

## BECOME A MEND HERO!

WE'RE IN SEARCH of monthly Heroes! Becoming a MEND HERO means you will be joining other committed supporters who want to help make a difference. **Every month.**

Please sign up today at our website, [MendPoverty.Org/Donate](http://MendPoverty.Org/Donate) or call Scott Mikels at, (818) 686-7353 to provide a few details on the credit card or bank account you want charged, and to authorize your gift. Your generous support will go a long way in our community. Thank you in advance.

### STAFF HIGHLIGHT - AARON



AARON KNOWS HIS WAY inside and out of MEND's warehouse, unpacking food donations, helping show new volunteers the ropes, and always ready with a kind word of encouragement. How he got to his role as MEND's Food Packing Coordinator is a story of second chances and new beginnings.

He shares how he felt after losing a job he loved a few years ago. "Finding work after that was difficult," he recalls. A single father of four, Aaron knew he had to do something drastic. The stress and worry of not being able to provide everything his children needed was weighing him down. He reflects on this challenging period in his life: "I needed to be able to show my kids that whenever you have a moment of bad luck, you push forward."

So, he signed up for work experience at MEND to learn new skills and hopefully to find a job.

And sure enough, an opportunity at MEND opened up and he was soon hired.

He has this to say about his work: "I don't think I've ever really had a job that gave me the kind of satisfaction I have at the end of my day. I have many conversations with people who come to the food bank, and they are just like anyone else. They are us." He adds: "I feel good helping and being a part of MEND. I see it as a godsend."

And we see you as a godsend as well Aaron.

### VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT / NARONG

"WHEN PEOPLE NEED HELP, you help, you don't care who they are. I look back sometimes and I see my dad, a Chinese immigrant, living in Thailand.... He always thought of other people," says Narong, a volunteer at MEND. He adds: "At the end of the day there's so much joy in helping others."

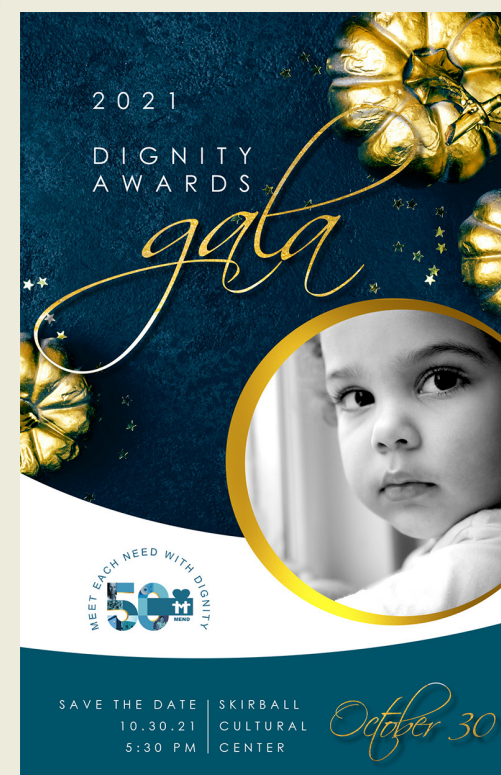
Perhaps that is why, even during the pandemic, we could not keep Narong away. At a time when we lost most of our volunteers, Narong was there every Tuesday and Friday, busy assisting in the food bank. And then there were the home-cooked meals he cooked for our staff and volunteers each week.... So delicious!

For many years, Narong's heart has been with people living on the streets. For 15 years, he has cooked for and ministered to homeless men and women at his church and at MEND. He says: "Volunteering has taught me so much.... humility, gratitude and the importance of showing love for others. I truly believe that those of us who have so many blessings in life, have an obligation to give back to those in need."

We agree and are truly blessed to serve alongside wonderful people like Narong.



### SAVE THE DATE- 10.30.21



# MEND matters

With dignity and respect, MEND's mission is to meet the immediate needs of individuals and families and increase their access to opportunities that strengthen their capacity to thrive.



SUMMER | 2021

### FIFTY YEARS OF COMPASSION IN ACTION – THE LEGACY YOU MAKE POSSIBLE



ONE COULD SIT FOR HOURS getting lost in the stories of Ed and Carolyn Rose and how MEND first came to be...stories filled with so many different people and places; of seeing a need and doing something about it.

As we celebrate MEND's 50 years in this community, we reflect on how a young thirty-something couple and several generous families came to found such a consequential organization and movement in the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles.

Carolyn Rose shares: "It was so many people [who started MEND] .... We all had a dream that we could do more. We never dreamed we would be where we are today."

MEND was born out of the love and work of caring neighbors and friends, many of whom were members of Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church and other Valley congregations. They all shared a common purpose – to lessen the suffering of poor and vulnerable families. They collected

and stored the most needed items – food, clothing & furniture – in three family garages. And through a growing network of churches, schools, neighbors, and friends, they connected with families in need and quickly mobilized to get them what they needed.

"We did not start with the intention of creating a non-profit organization", the Rose's share. "We were all volunteers. We survived on whatever people donated."

The remarkable group of friends and neighbors settled on a mission very early on – *to meet each need with dignity* – and this has driven the work that you have supported through the years.

Ed adds: "We meet people at such a difficult point in their lives and if we don't have their dignity in mind, we're not doing our job."

He recalls the story of one family from the early years of MEND.

*continued inside*

### A SUMMER WISHLIST

If you can contribute towards our food bank, we'd be very grateful:

- Non-Perishable Food – peanut butter, granola bars, oatmeal, canned tuna, tomatoes, chili, vegetables, fruit, soups, and dry goods such as rice, spaghetti, and beans.

