

# MEND

## matters



With dignity and respect, MEND's mission is to meet the immediate needs of individuals and families and increase their access to opportunities that strengthen their capacity to thrive.

[mendpoverty.org](http://mendpoverty.org)  
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## ANTHONY'S SECOND CHANCE WITH MEND

**IT'S SOMETHING NONE OF US CAN IGNORE.** More people than ever in Los Angeles are homeless or living in crisis. Many are struggling with substance abuse and mental illness, which in too many cases are the twin precipitating reasons for the set of circumstances that lead to loss of employment, home, family, and finally homelessness.

The weight and impact of living on the street are significant, and each month...or year spent unhoused makes recovery and rehabilitation harder, *but not impossible*, as you will see with Anthony's journey.

At MEND, our First Step services, generously funded by your kindness, offer care and support...the first step if you will... just when it's needed most. Those who are ready to address the issues that have kept them homeless, can find help at MEND in collaboration with other agencies in the community.

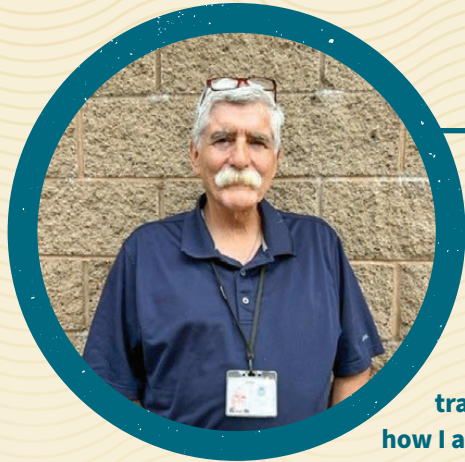
I know the challenge can sometimes seem too big but I

can say that your support makes a world of difference to someone who is homeless. While we may not be able to end the crisis, your help means that anyone who needs MEND's support will receive it. Offering a kind word, a hot meal, support to find accommodation and hope... that's what you and MEND do.

A man who is homeless recently shared: "I know that there's a better life, but when you're living on the streets... it's an impossible dream."

We hope that Anthony's story will show you how that "impossible dream" can be replaced with hope and a second chance by kind people like you.

Janet Marinaccio  
President & CEO



# ANTHONY'S STORY

**"I promised God that I would share my story every day, so I'm happy to tell you about it, Anthony says; "I'm going to be very transparent, because that's how I am now."**

If the word *gratitude* came with an image in the dictionary, it would be the photo of 64 year-old Anthony Guzman. He has a lot to be grateful for.

8 years ago he was a married homeowner with four children and a beautiful wife of 40 years. He was employed in a good management job, but behind the scenes, the picture wasn't pretty.

"My wife told me we needed to talk about something wrong with me. She didn't know what it was, but I was doing meth," he shares. The next day, Anthony left his home and did not see his family again for 6 years.

He adds: "I kept on with my selfish behavior, and I lived in my car."

Somehow, finally, he had had enough of being homeless. He was not proud of the man he had become

"I came to my senses enough to cry and ask God for help," Anthony says.

Shortly, he heard about a faith-based men's recovery house. He inquired about services, applied and was accepted. Now he had a place, a structure, companions, mentors, and, as he adds: "God watching over me."

And that's how Anthony first came to MEND. The men in the recovery house came to MEND to volunteer... and to receive donated groceries. Anthony's experience in trucking came in handy and he began to help with pickups and deliveries, as well as loading and unloading provisions.

Things were looking up for Anthony. He graduated from the recovery home, found a job and, critically, started to reconnect with his daughter who had never stopped tracking him. Anthony's future looked good.

But life had one more cruel twist for him.

In 2020, near the beginning of COVID, he was diagnosed with an aggressive tumor in his throat. It was a scary time. Four intense weeks of radiation and chemo followed. And through it all, the one highlight was his daughter taking him to his

daily treatments. After recuperating for almost a year, Anthony was well enough to help at the recovery house and resume volunteering at MEND. And he did just that.

**Anthony has been cancer-free for almost 3 years and he's thankful every day.**

About a year ago, an employment counselor at MEND alerted him to a driver position opening at the food bank. She felt that it was a good fit for him. Anthony agreed and immediately asked the onsite Gateways Employment Services for help with writing a resume, applying for the job and preparing for the interview. After an anxious week of waiting he was hired!

But this was not the end of Anthony's story. Most recently, MEND invited him to apply for another position – as the organization's Handyman. Once again he was successfully hired. He is particularly proud of the words of his hiring manager: "Trust is earned." He is trusted ...wow.

Anthony shares how much he enjoys his job and loves to come to MEND. He has recently moved into his own home, a perfect one-bedroom apartment. He cannot stop sharing photos of the place with everyone at MEND.

