Jane Pfau	Squirrell Family	Joe & Catherine Martina
William & Vennita	Ruth Hazel Pierson	Agatha Johnson	Toni Keane
Flanagan	Alan Port	Jack Gillen	Chance Hales
Louise Foussat	Mary Pullman	Calvin Gregoire	Bill Carrothers

Needs

Gently used furniture
 Men's Belts, especially large
 Gift Cards for Walmart and Target

Adult and Baby Diapers
 Comfy Walking Shoes for Men and Women

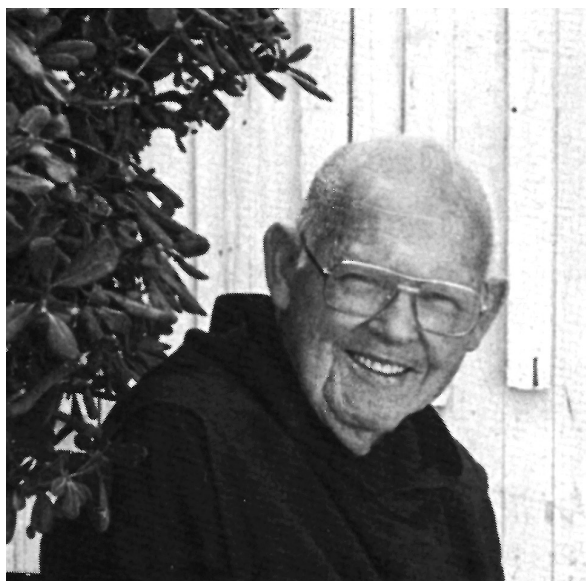
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
August		1 St. John The Evangelist	2 Brother Benno's Auxiliary	3 Oceanside Pacific Kiwanis	4 San Luis Rey Mission	5 St. Thomas More
2017	7 St. Elizabeth Seton #1	8 Riverview Church	9 1st MLG FCPOA	10 Oceanside Civitans	11 St. Patrick's	12 La Costa Valley Volunteers
Monthly	14 North Coast Methodist	15 Christ the King Lutheran		17 Rotary Club of Carlsbad	18 St. Elizabeth Seton #2	19 Girlfriend's Care
Serving	21 Sunrise Kiwanis of Vista	22 St. Mark's San Marcos	23 San Luis Rey Methodist	24 Pilgrim Creek	25 Sonrise Christian Fellowship	26 Catholic Daughters
Team	28 Christ Church	29 Welk Resort	30 Soroptimist International	31 Brother Benno's Thrift Shop		
Schedule						

Furniture Sales at the Center

3242-B Production Ave., Oceanside 760-529-5481 ext. 200 **Open Tues. - Sat. 9 am to 1 pm**
 We welcome your saleable furniture items. Please call 760-439-1244 ext.102 for free pickup.

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

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



Brother Benno's Thrift Shop

(Helping the poor, one sale at a time)

Clothing, Household Goods, Furniture

Shop open Tue-Sat 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. -- Stop by to check out our Daily Specials!!

3955 Mission Ave. (East of Albertsons) 760-967-7505

Please use the enclosed envelope to make your tax-deductible donation to the Brother Benno Foundation. If you are viewing this online you can donate by going to brotherbenno.org and click on Donations. This will allow you to make a secure donation using PayPal or a Credit Card.

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, nights of lodging, medical and mental health referrals, prescriptions, ID replacement, mail services, Social Security, and veterans' issues, food packs, men and women's drug and alcohol recovery program, rent and utility assistance when funds are available. 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 Services:

	June 2017	Our 33rd Year		June 2017	Our 33rd Year
Meals	13,362	4,071,458	Loads of laundry	37	27,717
Nights of lodging	759	286,603	Food packs	1,310	318,581
Articles of clothing	6,096	1,264,867	Blankets	167	42,623
Showers	1,179	234,652	Tarps	94	2,406
Haircuts	114	21,756	ID Vouchers	13	8,986
Bus passes	109	82,265	HUGS	1,800	946,444