OUR MISSION as a volunteer-driven organization, is to provide services that meet the basic human needs of individuals who reside in the Northeast San Fernando Valley. These services are provided in a manner that safeguards the dignity of all recipients while promoting self-reliance.

MEND’S PHILOSOPHY rests on the principles that (1) every person, created in the image of God, has innate human dignity and the right to be treated with respect; and (2) every person has the fundamental right to what is needed for a fully human life.
Dear Friends,

MEND is an agency that is GOING and GROWING! This annual report, will find examples of activities in each of our main departments that show evidence of how we are going – making a difference and improving services that will better the lives of the low-income clients we serve.

But all this GOING has meant that we are GROWING – so much so, in fact, that we have run out of space in the MEND Center for all that our volunteers and staff are doing! When we last re-modeled and doubled the size of our building in 1996, we were serving an average of 11,000 individuals every month. That number has now more than tripled: in 2002, we averaged 34,600 monthly! This growth has had the following impacts on our clients and volunteers:

Our Computer Lab is jammed packed with terminals – but not enough for all of the children that need to use them after school!

Our Hospitality Center and Kindercare rooms are often filled to overflowing!

We had to close the Valley’s only free furniture distribution program this year, because of a lack of space!

Emergency food is stored in downtown LA and elsewhere in the Valley, meaning that our volunteers spend many extra hours transporting food!

Clothing donations often come in the truckload – but there is no adequate space to sort and store these items before they are rotated into the Clothing Distribution Center!

During 2002, members of the MEND Board actively pursued the purchase of adjacent or nearby land for a major capital expansion project that will allow MEND to not only meet our current programmatic requirements, but will allow our agency to continue to actively grow. These efforts to buy land will continue during 2003.

Thanks so much to all of you who have supported MEND through your cash and in-kind donations, as well as your volunteer time.

"You are making possible MEND’s motto to “meet each need with dignity.”" – Joe Salas

2002-2003 MEND Board of Directors

President
Joe Salas
1st Vice President
Star Galdston
2nd Vice President
Steve Brown
Treasurer
Luzmaria G. Nelson
Secretary
Candaree Rose
Past President
Richard Marais, D.M.D.

Standing Committee Chairpersons

Fundraising
Richard W. Bush
Steve Brown
Management, Budget & Planning
Luzmaria G. Nelson
Public Relations

Carolyn Rose
Volunteer Development
Frank Sanchez

Members-At-Large
Lida Castillo
Hilda Garcia
Martha Hernandez
Audra Johnson
Jack Labrie
Lisa Pulido-Acosta
Robert Myers
Daniel Ruben, MD, MPH, M.A.
Bill Williams
Eduardo Palacios, Designated 11/20

Executive Director
Marianne Raver Hill

Learning to Sew for Fun or Profit

Conchita Alfaro and Liz Wilson brought their expertise in sewing to MEND by starting a sewing training program in 2002, which is providing hands-on teaching of the art of stitching and clothing design. The two women dedicate Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings to teaching MEND clients how to sew purses, quilts, and anything else that they would like to learn.

"I enjoy teaching this class because I feel that not only are the clients who come learning something new, but I also see it allowing them to feel confident in themselves and what they can do. This provides them with the courage to go out and look for a job,” said Judy, the volunteer.

New Kids’ Classes in 2002!

This past year on Saturday mornings, children from pre-kindergarten to 8th grade gathered at MEND’s Learning Center to work with volunteer teachers on reading, math and educational computer fun.

Children were placed in groups of approximately three or four to work on line work and by reading or math level. The volunteers had the same fit students each week and week after week, which helped to form special friendships. And those friendships, such as with Jaspal, received one-on-one help.

The classes on Saturdays are a valuable and popular resource for children, and each child looks forward to the hours they spend with us sharpening their skills and learning with other children. Some of the growing needs for the classes include dictionaries, flashcards, and sets of books for different grade levels. Extra volunteers are also welcomed!

Teeth to Toes Delights Children!

On June 20 and July 10, MEND facilitated its “Teeth to Toes” events. In attendance were third graders from Haddon Elementary School. The classes took turns rotating through MEND service and activity rooms.

Each child had a visit to MEND Dental Clinic, receiving a fluoride treatment and toothbrushes as well as instruction on the importance and benefits of dental hygiene. Then, the students were ushered into the Reading Room where some of MEND’s volunteers read several of the children’s favorite stories.

The classes took turns rotating through activity rooms.

Next, the children spent thirty minutes with the dietician where they learned how to make healthy and nutritious snacks.

At the end of their visit, the children were sent to the “Toes” part of the day.

Diabetic Case Management Program

The purpose of a two-year grant from the California Endowment is to provide in-home services to clients with behavior modification on smoking treatment and patient education.

Ninety percent of the diabetic participants lowered their blood sugar levels significantly in the initial six-month period. This collaborative effort from a team of health care professionals and patient professionals was at the halfway mark. Their comprehensive program includes development of a motivational model to teach hard-to-reach diabetics and hypertensives (high blood pressure) individuals.

Reaching out to various agencies to help in this planning stage, the MEND professional were able to learn more about these high risk patient groups. These assessments were made of each participant regarding nutrition, exercise, occupational and medical education of family and perfect patient member.

Patients have responded well to the personal attention they are receiving, including field trips to local supermarkets. A registered dietitian gives customized tours to show patients how to shop wisely and cost-effectively in order to meet their dietary requirements. They even provide product discount coupons for future purchases. With respect to keeping appointments with medical specialists, MEND provided taxi vouchers so patients have the opportunity to keep their appointments.

Helping Clients Look Their Best

MEND’s clothing program is a growing need for its clients. With each small donation of appropriate donations comes sorting, labeling and storing. But with open arms, the staff are taking on one more project—creating a special clothing resource for job-interview clothing. Clients who are in need of business attire for job interviews can visit the clothing center and make a special request for business clothing. The Clothing Center took on this project after identifying business attire as a growing need for its clients. Business clothing and accessories—clean, pressed, and on hangers—can be donated directly to MEND’s Clothing Center.

Volunteer Recognition Committee

Afroza (left) & Latif Waliwala (right) are participants in MEND’s Sewing Training program.

MEND Board of Directors 2001-2003

President
Marianne Raver Hill
Executive Directors
Joe Salas, MEND Board of Directors 2001-2003 President

MEND Job training participant Belita Garcia looks over her potential job clothing on hangers. My Art Catering business, "Buen gusto,” was started by MEND volunteer, Meir Saddia for sharing his talents and time with MEND.

Example • "The participating children were so proud of the results than they wear them to school!”

MEND job training participant Belita Garcia looks over her potential job clothing on hangers.