

MEET EACH NEED WITH DIGNITY



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*40 Years of MENDING poverty*

Four decades ago a small group of people working from three garages came together to help the poorest families of the northeast San Fernando Valley. They collected food, used clothing and furniture for families referred by local schools and churches and gave themselves the name, MEND – Meet Each Need with Dignity.

Today, MEND is the largest poverty-relief agency in the Valley serving as many as 32,000 poverty-level clients each month and seeing every day how a little help can transform someone's life.

The transformation, of course, begins with MEND itself. Forty years later the handful of people working to make a difference has become 3200 volunteers and the garages have evolved into two large facilities, both located in Pacoima. The MEND Center on San Fernando Road houses an emergency food bank, clothing center, medical, dental and vision clinics, shower facilities, and rooms for community meetings. The Van Nuys Blvd building is the site of the Rose Education and Training Center, named after Ed and Carolyn Rose, two of MEND's founding volunteers who are still active in the organization today.

As MEND marks its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and celebrates its achievements, the true success obviously lies with the people it has helped, whether it's through an English class, a job training program or a box of food.

MEND President and CEO Marianne Haver Hill says the commitment remains to help people escape the bonds of poverty and provide a foothold towards stability and self-reliance.

The need for assistance, however, has never been greater as the effects of the recession and unemployment have had a dramatic impact.

“In the last few years, we have seen a 100% increase in individuals asking for help in several of our programs and this has provided challenges in keeping up with demand. But using its

volunteer model of service delivery, MEND has proactively increased its volunteer recruitment as well as donated goods to expand its programs.

“As we look back on four decades of giving, healing and mending, we honor MEND’s humble beginnings and celebrate how far we’ve come, but at the same time we are preparing for challenging days ahead as more and more people face critical times,” says Haver Hill.

MEND will hold celebrations marking its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary on Saturday, March 26, during its annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner at the San Fernando Road Center. Past board presidents, as well as many volunteers active in the early years of MEND’s history will be honored during this event.

Other upcoming events include the Annual MEND Poverty Conference on June 15 which brings together leading anti-poverty advocates to discuss challenges in the fight against poverty, maximizing existing resources and exploring areas of opportunity for collaboration.

This year, MEND was selected to host Los Angeles’ only officially sanctioned Oscar party with proceeds directly benefiting MEND. The Oscar viewing party during the 83rd Academy Awards® ceremony was part of Oscar Night® America, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences’ outreach program.

Following is a timeline highlighting key points in MEND's 40 years.

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## MEND Timeline: Looking Back on 40 Years

- **1971:** MEND is founded by a small group of people working from three garages who want to help the neediest families of the Northeast San Fernando Valley. They collect food, used clothing, and furniture for families referred by local schools and churches. Home visits are also made to recipients to help determine their needs
- **TODAY:** MEND is the largest poverty-relief agency in the Valley, serving as many as 32,000 poverty-level clients each month, and utilizing more than 3200 volunteers.
- **1976:** MEND becomes a non-profit 501c(3) organization.
- **1981:** MEND welcomes its first full-time volunteers from The Order of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus. These volunteers are pivotal to MEND's operations as services to the community are expanded.
- **1982:** MEND operations move to a warehouse on Van Nuys Blvd. in Pacoima. English as a Second Language (ESL) classes begin.
- **TODAY:** The original MEND building is now an education and training center with programs for adults and children
- **1985:** An opportunity to purchase the building for \$150,000 leads to \$90,000 being raised in three months for the down payment.
- **1987:** Renovation of the building is underway. The first paid staff member and Executive Director, Marianne Haver Hill, joins MEND.
- **1988:** The renovated MEND Center opens offering food and clothing distribution, English as a Second Language classes and dental services.
- **1991:** A free medical and dental clinic, staffed by volunteer health professionals, is opened to provide basic care for uninsured, low-income patients.
- **TODAY:** The medical and dental clinics provide family practice, women's care, hypertension and diabetes education and treatment, counseling, vision care, dental hygiene instruction and dental procedures, chiropractic treatment, and acupuncture. Health education programs and a dispensary are also offered to MEND patients.

- **1992:** Computer Lab starts with five terminals to enhance English learning and to provide job training to MEND students.
- **TODAY:** Twenty-five computers are available for classes held Tuesdays through Saturdays, providing training to more than 295 adults and children annually.
- **1994:** The Northridge Earthquake severely damages the facility, but operations continue. Kaufman and Broad provides earthquake repairs at their cost and brings the building up to code.
- **1996:** The MEND Center is expanded into a beautiful 20,000 sq.ft. facility, renovated by R.E. Lee Design and Construction, Inc.
- **1998:** Job Skills training program is started to provide clients with opportunities to gain experience through a structured volunteer program in the various MEND departments.
- **TODAY:** Several hundred low-income individuals receive training each year in dental and medical assisting, food service, warehouse and inventory, office skills, and other career fields.
- **2001:** MEND celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a gala silent auction and dinner.
- **2003:** MEND opens escrow on a property on San Fernando Rd. in Pacoima for a new building to house MEND's rapidly growing services.
- **2004:** MEND pays off property and begins designs for new 40,000 sq. ft. building.
- **2005:** Construction begins.
- **2007:** Grand opening of the new facility which includes an emergency food bank; clothing center; medical, dental and vision clinics; shower facilities; and rooms for community meetings.
- **2008:** MEND launches its shower program for the homeless. Showers are available one day a week for four hours.
- **TODAY:** Showers are available two days a week serving as many as 80 clients.
- **2010:** MEND is chosen by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to be the charity in Los Angeles to host an Oscar Night® America benefit on February 27, 2011.
- **2011:** MEND marks 40 years of MENDING poverty.