

January 21, 2004

The New Year is a time of new beginnings – we think about resolutions, and make plans to change habits, to re-allocate our time, to review our investments. You've probably seen the ads for credit cards that give you back money for every dollar you spend, and you get pitches from investment firms on ways to "make your money work for you."

Have you thought about getting change for your money...in a way that helps those living on the edge? You have the power to make significant changes for your needy neighbors who come to MEND. How? By making a resolution in 2004 to make a financial commitment to MEND on a regular basis.

Let me give you some examples of how your monthly gift could make a difference:

- Jose came in to the medical clinic in July, and was diagnosed with severe diabetes. It just so happened that MEND had received several grants the previous year to fund the purchase of medicines but these grants had all been spent. We anticipated receiving new medical grants soon. But in that "in-between" time, we counted on pledge donors to "fill in the gaps" so that Jose did not have to leave the MEND dispensary empty-handed.
- Luz has been a student in our English as a Second Language program for some time, and she also participates in our women's support group called "Mujeres Hoy!". She has struggled with insecurity, with domestic violence issues, and with poverty for years, but recently, she has been thinking she might have the courage to enroll in MEND's Office Skills program with the longer term goal of pursuing a job. It so happens that, this past year, the foundations we've approached who have responded favorably to our proposals have funded healthcare and emergency food, but few grants have come in for our Education and Training Center. Pledge donors allowed us to continue these empowerment programs without interruption for participants like Luz.
- The number of recipients receiving emergency food from MEND has gone up by __% since 1996. We were fortunate to receive more than \$3.8 million in food donations during the last fiscal year, from sources all over Los Angeles County. But it costs money to keep the trucks in operation that are scheduled to pick up these donated goods, even with volunteer drivers. Pledge donors made sure that MEND workers could fill up with gas and get regular maintenance on our vehicles.

Normally, I don't write letters such as this one because MEND is blessed to have an outstanding fund raising team of volunteers who write appeals to individuals, prepare proposals to foundations and businesses, and coordinate special events.

Today, however, there is a sense of urgency, which is why I am appealing to you personally.

MEND has experienced tremendous growth in recent years in the numbers of clients we serve, as well as the programs we offer to our needy recipients. An expanding volunteer base has brought vitality and new directions within each department, and last year, provided more than 1300 individuals the opportunity to make a significant difference for those living in poverty.

The fact is, MEND needs more steady income to make sure we don't fall behind in our most basic commitments to "meet each need with dignity" for our clients as well as for our volunteers. Would you be willing to make a monthly (or quarterly) pledge?

Thank you in advance for your concern for your neighbors in need who are assisted and empowered through MEND. I can assure you that your money will make change – great change – for these families and individuals. God bless you for your generosity.

Sincerely,

Marianne Haver Hill
Executive Director

P.S. Your monthly (or quarterly) pledge of \$10, \$25, \$50, \$100 – or more! - will ensure that people like Jose and Luz can move forward to lead healthy, productive lives that are self-sustaining. Thank you!