We are immensely proud of the arc Anthony's life has taken. He was given a second chance and seized it with all he had. He is not alone. Every year, because of your support, countless men and women at MEND receive access to opportunities that can help them restart their lives. Anthony is deeply grateful: "I'm especially thankful that my kids can see me the way I should be. Thank you for letting me share."

**And thank YOU for helping people like Anthony take a step towards a new beginning.**



**"MEND's kindness and humanity make me cry in a good way."  
– Ana, program participant.**

# RAUL'S NEW SHOES

**RAUL, A RETIRED GARDENER** in his late 60s, came to MEND in February of this year, after his doctor diagnosed him with prediabetes and hypertension. He was desperate to get healthier but was not sure where to begin. As a first step, MEND registered Raul to receive good & nutritious food to support his health. Next, Pathways to Wellness staff approached him to participate in health workshops, shopping demonstrations, and a walking group, among other activities. The latter was particularly hard for him but he persisted and began to see results. With a healthier diet and increased physical activity, Raul's weight started to drop and his hemoglobin A1C—the diabetes blood sugar marker - followed. By July he was no longer in the prediabetes range!

Excited at the achievement, Raul was encouraged to maintain his health. But to keep up with the walking group he loved, he needed better shoes. His current pair was too worn out to provide good support - it left his feet uncomfortable and sore. Raul shared his need with staff

and confided that he did not have the money to replace the shoes. MEND assessed Raul's situation and purchased a pair of quality walking shoes—durable, comfortable, and the right fit. Recently, Raul came in to pick up his new shoes. The delight on his face was undeniable as he showed off the shoes to anyone who would stop and listen.



Raul is one of 351 people who have enrolled in Pathways to Wellness this year to work on the chronic health issues that keep them from thriving. Learning to prevent or control diabetes, hypertension, or obesity has far reaching implications for both the participant, their children & family, and ability to work. Thank you for your care for others which helps people who may have lost faith in achieving better health, work towards goals that improve their capacity to thrive.

“Growing up a few miles from MEND I experienced firsthand the challenges in the community. I knew neighbors and family members whose food options were limited by their incomes—and saw the negative health [effects] of those limitations. I enjoy coming into work because I care about making a difference and helping families in need. It's very rewarding to know that through MEND [the] community has hope [and resources] for a better future.” – Brenda Morales, Pathways to Wellness Program Manager.

## THE GENEROSITY OF VOLUNTEERS



*“I grew up in the San Fernando Valley and I know that the community needs the services MEND provides. Being able to volunteer regularly [with other Bank of America employees] is such a privilege. And seeing how grateful the community is for what they receive is reward in itself.”*  
– Rosy Ayala

*“I love the mission here; I love that we are helping to feed the community. I love the staff and how easy they make it to come back,” says Fred Davis. He adds: “Volunteering at MEND is just the right thing to do.”* – Fred Davis

*“Helping others makes me feel good and knowing that [I'm] not working to get paid, but working to create a bag of food for a family in need is so meaningful. Volunteering and donating are very rewarding and I'm glad MEND allows me the opportunity to give back.”* – Bob Placencia

For more information on volunteering at MEND visit [MendPoverty.Org/Volunteer](https://MendPoverty.Org/Volunteer) or scan the QR code to learn more.



## A WINTER WISHLIST



**THE COLD AND WET MONTHS** lie ahead for our men and women who are homeless. If you can donate any of these basics, please know they will go to immediate use for a person in need who will be very thankful for the dignity and comfort you give.

- ✓ New packaged underwear, socks, hats, scarves, and gloves
- ✓ Food (no glass) – proteins such as tuna & canned chicken, chili, canned fruit, and power bars.

You may purchase items online for delivery to or drop off in person at: 10641 San Fernando Road, Pacoima, CA 91331

If you need assistance, call (818) 686-7360. Thank you.



## A GIFT IN YOUR WILL MAKES A NEW FUTURE POSSIBLE FOR PEOPLE LIKE ANTHONY.

Your gift of any size to MEND in your will is a beautiful way to ensure your values endure while supporting the life-transforming work you make possible. This act of generosity extends far beyond your lifetime and *serves as a powerful testament to the legacy you desire to leave behind.* If you've already taken the step to include MEND – Meet Each Need with Dignity in your will – thank you for sharing your love and hope.

If you have any questions or need additional information, call Chanya Blumenkrantz, Chief Development Officer, at (818) 686-7320 or you may reach her at [chanya@mendpoverty.org](mailto:chanya@mendpoverty.org).

Scan the QR code for more information:



## BECOME A MONTHLY HERO TO THE PEOPLE YOU HELP SERVE

WE INVITE YOU to join our growing community of heroes who are making a monthly donation to fuel the work that we do. You can sign up on our website, [www.MendPoverty.Org/donate](http://www.MendPoverty.Org/donate) or call Scott Mikels at (818) 686-7353 and he'll be very happy to help you.



Scan for a direct link