Drop off items at MEND, 10641 San Fernando Road, Pacoima, CA 91331. Or find

MEND's Amazon Wishlist on our website at, [mendpoverty.org/ways-to-give](http://mendpoverty.org/ways-to-give) and donate that way. Amazon will deliver your generous donations to our food bank. If you have questions, please call Food Bank Manager, Adam Brooks at, (818) 686-7334.



## FROM STRUGGLING TO RESILIENT



IT IS PROBABLY TOO EARLY to close the book on COVID but with vaccinations continuing and some of the restrictions lifting, we're beginning to exhale!

And though we've stayed in touch with you throughout the pandemic, we want to express once again, how blown away

we are at how you've helped MEND serve—without disruption—**thousands of families per month!** The Oscar Wilde quote: **"When it rains, look for rainbows; when it is dark, look for stars"** comes to mind often. Through some of the darkest times, you have been the rainbow... and the stars for so many struggling people. Today, I spent some time with our COVID-outreach team, and I have to tell you that every time I do, I'm so grateful for your trust and investment in the work we do. It has enabled us to reach more than 50,000 people in our community, with information on COVID-19, vaccinations and messages of encouragement. As one mother who recently received a visit from our team said: "You are Angels, thank you."

That's you. You help reach thousands of hurting people like this mother, each month. The legacy started by Ed and Carolyn Rose along with a group of friends and family, continues to this day. Because of you, our community has weathered the COVID storm going from struggling to greater resilience. In no small measure because you have continued to believe in the work that we do.

**You have done incredible things for the most vulnerable people in the San Fernando Valley.** Thank you.

Janet Marinaccio  
President & CEO

## CORPORATE SPOTLIGHT



**WE ARE SO GRATEFUL** for the dedicated partnership of LA Care Health Plan. During the pandemic in 2020, LA Care donated generously and sent volunteers to help distribute food to people in need. And this year, LA Care is sponsoring 12 food distributions, allowing MEND to reach thousands more people in need of food. Every month, the company's amazing staff can be seen handing out food and sharing smiles. Thank you, LA Care, for lending a much-needed hand during a time when our community needs it most.



*continued from cover*

"We were visiting because they had been adopted in MEND's Christmas program," he says. The family lived in a small, abandoned store. Ed was there to drop off food, clothing and toys for the holidays. "It was a really difficult living," he recalls.

The family stayed on his mind throughout the holidays. After Christmas, Ed dropped by again.

He recalls: "The kids were so happy, they brought out their toys and clothes, and showed me what they got. Their mother kept bringing up a sweater she received – she called it a *beautiful pink sweater*... Finally, I asked her if I could see it, since she was so happy with it. It is then that she shared that she had packed it and sent it to her mother. 'My mother never had anything new in her life,' she said." Ed was quiet for a while.

The fledgling group's mission attracted people from across the San Fernando Valley and beyond. This included two nuns, Sister Elizabeth Barber and Sister Sue Schneider, who helped "staff" the first MEND service center. In addition to distributing food, they led classes in art, gardening, tutoring for children and English classes for adults.

While MEND has evolved through the decades, what has never changed is the heart that so many kind and giving people like you have brought to intervene with care and compassion in the lives of hurting people. 2020 certainly confirmed to MEND and our community that it is blessed with incredibly generous people, willing to give of themselves in times of great need.



Ed, Carolyn, and their friends and neighbors saw a great need back in 1971, and knew that they could not do it alone, **just as today we know we cannot do it without you.** And all of our efforts, ultimately, are for families like the one Ed recalls fondly from the early years. Their story provides a glimpse into the lives of the individuals and families MEND has served through the years and continue to serve today; families that are truly grateful for the help you give and, are often ready to share the little they have with others.

**We are deeply grateful for the legacy that you have enabled, and for the 50 years of services that you have provided.**



## HANNAH'S STORY

**"IF IT WASN'T FOR MEND** being there for us, I don't even know what we would have done as kids. I still smile so brightly just thinking about the joy MEND sparked," says Hannah. Today, Hannah is a 32-year-old professional and supporter, but when she first came in contact with MEND, she was a sweet 6-year-old living with her family in a garage. The family's hard times lasted more than a decade and included bouts with homelessness. Life improved only after Hannah's Mom got clean from drugs. But even during their worst years, Hannah remembers fondly the gifts, blankets, backpacks and wonderful food she received from MEND.

On behalf of all the children who grow up coming to MEND for food, holiday toys, back-to-school or other events; we are forever grateful for kind donors like you who bring joy to their lives.

## KARLA'S STORY



**KARLA AND HER YOUNG FAMILY** are among thousands of San Fernando Valley families that relied on MEND for food assistance in 2020. After she lost her house-cleaning job, she shares that *for months* she was afraid her family would be evicted or would lose their electricity. And even after our case staff assured her there were resources available to her and things she could do to minimize risk, her stress kept her up at night. She adds: "MEND's help made me so thankful not to worry about food. I have no idea what I would have done if they did not exist. I am so grateful for MEND and the people who support MEND."

She never has to worry about keeping her family fed thanks to the fresh produce and essentials that you make possible through your gifts.

## PARTNERS FOR THE FUTURE

A **WELL-PLANNED GIFT** sustains your generosity after your lifetime, and makes a powerful statement about the legacy you wish to leave.

If you have already included MEND – Meet Each Need with Dignity in your will, thank you! Your gift, when the time comes, *hopefully far into the future*, will continue MEND's life transforming services in this community.

Please contact Chanya Blumenkrantz, Chief Development Officer at, (818) 686-7320 if you have any questions or would like to receive additional information to help in your decision. You can also find legacy information and sample documents at our online site here: <https://mendpoverty.org/legacy-society>

***In the end, if the question is how you want to be remembered, then there's no better way than in the impact your legacy will make in the lives of people in need.***

Thank you for your support!