

With dignity and respect, powered by volunteers, MEND's mission is to break the bonds of poverty by providing basic human needs and a pathway to self-reliance.



SUMMER | 2016

matters

mendpoverty.org



INGRID TORRES

"I love playing the flute. It's my favorite instrument" says eight year old **Ingrid Torres**. She is among 70 kids who have taken advantage of MEND's Summer Youth Program. Two years ago, Ingrid's grandmother and legal guardian, Audelia Hernandez, enrolled her in the Youth Services Program after learning about its services. During the regular school year, Ingrid receives homework help, one-on-one tutoring, and participates in enrichment activities offered through the program.

"Education is really important. That is why I bring Ingrid here" says Audelia. Since the summer program began, from Wednesday through Friday, Audelia sits patiently in the lobby for four hours while Ingrid attends art, music, cooking and self-defense classes.

"It is good to keep children occupied – especially during the summer. If MEND did not have these summer classes, Ingrid would have been playing video games all day at home. That is no way for a child to learn."

For Ingrid, one of the highlights of her summer is the friendship she has developed with her music teacher, Amber. "Amber lets me take the flute home to practice. She is really cool." Ingrid looks forward to getting better at playing the instrument and would like to keep practicing even after the summer classes are over.

Audelia is grateful to MEND for giving her grandchild the opportunity to learn the arts. "When the kids learn here, the hope is that they pay it forward when they get older. Kids are really our future."

Upcoming Events

Baby Shower
September 28

Friends for Good Breakfast
(Donor Recognition Event)
TBA

Super Saturday Home
Visiting
October 29

THE MEND WISH LIST

Please help us meet critical needs with your time, contributions and services:

Volunteers Needed:

- Resume Editors: 3 hours per week
- Mock Interviewers: 2 hours per week, 2 weeks per mo.
- Home Visitor: 4hrs/wk Tues-Saturday
- ESL Teachers: 1 x week Tues-Friday
- Computer Lab Instructors: 3hrs/wk Tues-Thurs
- Data Entry: 6hrs/wk Tues-Fri
- Kinder Care Attendant: Saturday 9-1
- Clothing Donation Receiver: Flex Hours
- Tutors: 2hrs/wk Tues-Thursday 3-6PM
- Youth yoga instructor: 1 hour a week
- Dental Specialists: 3+hrs/month
- Optometrist: 3hrs/month Sat
- Physicians & Nurse Practitioners: 3hrs/wk or once a month
- Registered Dietitians: 3+hrs/month
- Drivers: Flexible Hours
- Kitchen Assistant- Cooking, Prepping & Sanitation: 3+hrs/wk

Wish List Items:

- Swivel Computer chairs
- Dictionaries
- Bulletin Boards (large)
- Dry Erase Boards (large)
- NEW Computers for Dental Software
- School Supplies
- Disposable & other Dental Materials
- Shoes
- Single and double strollers
- Slow cookers, blenders, vacuums
- Folding Shopping carts
- Electric wheelchairs & walkers with seats
- Adult Bicycles
- Pallet Jacks

Food Donations needed:

- Soup, Tuna, Peanut Butter, Cereal, Granola/Protein Bars

Oral Hygiene products needed:

- Toothbrushes, Toothpaste, Mouth Rinse



The 9th Annual MENDING Poverty Conference

"Affordable Housing and Healthy Neighborhoods—Working Together Toward Sustainability" was the theme at the 9th Annual MENDING Poverty Conference. The conference, co-hosted by MEND and Valley Nonprofit Resources, was held on June 8, 2016. **Trent Stamp**, CEO of the Eisner Foundation, welcomed conference attendees and was the featured guest speaker at the nonprofit CEO breakfast roundtable. Mr. Stamp stressed the importance of collaboration between philanthropic organizations and nonprofits to address issues that plague society. Building on Mr. Stamp's remarks, **Councilmember Felipe Fuentes** spoke

