

The Sixth Annual MENDing Poverty Conference was held on June 13, 2013 at the MEND Center in Pacoima and was hosted by MEND and Valley Nonprofit Resources. The conference theme was "Healthcare Reform for Low" Income Individuals: Included or Invisible?" The conference also addressed the fundamental roles of nonprofit organizations serving people and families living in poverty. Among the speakers were California Endowment CEO Dr. Robert Ross, Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Dr. Jonathan Fielding, and HealthNet Medicare/Medicaid Compliance executive Jason Silva. Associate Director of Visión y Compromiso Melinda Cordero-Barzaga, received the 2013 MENDing Poverty Nonprofit Leadership Award because of her work and leadership in the Los Angeles nonprofit sector. Retiring Los Angeles City Councilmember Richard Alarcon was also honored for his longterm commitment to anti-poverty initiatives and his support of our annual conference. Approximately 200 nonprofit executives and program managers from poverty agencies throughout Los Angeles participated in the plenary sessions and workshops.

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From left to right (bottom): Nene Ogbechie, Andrea Banuelos, Maggie Torres, Marianne Haver Hill, Jenny Gutierrez, Lupe Martin and Maria Jimenez Middle: Denise Sanchez, Sandyha Palhan, DDS, Laura Robledo, Jennifer Silver, Tarry Kang, Charlette Brown, Andrea Lopez, Gabriela Olea, Veronica Soto, Angelica Gonzalez and Yesenia Danesta Top: Victor Estrada, Richard Weinroth, Luke Ippoliti, Jesus De Santiago, Mark Sherstinsky, OD, Christian Serrano, Wilson Herrera and Kenny Doyle (not pictured): Tremain Baker, Dinora Cubias, Scott Mikels, Gabriel Ramos and Lilia Soller



M ENDing poverty through better health.

MISSION: 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. VISION: ALL MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY LIVING IN POVERTY ATTAIN SELF-RELIANCE AND CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY AS CARING HUMAN BEINGS.



Xavier Guillen

A few years ago **Xavier Guillen** thought it would be a good idea to lose weight. But unlike many entering middle age, it wasn't a sideways glance into a mirror that motivated him. "My glucose level was off the charts." says the 47-year-old mechanic from Pacoima, who first went to MEND's Medical Clinic in 2006. "The lab work came back and the results showed my diabetes was out of control."

Xavier, unemployed during the economic downturn and without insurance, had been taking insulin for five years before going to MEND. The first step doctors took was to prescribe additional medication. However, he says, the medical staff did more than dispense drugs. They gave him the kind of encouragement he needed to embrace a healthier lifestyle. "They kind of picked on me," he says good-naturedly. "Every time I saw the doctors they told me to lose weight. Eventually I listened."

Just as important were the services the clinic offered, particularly a nutrition class that played a significant part in Xavier losing eighty pounds in three years. "I had a terrible diet," he says. "Pizza, donuts, frozen burritos. I wanted to change and the course helped me a great deal."

The dramatic weight loss paid off. Xavier no longer needs insulin and recently began taking less powerful medication to control his diabetes. Although the decision to lead a healthier life was ultimately his. Xavier says MEND deserves much of the credit. "I wanted to take control of my life," he says. "It was time. But I couldn't have done it without MEND."



Feliciano Moses Lerma

Feliciano Moses Lerma is a few weeks away from his 80th birthday. He has a full-time job, feels "fantastic", and his energy is contagious. There was a time, however, when Feliciano had nothing.

After serving 20 years in prison, he came out with no home, no money and no teeth. In prison they pulled his bad teeth.

Feliciano had no option but to live on skid row. He had no food, no shelter and his health was poor.

A parole officer finally helped place him in a shared room just a few blocks from MEND. "I thank God because he is the one that directs my life," says Feliciano, "and he directed me to MEND. "When you come out of prison you look for a new path, a new future. This was given to me by MEND. I was given a chance at life."

Feliciano received food and clothes from MEND. He was also given new teeth. MEND's free Dental Clinic is staffed by volunteer dentists and dental professionals that provide essential dental care for those in our community who are uninsured and cannot afford to pay for healthcare.

Feliciano says that, after receiving dentures, his health improved dramatically because he could eat again. He was also getting nutritious food. "The teeth, clothing, nutrition made me feel human again. I could finally smile," he says.

Feliciano felt confident enough to go on job interviews and today has a full-time job he loves. He manages 52 apartments and has his own apartment and car.

Recently, he returned to MEND to personally thank the Dental Clinic staff and volunteers for their help. "MEND didn't just give me teeth, they gave me life," says Feliciano.



