For Immediate Release

Media Contact: Jenny Gutierrez
MEND Director of Programs & Services
(818) 896-0246 ext. 7322
Jenny@mendpoverty.org

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY'S LARGEST NON-PROFIT CHRISTMAS BASKET PROGRAM MEETS CAPACITY DUE TO ECONOMY

MEND, an Anti-Poverty Agency, Requests Food, Clothing & Financial Support from Community to fill Resources

Pacoima, CA (Oct. 21, 2008) – MEND (Meet Each Need with Dignity), the San Fernando Valley's largest anti-poverty agency today announced that it has reached its maximum of 1,200 Christmas basket recipients in just 8 days of registration—half the time the organization had planned for open registration. Given the economy and other factors, the organization is concerned about having enough resources to meet the needs of all these clients.

"Many families have lost their jobs and homes and are now finding themselves needing extra help this season to help make ends meet," said Marianne Hill, executive director of MEND. "Last year we extend registration to meet our maximum of 1,200—and that process went well into November. We have just reached mid-October and already we've maxed out on Christmas Basket families we can serve."

Hill added, "We are in need of turkeys and other holiday meats, packages of flour and sugar, hot chocolate, oatmeal and other non-perishable food items; as well as new, warm blankets, and new toys/gifts for kids ages 10-14. Most importantly, we need financial support from individuals and businesses, given that our costs have gone way up with the increased client demand."

MEND will be organizing its 36th annual Christmas Basket program, in which 1,200 needy families residing in the northeast San Fernando Valley will receive food, clothing, new blankets and new toys for each child for the holidays. Over the last 37 years, MEND has provided food, clothing, educational programs and medical care to families struggling to meet self-sufficiency.

For more information on how to make a contribution, please contact Jenny Gutierrez at (818) 896-0246 ext. 7322.

About MEND

In the early 1970's, MEND (Meet Each Need with Dignity) opened its doors in an effort to transform the lives of the neediest residents of the San Fernando Valley - poor children and their struggling families. Starting as a small group of volunteers working from a garage, MEND has grown primarily by word-of-mouth into one of the leanest operating non-profit organizations in existence. More than 95% of the support and donations received by MEND, now the largest poverty agency in the Valley, provides emergency food, clothing, medical, vision and dental care, job skills training and job placement assistance, English as a Second Language classes, youth activities, and a Christmas program. In 2007, MEND served over 40,000 individuals each month utilizing a workforce of more than 2600 volunteers.

# # #