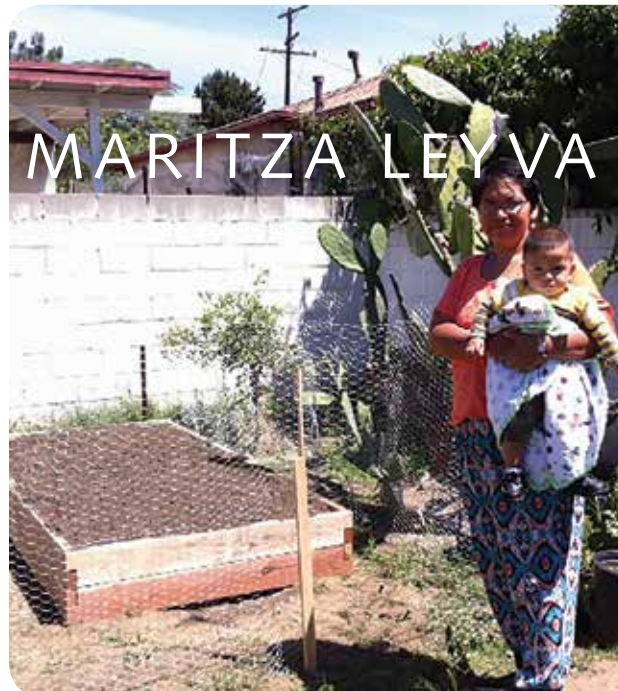
briefly about the housing crisis locally and how it can be resolved.

The morning keynote speaker, **Mercedes Marquez**, former Assistant Secretary in the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, shared her personal experiences working in the housing sector and provided some lessons learned about how to overcome these challenges.

The conference included three concurrent workshops titled, "What's the Housing Mix in Your Neighborhood? Housing 101," "Who is Your Best Advocate? Engaging Clients in Public Policy," and "What Does Stable Housing Look Like? Models and Resources for Housing Stability."

Lunch speaker, **Rushmore Cervantes**, General Manager of the LA Housing and Community Investment Department, closed the conference by providing an overview of housing needs in Los Angeles.

Conference sponsors included Agora Realty, The California Endowment, The California Wellness Foundation, The Honorable Felipe Fuentes, Habitat for Humanity – San Fernando/Santa Clarita Valleys, Kaiser Permanente, The Honorable Sheila Kuehl, LA Care, LA Family Housing, Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County, New Capital LLC, Thomas Safran & Associates, Union Bank and Wells Fargo.



When 39 year-old **Maritza Leyva** became part of MEND's Grow Together Project she would never imagine that this opportunity would serve a need she would soon have.

As an uninsured client, Maritza receives vision and dental care at MEND's Medical and Dental Clinic. A few months ago, she heard about MEND's Grow Together Project. Her interest peaked when she learned she could have her very own home garden in her backyard.

Maritza and her family became recipients of a home garden this past April. Soon after that, her husband was diagnosed with diabetes. "[My husband] needs to make a lifestyle change and I knew this garden will be a huge resource for that."

This summer, Maritza attended a series of cooking classes offered to Grow Together families to learn how to put their harvest to use. "I run out of recipe ideas and I thought this opportunity would help me introduce new food options to my family." Maritza was excited to share that she would be using the latest recipe she learned for her husband: roasted cauliflower tacos with a Mayan salsa.

When asked about her future plans, her answer is simple: "I want to see my garden bloom." Maritza hopes to continue to grow fruits and vegetables and learn how to use them in healthy recipes for her husband and four children.

"Everyone should know that MEND helps," she says, "people always wait for the help to come to the front door but the help is here, with many, many resources."



Music fun at MEND's Summer Youth Program

Four children sit or wiggle on brightly colored chairs while their volunteer music teacher, **Amber Frias**, talks about songs for an upcoming concert. One by one the students practice songs on their instruments—a flute, clarinet, saxophone and drums—while Amber offers gentle instruction and support. Giggling is allowed in this class, and the young students seem relaxed, happy and interested in getting better musically.