MEND's Eye Care Clinic was founded in 2001. The only free eye clinic in the San Fernando Valley, it provides eye exams, glaucoma testing and prescription glasses for the community's neediest residents. Many of them have difficulty paying for basic necessities and simply don't have the funds for something as necessary as eveglasses.

One such family is the Garcia family in Sylmar. They are struggling in today's economy where jobs are difficult to come by, but their three boys are strong and dedicated students. Their eldest is in college, their 14-year-old is a straight A student, and their youngest,12-year-old Fernando, says he gets 'Mostly A's".

Last year Fernando began to notice his vision was bad. He could not see the board in school and had to borrow notes from his classmates after class. He also began to get headaches.

His mother, Olivia, says the family has been receiving food and clothing from MEND and she was aware of the Eye Care Clinic. A guick exam showed that Fernando needed glasses

Olivia says had there been no help from MEND, Fernando would just have to get by with poor eyesight until the family had the resources to pay for eyeglasses. She went on to share that "It's the worst feeling in the world when you can't help your children; you are so frustrated and feel like a bad mother"

"We are so thankful for the help MEND gives us. It's provided in the most kind, sensitive way," she adds. Meanwhile, Fernando loves his new glasses and says he sees everything so much clearer. The Eve Care Clinic is a collaboration

ADMINISTRATIVE AND OTHER EXPENSES \$202,226

2%

FUNDRAISING

\$423,603

PROGRAM SERVICES \$12,556,894

between MEND, the Lions Club and the San Fernando Valley Optometric Society.

LEADERSHIP LETTER

MEND's Health Clinic has grown dramatically in recent years, both in the numbers of uninsured, low-income patients treated, as well as in the quality and scope of our Clinic services. This is largely due to collaborations with universities, hospitals, and health organizations that have partnered with our staff and core clinic volunteers. With MEND's holistic approach, patients can receive medical, vision and dental services, counseling, and health education, all under one roof.

But beyond helping our patients feel better, MEND workers understand that good health fits into our agency's mission to "provide pathways to self-reliance." For example, a child living in poverty with poor vision will do much better in school if he can obtain free glasses. An unemployed adult can go to interviews with confidence and has a better chance at employment if missing and broken teeth are replaced. Someone with diabetes or other medical issues will miss less work and has a better chance of keeping a job if health conditions are managed with medication, exercise and good diet.

In fact, much of our work in 2013 was spent in giving focus to what it means for MEND to "provide pathways" to self-reliance". During the first six months, our Boards, subject matter experts, and staff worked diligently on the development of a new 2013-2016 strategic plan. Two signature program initiatives came out of this planning process, both of which were started in the fall. The first is "(M)ENDing Poverty: 1000 Clients Job Ready", which is an effort to expand and strengthen MEND's job training programs and other services that support employment readiness. The second is the launch of a comprehensive database called "Efforts to Outcomes" that will allow us to track clients' progress toward self-sufficiency.

Looking back on 2013, there was strong evidence that when individuals and organizations from all sectors of our community come together, we can truly move people out of poverty and on to self-reliance. MEND is grateful to our thousands of volunteers, partnering organizations, and our financial and in-kind donors for making the MEND mission a reality.





Total Expenses \$13,182,721

2013 MEND PROGRAM STATISTICS

Total of all volunteers (unduplicated) 5,225	
Total of new volunteers Total volunteer hours	4.023
	172,609
Emergency Food Department Total encounters (MEND + Outreach)	234,227
Total volunteer hours	40,771
Home Garden Training	
Total families Total volunteer hours	72 2,034
Clothing Center	2,034
Total encounters (MEND + Outreach)	168,196
Total volunteer hours	31,207
Christmas Program	
Total individuals Total volunteer hours	5,329 11,122
Medical and Vision Clinics	11,122
Total medical encounters	6,080
Total vision encounters	1,429
Total volunteer hours	15,413
Dental Clinic	
Total encounters Total volunteer hours	5,314 16,313
	10,515
Home Visiting	4 570
Total encounters Total volunteer hours	1,578 703
Education & Training Center	, 00
Adult Language Students	
Total students	607
Total volunteer hours	9,824
Computer Lab	207
Total students Total volunteer hours	287 3,052
Youth Services	0,002
Total students	100
Total volunteer hours	4,264
Sewing	
Total students Total volunteer hours	54 1,270
	1,270
Homeless Showers Total encounters	1,411
Total volunteer hours	527
Job Skills Training Program	
Total participants	1,081
Office (Recipient/Administration/Volunteer	
Services) Total volunteer hours	31,134
Board of Directors/Committee	e .,
Total volunteer hours	4,975

Pictured from left: Jenny Gutierrez, MPH, Chief Operating Officer Marianne Haver Hill. MS

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Maritza Recinos. MPA



WITH THANKS TO OUR 2013 PARTNERS IN MENDING POVERTY

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