

BECOME A MEND HERO!

WE'RE IN SEARCH OF monthly Heroes! Becoming a MEND Hero means you will be joining other committed supporters who want to help make a difference. **Every month.**

Please sign up today at our website, [MendPoverty.Org/Donate](https://mendpoverty.org/donate) or by calling Scott Mikels at, (818) 686-7353 to provide a few details including the bank account or credit card you want charged, and to authorize the gift. MEND also accepts gifts of stock. Your generous support will go a long way in our community. Thank you.



THANK YOU to the National Association of Letter Carriers whose Stamp out Hunger campaign recently donated over 60,000 lbs. of canned and dry goods to MEND for distribution to the community.

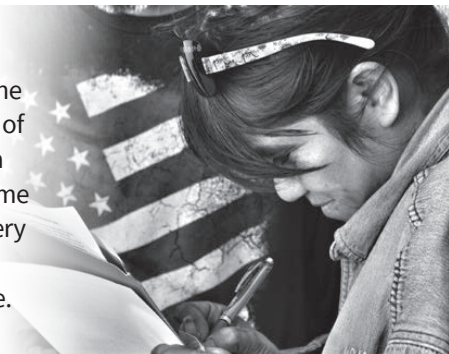


CORPORATE SPOTLIGHT

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNER, LA Care Health Plan, whose partnership since 2020 has allowed MEND to reach thousands of people in need with good, nutritious food. Every month, the company's amazing staff can be seen handing out food and sharing smiles. Thank you, LA Care, for your heart for our community.



For safeguarding our **First Step** services to the homeless ... we thank you. Your support protects the ability of our frontline teams to offer nourishing food, a change of clothing, and hygiene items. It provides a place for those living on the streets to come and sit, charge their phones and rest. Every Thursday, you make possible the warm smiles and comforting words of welcome. Thank you for your kindness.



WHEN YOU LEAVE A LEGACY TO MEND... YOUR STORY WILL LIVE ON.

A WELL-PLANNED GIFT sustains your generosity after your lifetime and makes possible the care that the most vulnerable people in our community need.

If you have already included MEND – Meet Each Need with Dignity in your will, thank you! Your gift, when the time comes, **hopefully, far into the future,** will continue MEND's life transforming services in this community.

Please contact Chanya Blumenkrantz, Chief Development Officer at, (818) 686-7320 if you have any questions or would like to receive additional information to help in your decision. You can also find legacy information and sample documents at our online site:

www.mendpoverty.org/legacy-society or scan the code for a direct link to our Legacy page

In the end, if the question is how you want to be remembered, then there's no better way than in the impact that your legacy will make in the lives of people in need.

We're deeply grateful on their behalf.



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
SUMMER | 2022



MORE AND MORE LATELY, I find myself reflecting on the stresses that our country is going through. The economic uncertainties, the exploding crime, the growing numbers of people living on the streets and in need. The loss of trust...and hope.

Yet despite this pessimism of the world out there, closer to home I see a goodness that shows up daily.... in our own lives and in the lives of those that MEND serves. And I see good and wonderful people like you who care about your neighbors. You give and volunteer to help people you may never meet, and you do so, even while you may also be feeling the effects of a changing economy.

It is a proud reminder that we live in an incredibly generous, albeit complex country.

In the past two years, your support has meant so much to those in our communities who are struggling. They still come to MEND in great numbers, and because you have been so faithful in your support, we are able to feed thousands of people each month, intervene with mental health supports, extend help to those who are homeless, offer COVID vaccines and allay fears, and through Here We Thrive, help rebuild stronger, more resilient families that are able to thrive. You are doing an extraordinary thing.

We are entering another uncertain period. Perhaps it's simply an extension of the one we have come through. But here's how you can continue to make a difference in the lives of people in need, poor seniors, and struggling families with children. 2020 and 2021 taught us that we can no longer rely solely on donated food and supplies when the need begins to surge. So, we are actively preparing... building up MEND's capacity to ensure that we are here with help, when our community needs it. We are ordering extra food and stocking up. With your help, we will protect and safeguard those who are most vulnerable.

We could not be here or do what we do without you. Thank you...kindness is never wasted and always makes a difference. ***This is the good you make possible.***


Janet Marinaccio
President & CEO

A SUMMER WISH LIST

If you can contribute towards any of the following items, thank you:

- ☒ Nutritious food that our homeless clients can eat & store safely – peanut butter, granola bars, canned tuna, soups and fruit (pull-tops)
- ☒ Food for our seniors & families with children – canned proteins (tuna, chicken), tomatoes, chili, vegetables, fruit, soups, and dry goods such as rice, spaghetti, and beans.



Drop off items at MEND,
10641 San Fernando Road,
Pacoima, CA 91331,
Tuesday-Friday, 12pm-5pm.
If you have questions, please
call Cristina Coronel at,
(818) 686-7360.

IS THERE REALLY HUNGER IN LOS ANGELES?

EVERYONE FEELS HUNGER. But, for most of us it's a temporary discomfort we feel in between meals. A snack, glass of water or early dinner quickly takes care of it.

Which is why we sometimes get this question: Are there really people who struggle with hunger in Los Angeles? Sadly, yes. In one of the richest cities, in the richest state in the country, a third of households report that they have struggled with hunger in the past year. Hunger is closer than we think.

During our recent food survey of the people you are helping us serve, 54% said that they either "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" with the statement: Without MEND, I would go hungry. There are families and individuals **today** who are uncertain whether they have enough food to last the week. For many unemployed people, poor seniors, and low-wage workers with families, some weeks are hungrier than others because **even with careful planning** they're unable to stretch the grocery budget throughout the month.