It's just another day in the Summer Youth Program at MEND, where kids' days are filled with playing music, making art, cooking, taking local trips and having fun in a safe, supportive environment. The summer program classes take place in MEND's Education and Training Center building that was recently renovated with

colorful murals and open, well-lighted spaces.

But while kids are learning creative skills, they're also learning to get along with each other—which for some can be a huge personal leap. It all happens with the help of sensitive, caring volunteer teachers like Amber.

Amber, 21, works at Wal-Mart from 4:30 am to 10 am, then volunteers at MEND later in the morning, four days each week. She's mother to a 2-year-old daughter, and a student at Valley College, where she studies child development.

"I love working with kids," she says. Her music students range in age from 8 to 14 and aside from teaching them classic tunes, she allows them to learn songs from video games.

"They mean a lot to me," she says. "They keep growing, and inspiring each other to do better." She tells of one 11-year-old music student who had the reputation of being a bully. "At first, she did not want to participate," Amber remembers. But within a week, the girl's attitude shifted. "It turned out she is super talented and became super nice to everybody."

Music is one way to show kids the bigger world, and the front wall of Amber's classroom features photographs of famous musicians. "A lot of the kids have never been introduced to any music," she says. "These photos show that musicians are real people."

For more on this story, visit our website at mendpoverty.org

Won't you please give serious thought to ways in which you and your family can share your time, talents, and resources with MEND? If you would like to become involved, please fill out this coupon and mail it to:

**MEND — Meet Each Need With Dignity
10641 N. San Fernando Rd.
Pacoima, CA 91331**

or call us at MEND: 818.896.0246

**SUMMER 2016
MEND Newsletter**

Please return the completed form with your donation. Tell us how you heard about MEND

I wish to make a donation of \$ _____ (all charitable donations are tax deductible)

My check is enclosed

For credit card donations, please visit MEND's secure website, www.mendpoverty.org
Now accepting American Express, Discover, VISA, Mastercard and Paypal

I would like to volunteer my services to a MEND program or committee. What would you like to do?

I would like to help "The Christmas Program" by (please specify below):

I would like to put MEND in my will

Please note my 'Change of address'

Please remove me from your mailing list

Name _____ Phone _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____



The garden at MEND's San Fernando Road building is bursting with wonderful produce for our summer hot meals program, thanks to the dedicated work of our volunteer gardeners. MEND client families especially appreciate these meals, as many of them have children who are out of school and therefore don't receive subsidized lunches.

And our MEND trucks are arriving almost daily full of donated fresh fruits and vegetables that we put into our emergency food boxes.

Currently 84 job trainees are pursuing on the job experience in our MEND departments, choosing from among 14 different career tracks. In addition to work experience, they are taking classes in customer service, job search skills, resume building, and more.

In our Education and Training Center, an innovative summer series of weekly English as a Second Language workshops were offered on topics such as Readers' Theatre, conversation, practical writing, grammar, and so on. Likewise, the MEND Computer Lab classes included everything from keyboarding all the way up to Excel and PowerPoint. Our neighborhood children benefit from summer camps featuring classes in music, art cooking, woodworking, self defense, computer coding and other technology offerings.

We are especially grateful this year to our Summer Empowerment Sponsors who financially supported our Education and Training Center programs with generous donations: Lisa Feintech, Jessica and Jerry Edmonds, Andrea Provenzale, Abby Sher, and Gretchen Trent.

MEND services don't slow down during the summer, so a special thanks goes to all of you who continue to share your "time, talent and treasure" to make the work of MEND possible!

Marianne Haver Hill

PRESIDENT AND CEO

DONOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank You to all MEND donors, including foundations, businesses, and other groups that have contributed since our last issue. Please visit mendpoverty.org for a more detailed list.

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Thanks to our Individual Donors as well!

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If I can show you a simple way to redirect your taxes to benefit...

- You
- Your family
- And MEND's deserving families working to better their lives

Would you give me 20 minutes of your time to discuss a gift to MEND in your will?

Please contact **Katie Patrykus** at (818) 686-7362 or give@MENDpoverty.org or visit MENDpoverty.org/legacy for more information.

Thank you!

