**MANA de San Diego**

MANA de San Diego empowers Latinas through education, leadership development, community service and advocacy. The Hand to Hand grant supports the Hermanitas (middle school-high school) and Tias (college students) programs.

MANA provided Hermanitas monthly career exploration and self-development seminars on such topics as careers in STEM and Entertainment/Media; leadership training as they prepared and carried out community service projects in grade level groups; and focused, age-appropriate college preparation activities such as individual writing support for high school seniors working on their college application essays.

All fourteen of the high school seniors graduated this year, on-time and all were admitted to college.

MANA confirmed that 54 of the college students have continued to progress toward their degrees in this academic year, resulting in a 98% college retention rate among the Tias program participants.

Grecia is one success story. After graduating from high school and the Hermanitas program, Grecia continued to receive support from the Tias program while she worked on her undergraduate degree at the University of California Riverside (UCR). Grecia shared her interest in pursuing a law degree with the program leaders and was connected to the San Diego District Attorney, Marissa Bejarano, who reviewed her resume and forwarded Grecia’s resume to colleagues. Grecia was able to land a summer internship in the offices of the first female and first Latina City of San Diego Attorney, Mara Elliot, and a virtual internship throughout the school year. All this career development experience and support helped Grecia complete her degree early! Grecia received her degree in September 2022. Grecia is also continuing to intern with the San Diego based law firm of Kuyateh Law Group as she studies to take the LSAT this year.

**handtohandsandiego.org**

Hand to Hand makes an impact in the lives of women and girls in San Diego County by directing resources to programs that empower change and self-sufficiency.

**Our Mission**

**MANA de San Diego**

**Operation HOPE North County**

**Foundation for Women Warriors**

**Brother Benno’s**

**In this issue**

OCTOBER 2022

A group of people holding certificates

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MANA of San Diego Las Hermanitas Program Graduates

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OPERATION HOPE NORTH COUNTY

**Steps to Independence** **Program** is a comprehensive program that provides shelter, food, skill building courses, youth building programming, connections to resources and housing navigation to families and children in San Diego County. Our **Hand-to-Hand** grant provide 128 women and girls with these services in 2022.

**OPERATION HOPE – NORTH COUNTY**

The Steps to Independence Program provided shelter, food, skill building courses, youth programming, connections to resources and housing to a total of 128 women and girls. The program allows the clients to feel safe from the trauma of homelessness, and in some cases, from domestic violence. Throughout the year, Covid continued to bring challenges to the program, resulting in some staffing shortages, limited number of volunteers, availability of affordable housing and the rising cost of living, thus necessitating the Steps to Independence Program to become increasingly creative with resources to meet the needs of the community it serves.

Funding from Hand to Hand was used to support safe shelter, assess, and address immediate health needs and create individualized goal plans for 128 women and girls. Financial education, career and job assistance, mentoring and counseling, links to health care, legal assistance and other supportive resources were also provided. Children were academically assessed and participated in age-appropriate programs and activities to support their developmental and academic growth. All school-age children had access to online tutoring through School on Wheels, one-on-one in-person tutoring, and additional resources as needed.

Women and families who graduate the program continue to receive resources through the   
Pantry of HOPE, allowing them to receive weekly fresh produce, canned goods, dairy items, diapers, clothing, and other items to help support their long-term success and independence.

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| --- | --- |
| **FOUNDATION FOR WOMEN WARRIORS**  In 2021, the Women Veteran Transition and Emergency Services Program, a project under the auspices of The Foundation for Women Warriors, assisted 741 women and 786 children, for a total of 1,527 lives impacted.  Hand to Hand funds were used to pay for program supplies, insurance, rent, utilities, staff payroll and training.  Women veterans are the fastest growing segment of homeless veterans and are 2 ½ times more likely to commit suicide than civilian women.  Many female veterans experience sexual harassment, housing instability, a high unemployment rate, lower median income and are more likely to live below the poverty threshold compared to male peers.  The grant from Hand to Hand allowed The Foundation for Women Warriors to provide emergency financial assistance to 41 women and 66 children, childcare assistance to 18 women and 41 children, and referrals to 525 women and their 495 children in the areas of mental health, legal assistance, employment, and other resources. | Over 100 women participated in their Connect with Community economic, professional, and personal development workshops, and finally, they distributed over $100,000 of critical baby supplies and household goods to 224 women and 357 children facing financial insecurity.  The support provided by Foundation for Women Warriors was a game changer for Rachel, a Navy veteran, mother and full-time student.  The childcare assistance provided by Foundation for Women Warriors allowed Rachel to continue to pursue her education online while taking care of her new baby.  *“Words cannot even begin to explain my gratitude for this program. From the bottom of our hearts,*  *we want to thank you!*  *We are forever grateful for the kindness and financial assistance you so generously provided my family.*  *This will be the boost we need to help me reach*  *the finish line and secure a career.”*  *~ A 2022 Program Participant* |

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Hand to Hand received the proceeds of a benefit concert, "To the Stars", presented by Sorelle Women's Chamber Chorus on October 23 at the United Methodist Church of Encinitas. Under the direction of Michelle Risling, and accompanied by talented local instrumentalists, the group performed a beautiful set inspired by the eerily stunning images produced by the Hubble space telescope. This talented group of singers performs twice a year, donating a portion of their proceeds to various local non-profits benefiting women and girls in San Diego County.

Hand to Hand greatly appreciates their support!

A group of people posing for a photo

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Serving the poor and homeless neighbors in San Diego County since 1983, The Brother Benno Foundation’s Community Outreach Team has brought new life and hope to many women who feel alone, forgotten, and lost. Their “Hub Center” in Oceanside is a place where they can rest, have a hot meal, find warm clothes, take a shower, and meet with supportive staff and volunteers who will help them to begin the process of rebuilding their lives.

For many women that come to Brother Benno’s Hub Center seeking help, paramount is the need to obtain or replace identification papers such as birth certificates, social security cards, driver’s licenses or CA issued ID cards. Help with paying the required fees for these documents, as well as the bus fare needed to go and apply for them, was identified as a critical need. The Outreach Team turned to Hand to Hand for help.

Having the correct Identification papers is the first step in this all-important rebuilding process. Without them, it is not possible to apply for assistance, social services, supportive care, employment, housing, or continuing education. Brother Benno applied for and received a $7,500 grant to assist women seeking to start over by taking this important first step.

During 2022, our Hand to Hand grant helped 223 homeless women receive assistance to reestablish their identity and provided passes to pay for bus transportation to secure them. In addition, it provided for bus transportation to access social services, employment opportunities, education, medical care, or court appearances. This important aid made it possible to access the building blocks they needed to start over and begin again.

Hand to Hand helped these women onto the path *out of homelessness* *and onto the road towards independence.* We honor and congratulate all these women for their courage and resolve to ask for help, use it wisely and rebuild a better life for themselves!



 

***For information about the Hand to Hand Giving Circle:***

***K.J. Koljonen, 4KJKSD@gmail.com***

***Grantee Relations***

**BROTHER BENNO’S HOMELESS SERVICES**

**handtohandsandiego.org**

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Hand to Hand was established in October 2008 as a charitable fund at Coastal Community Foundation.

**Chair Persons**

**History**

**Lead Chair:**   
K.J. Koljonen

**Grants**  Carol Zeenkov

**Grantee Relations**   
Mary Murphy

**Finance**   
Trisha O’Neal

**Membership**  
Amy Larson

**Hospitality** Jody Sather

**Admin Coordinator** Sue Steele

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