And as inflation sends prices even higher in grocery stores, we are seeing more and more people join the distribution line again. So last Friday, we chatted with people in line, as we always do, but this time we asked how they're holding up given present circumstances. They all shared that they did not have enough food at home. They were getting by either by serving smaller portions and rationing food, hoping their children are still eating enough to stay healthy; or by going without so their children are able to eat.

For 70-year-old Ron and his wife, Jill, MEND's food services are critical. He struggles with depression, and though he's getting outpatient care at a local mental health center, each day is a challenge. Ron was at MEND to pick up a food bag because his wife's EBT wasn't available for another few days and food supplies were low. He comes to MEND whenever they need help. He says, gratefully: "MEND has always been here when we've needed food".

"MEND HAS ALWAYS BEEN HERE WHEN WE'VE NEEDED FOOD"

Among the growing population of unhoused individuals and families, are the 41% of participants surveyed by MEND who are sharing a household with another unrelated family. Lacking basic securities such as housing and food means they face challenges that make it harder each day to get ahead.

We recognize that helping families put food on the table isn't the only solution, but it is a good start. When vulnerable people aren't worried about food, they can sleep at night, focus in school and at work, and reduce stress and worry. Millions of meals are distributed by MEND each year, thanks to you, helping hundreds of thousands of individuals in Los Angeles battle hunger so they can survive and, with additional supports from MEND, remove barriers in order to thrive.

Hunger in Los Angeles is a problem that won't be solved today, but with your help, we're doing something about it for our most vulnerable neighbors.



"WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH ALL OF THE MINT?!"

AS AN ORGANIZATION that depends on food donations for distribution, we can't always predict what we will receive week after week. Though we make sure each bag has a balance of protein, dry goods, fruits and vegetables.... sometimes we have to figure out what to do with an abundance of say... bok choy, dragon fruit or....mint?!

David Hernandez, our manager for Community Nourishment Programs reminds us: "We take what we get. And our families always find a way to make it useful". He is right of course, but we still wanted to know: Would our clients be able to make use of mint? What are they going to do with so much of it? So, we asked people in line.

Laila, a sweet mother of 3, did not hesitate. "I can make tea, a bean dish, and a meat recipe," she said excitedly. The mint will allow her to serve her family something new this week. She added: "I never buy mint - this is a treat!"

Our clients are resourceful. And so grateful! They make the most of everything they receive and treat it all as a gift. This is why every donation, however small, goes such a long way. Thank you for your gifts.



A GIFT MORE THAN FOOD – EVELYN’S STORY

A RESERVED 32-YEAR-OLD, Evelyn is also a single mother. She is an atypical client. For one, she has a college degree and before the pandemic, she was an arts teacher. But now she is unemployed.

She says: "I earned my degree....and I was supposed to be able to pull myself up." But that had not happened. Evelyn was tired of "being brave", while she dealt with the stresses of the pandemic, unemployment, struggles with ADHD, anxiety, and depression. She was sharing her fears and frustrations with us because, as she shared, **she needed help**. She recognized that there were barriers she could not address alone, despite her college degree.

So, she joined the Wellness program, put on her tennis shoes, and started to walk weekly with other participants. Evelyn found MEND to be inviting. She felt a sense of community in a place that was nonjudgmental.

Evelyn is thankful she joined: "[MEND] has provided me with encouragement and support to bounce back from my depression. She says: "The programs and services have been helpful.... they've connected me to others and encouraged me to meet my (health) goals."

Thank you for sharing this personal story, Evelyn, and for trusting us to be your lighthouse and place of safety.



“DON'T JUDGE EACH DAY BY THE HARVEST YOU REAP BUT BY THE SEEDS THAT YOU PLANT.”

- ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON



FOR TICKETS OR SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES, SCAN QR CODE OR EMAIL: CRISTINA@MENDPOVERTY.ORG

The theme for this year's Gala is **Here We Thrive**, an ambitious and inspirational goal for the people that we serve. **Here We Thrive** helps enrolled families work through challenges that keep them dependent on crisis services and gives them a greater chance to break the cycle of poverty. Join us as we celebrate and support their efforts toward greater resiliency, and **MEND's** investment in creating a thriving community.

THE FAMILIES WHOSE LIVES YOU SAVE

THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS behind in unpaid rent, Maria was in danger of eviction and homelessness when she came to MEND. She needed help.

And what we learned when she finally opened up was heartbreaking. About a year ago, Maria's life was very different. She'd survived a car accident and been compensated \$10,000 in insurance funds. She felt optimistic. Things were looking up. Yet here she was some months later in a desperate state.

"I used all of the money to pay a ransom for my mother and sister who'd been kidnapped in Mexico," she shared. Seeking her family's release in Mexico was a priority. They were all she had. We understood. But she was soon to find out that it was too late. Her mother and sister had already lost their lives. Worse, her young nephews were now orphans. Without hesitation, Maria took them in.



Our staff worked quickly to respond to her immediate needs. We qualified her for rental assistance to wipe her debt clean, and enrolled her in MEND's food services. Our urgent goal now is to help her deal with some of the considerable burden caused by this terrible tragedy. In the next months, we hope to introduce Maria to **Here We Thrive** so that she can work one-on-one with a professional to find a long-term and sustainable solution to the challenges she is facing.

Maria is a strong woman, and we have no doubt that she'll come through this trauma in the end. And when she's ready, because of your help, she'll find a listening ear and the support she needs to overcome.