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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Brother Benno's to celebrate Father Charles Wright's 90th birthday July 9

Event to celebrate milestones and stories from the nonprofit's longest serving board member

OCEANSIDE, CA - Brother Benno's, a nonprofit group serving the homeless, working poor and seniors in San Diego's North County, will host a 90th birthday for board member Father Charles Wright, beginning at 11:30 a.m., July 9, at the Brother Bennos Center, 3260 Production Avenue, Oceanside.

The event will feature food and refreshments by Freida's Taco, and Father Charles will share insight and stories about the beginnings of Brother Bennos, a beloved nonprofit that has provided 5,119,091 meals, 1,607,404 articles of clothing, 295,808 showers 1,041,244 hugs since its inception in 1983.

Wright served on the group's board of directors from the start; he still attends every board meeting, either in person or by Zoom. Wright has become an honorary Brother Benno's chaplain, chaired its foundation's board still leads 10:30 a.m. Mass.

Wright spent 21 years leading San Diego's Prince of Peace Abbey before resigning in 2016. He was born and raised near Buffalo, New York, and moved to San Diego with his family as a teenager, graduated from La Jolla High and spent two years studying prelaw at San Diego State University. After stints working for a Los Angeles electric products company and serving in the U.S. Army, he visited the abbey, then called St. Charles Priory, in 1961. He joined two years later and was ordained as a priest in 1970.

In 1983, when the priory became the Prince of Peace Abbey, Wright became prior, second in the abbey's leadership to Abbot Claude Ehringer. The abbey's monks named Wright to succeed Ehringer when Ehringer resigned in 1994. Like Brother Benno's, the abbey has deep San Diego roots, having been founded in 1958.

When he retired from the monastery, Wright [told KPBS](#) he most enjoyed serving people who were on retreat there.

"I guess we could say that our greatest need — that everyone has — is the need to give," he told KPBS. "When people come up and we are able to give to them, they are offering us — they are giving us the opportunity of satisfying our greatest need."

“Father Charles has been the Foundation’s spiritual compass since its inception,” said Brother Benno’s Executive Director Paul “Mac” McNamara. “His dedication, kindness, and genuine caring for his fellow human beings never fails to inspire. In the first few minutes after meeting him, one knows they are in the presence of someone special. One can only hope that he will be with us for another 90 years.”

Brother Benno’s began as a downtown Oceanside soup kitchen named for Brother Benno Garrity, a Benedictine monk known for tireless service to the area’s poor and struggling people. The soup kitchen served its first meal Oct. 21, 1983.

Over time, to meet critical needs, Brother Benno’s expanded beyond food to offer essential and outreach services, a men’s recovery program, housing support services and clothing.

About Brother Benno’s

Brother Benno’s is dedicated to serving homeless neighbors, the working poor and seniors in North San Diego County by offering essential meals, addressing basic needs, fostering community outreach and supporting addiction recovery.

Beyond cash donations, people can support Brother Benno’s mission by volunteering; donating clothes or vehicles; shopping at the group’s thrift store; hosting clothing or donation drives, funding a scholarship for a student who has been in foster care or arranging planned giving. Visit www.brotherbenno.org for more information.

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