For Immediate Release
December 7, 2017

Contact: Nene Ogbechie
nene@mendpoverty.org
Tel: 818-686-7335

Santa’s Helicopter and Red Cadillac Spotted in Pacoima

Santa Claus to deliver gifts to families in need thanks to Anthem Blue Cross and Southern California Gas Company

Santa makes his special flight again this year for MEND – Meet Each Need with Dignity, the San Fernando Valley’s largest poverty-relief agency. Santa will arrive by helicopter and deliver gifts for MEND’s annual Christmas Basket Program. The event is the unofficial start of MEND’s Christmas distribution where pre-registered families choose toys from the MEND “Toy Land” and receive their holiday basket.

WHERE: Santa’s helicopter – generously donated by Group 3 Aviation - will land at Whiteman Airport, across from the MEND Center, near Pierce Street and a classic red Cadillac will drive him to the MEND Center at 10641 N. San Fernando Rd, Pacoima.

WHEN: Friday, December 8, 2017
Helicopter arrives at 8:30 a.m. Basket distribution will continue at MEND until 4 p.m.

WHO: MEND identified over 900 of the area’s neediest families to receive Christmas Baskets which include enough food for Christmas dinner plus staple items, a new blanket and a new gift/toy for each child under the age of 14.

MEND’s 2017 Christmas Basket Program is sponsored by Anthem Blue Cross, a fourth year sponsor of the program, and Southern California Gas Company.

WHY: To enhance Christmas and the holiday season for families who would otherwise do without.

VISUALS:

- Santa Claus flying in helicopter and arriving at MEND Center in red convertible Cadillac while families await his arrival, and attendees visiting with Santa Claus.
- Families awaiting Santa Claus’ arrival in huge line around the block.
- Families and children receiving Christmas food baskets for their holiday meals and selecting toys and books from the huge selection of donated items.
ABOUT MEND

MEND—Meet Each Need with Dignity, serves an average of 37,000 clients each month, while remarkably keeping operating costs to less than 6%. Born as a volunteer-powered organization four decades ago in a garage, today MEND benefits from the assistance of approximately 5000 volunteers (and only 30 paid staffers) to implement its vast array of programs that provide food; clothing; job training; medical, dental and vision care; classes for adults in English as a Second Language, literacy, and computer training; showers and other services for the homeless; and a Holiday Basket Program for approximately 1000 pre-screened families in need. In 2016, 187,252 volunteer hours were provided, equating to 103 full-time employees.

# # #