

# 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  
WINTER | 2022



**THERE'S MUCH TO LOVE** about our City, Los Angeles. The weather, food, hiking trails, and ocean are unmatched. The creative energy alone is incredible!

But the city also, sadly, has earned itself notoriety with rising homelessness, surging rents, and high cost of living. The dichotomy between comfort and struggle plays out every day. As an example, food prices have gone up 13%

over last year. For some this does not make a big difference. But for many of our neighbors who are struggling and vulnerable, such an increase has a profound effect on their ability to afford the essentials we all may take for granted.

As one of our clients shared recently: "There's nothing left to cut back on."

But here's the good news.

Your generosity towards those who are struggling in our community is making a difference.

MEND cannot be all things to all people, but with your help, we can continue to be a place where **those who fall through the social safety net can find help**. A significant percent of the people we serve are homeless or near homeless, and 35% do not qualify for public benefits because of their immigration status. Because the poor spend a bigger share of their budgets on necessities such as food and rent, inflation is devastating to their ability to care for themselves and their families. For people losing their hope in the current economic crisis, your kindness is a godsend.

You'll read in this newsletter about Rosa and Anthony and others whose lives are made better by your generosity. Your compassion ensures people who find themselves struggling and overwhelmed, receive the support they need. It's in every nourishing meal, every compassionate encounter, and every sigh of relief.

Thank you for being the reason why a homeless man or woman finds support when they need it, a mother is able to feed her children, and a senior citizen can go to bed without worry.

Janet Marinaccio  
President & CEO

## A WINTER WISH LIST

When it gets cold in Los Angeles, your support can make a difference for poor and homeless people. In addition to food support, which is an everyday need, your gifts of clean socks, beanies, and blankets give dignity back to our neighbors in need.

- ☒ New socks and beanies
- ☒ Blankets
- ☒ BIG NEED: Sleeping bags
- ☒ Food – peanut butter, canned chili, soups, tuna, chicken, fruit & vegetables, and dry goods such as rice and beans.

If you can bring your donation in person, drop off at:  
10641 San Fernando Road,  
Pacoima, CA 91331,  
Tuesday-Friday, 12pm-5pm.

Or scan the QR code to shop our Amazon wish-list. If you need assistance, call (818) 686-7360.

Thank you!





## YOU'RE LIFTING A BURDEN OF STRESS FOR ROSA

**ROSA'S SMALL & SPARSELY FURNISHED** one-bedroom apartment is squeaky clean. A mattress and neatly folded bedding in the corner of the living room marks her 15 year old's sleeping space. A pair of worn soccer cleats stick out from under the sofa. She's excited to share the latest about her son.

"Mario is very good in soccer," she says.

Rosa is a lot more relaxed these days; very different from the woman who walked into MEND a few months ago. Her bright smile is back in place.

Things got very dark for the small family during the pandemic.

First Rosa's work hours were reduced, and then she was suddenly let go of her long-term job.

"I was looking and looking for another job...anything," she shares. But as we all remember, jobs were scarce.

With no income, she turned to credit cards, help from family and MEND's food pantry for essentials. She also stopped paying rent.

Rosa says: "Every morning I woke up with a headache...it never went away." ***It was a period of great stress.***

In time, she qualified for government assistance – EBT and CalWORKS – easing some of her worry. But it was not enough to help her keep up with rent. The arrears grew to \$6,773!

Finally, Rosa came to MEND. She had a question: Could we help?

And the answer was "yes, of course". Working with one of our compassionate staff, Rosa successfully applied for funds from the "Housing is Key" program to pay off 9 months of rental arrears and utility bills.

Recently we heard from Rosa: "I am so grateful and thankful for your help."

## ANTHONY IS GRATEFUL FOR YOUR HELP

**LAST MONTH**, a new client came to our First Step program for the unhoused. Because he looked like he may be unwell, our frontline staff decided to start his registration earlier than the 9AM service start time. We learned later that his name is Anthony and he has been living on the streets for many years.

We assessed Anthony's immediate needs – he needed food and clean clothes. But we were also able to provide him with a sleeping bag and tent. He teared up and looked overwhelmed.

