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NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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San Fernando Valley's Largest Poverty Agency Grows from a 2-Car Garage to a 40,000 Square Foot Center on March 31

Pacoima, CA, March 14, 2007 – With its roots stemming from a Mission Hills couple's commitment to the poor by storing food and furniture in their two-car garage, MEND (Meet Each Need with Dignity) will now celebrate the grand opening of a new 40,000 square foot multi-service center on Saturday, March 31 at 10641 San Fernando Road in Pacoima.

The celebration of the newest site for the San Fernando Valley's largest poverty agency will include a ceremonial ribbon cutting ceremony at 10:30 a.m., featuring Congressman Howard Berman, State Senator Alex Padilla, County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky and City Council Member-Elect Richard Alarcon. The free event is open to the public and will include tours of the new facility from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

"I never expected anything like this when we first started MEND," said Ed Rose, who with his wife Carolyn began collecting food and furniture to serve the poor back in the late 60s before joining forces with 17 others to establish MEND in 1971. "I get all excited every time I visit the new building."

Members of several churches in the Northeast San Fernando Valley started MEND by establishing food pantries out of three garages – one being the Roses. Eventually, these food pantries were established in Catholic schools and later in a public storage facility, Rose said. MEND is no longer directly connected to any specific religious group, but continues to draw support from various faith communities as well as non-sectarian organizations.

Today, MEND serves more than 40,000 recipients a month and is the ninth largest food bank in California (second largest in Los Angeles County). In 2006, MEND provided more than \$4.6 million worth of donated food, \$450,000 worth of donated clothing and nearly \$700,000 worth of donated medical, vision and dental care to those in need.

MEND currently operates in a 20,000 square foot facility on Van Nuys Boulevard in Pacoima. Once the bright new center – featuring decorative tile and attractive, playful interiors – opens later this month, the current center will continue to be used as the agency’s education and training department, which includes a computer lab that will be expanded.

The new center will allow its recipients more room to try on clothing (with three dressing rooms) and will provide for an on-site food warehouse instead of gathering food from several storage areas throughout Los Angeles.

With the building’s opening, MEND will also launch a “showers for the homeless” program in partnership with LA Family Housing.

MEND’s medical clinic will be moved to the new site. This clinic, currently located in a small 1,500 square foot space within the current building, will be expanded to a 10,000 square foot area of the new building. The dental clinic – through a partnership with Loma Linda University -- will increase from three dental chairs to eight.

“In addition, MEND will re-establish its furniture distribution program, which we had to discontinue because we ran out of space,” said Marianne Haver Hill, Executive Director of MEND.

Even though MEND is opening its new center, which Ed Rose likes to call “a little Costco,” don’t expect the Roses to be parking their cars in their garage soon.

“I’ve got some good furniture in there right now that I need to take to MEND,” Ed Rose said. “I received it from someone who was restoring an old house, and it was just too good for me to pass up.”

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