"I need this, thank you so much," he said.

He clarified: "I lost everything yesterday... even my sleeping bag, because the city sweeper took them." Asked how he slept the previous night, Anthony responded "on the ground."

We sat and spoke for a while and reassured him that because of kind people like you, MEND will always be here to help. We also offered him something to drink, a bag of food, shirts & jeans, and a hygiene kit. He couldn't carry everything at once, so we advised him to carry what he could and return later for the rest. We assured him they were safe with MEND.

Later in the day we saw Anthony again. This time he was wearing the jeans he picked out in the morning and had a very big smile. We could see on his face that he was happy, and very grateful. He now knows that, because of you, he will always get help at MEND when he needs it.



**"I LOST EVERYTHING  
YESTERDAY..."**



# HELPING OUR SENIORS THROUGH TOUGH TIMES

**RAFAEL AND HIS WIFE, ELISA**, are both seniors who survived the past two years relying on fixed income (SSI) and savings after losing their personal business in 2020. Initially, they expected the pandemic to resolve quickly and things to return to normal in a few months. But as we all know the economic challenges lasted two years.

At some point, their savings running out, the couple resolved to stop paying their rent.

"We felt embarrassed...we've never done something like this," Rafael shared.

Recently, MEND was able to help them qualify for funds to pay off the enormous debt they had accumulated over time. What a relief!

We saw Rafael and his lovely wife the other day. They'd stopped by to drop off a Thank You card for our staff.

Their faces betrayed their emotion as they said: "Thank you for your help, we are very grateful." In turn, we wish to extend the thanks to you. You could have found any number of reasons – but you stepped in and made a difference. We are deeply grateful.



## ROSELIA'S STORY

Roselia cannot believe her providence. At her lowest point she found help. Over and over in our conversation she kept bringing up the extraordinary patience and kindness extended to her at MEND during a time of incredible need. Roselia is unable to read, write or speak English. But, as she shared with us, she felt understood. She was amazed.

"Me ayudaste mucho con mucha paciencia y te agradezco mucho y te bendigo – **God bless you**" She says.

Roselia lives with 2 unrelated families, a situation that she has learned to accept. Sadly, the pandemic dealt her such a blow, it set her back many years. She lost her job, and because she wasn't able to find another one, she drained all of her meager savings.

It was a very hard time.

One day, someone encouraged her to come to MEND for food, and she did just that. It was a god-send. Every week she's faithfully in line to receive the food she needs.

Now Roselia is working with MEND staff to explore all avenues to resolve her other enormous challenges – finding another job, paying off debt – and together they are making headway.

Thank you for your kind help – it gives hope to vulnerable people in the San Fernando Valley who are often hidden from view.



## RESOURCES DURING HARD TIMES

*(Please share these resources with anyone in need)*

Rising prices are affecting everyone, maybe even you. While temporary COVID-19 emergency response measures have ended, below are some current resources that may help.

Help with Utility Bills & Weatherization



Edison's Energy Assistance Fund



SoCalGas Assistance



Lower your Phone Bill





# PARTNERS FOR THE FUTURE

A **WELL-PLANNED GIFT** sustains your generosity after your lifetime, and makes a powerful statement about the legacy you wish to leave.

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 here:

<https://mendpoverty.org/legacy-society>

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

*Thank you for your support!*



## CORPORATE SPOTLIGHT

**THANK YOU, KAISER** for your generous support over the decades. You have been right alongside MEND in myriad ways –sending doctors & nurses to serve the community when needed, making financial commitments adding to more than \$1 million over time, organizing food, blanket and sock drives, volunteering, and so much more. You've demonstrated your commitment to the low-income and vulnerable communities we serve, and for that we're sincerely grateful. On behalf of everyone you help serve, thank you.



**This Giving Tuesday (November 29th) every gift you make will be matched. Save the date!**



## 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. Your generous support will go a long way in our community. Thank you.



Everyone at MEND sends their best wishes for a wonderful, healthy, and joyful holiday season! You answered the call when our community needed you. May your cup overflow with the blessings of love from family & friends, grace, and peace.

