

MEMORANDUM

MENDING Poverty

DECEMBER 2010: MEND'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM UPDATE

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through San Fernando, volunteers were stirring at MEND's Annual Christmas Program. Over seven-hundred volunteers showed their holiday spirit by helping 1,141 families to receive food, clothing, blankets and toys for 2,746 children. Two hundred thirty-two adopted families received extra care by receiving Christmas dinner items, gifts for the children, clothing for each family member, and household items from adopting groups such as private companies, schools, churches and individuals. The increase in need is evident each year; the demand for overall services grew significantly in 2010, while 1,217 applicants applied for the Christmas Program alone. Thanks to the generosity of donors like you, MEND volunteers were able to show recipient families that Christmas wishes do come true.



The Gift of Joy and Love

MEND's Christmas Program for Iris Garcia means a warm Christmas dinner and pure delight on her daughter's face when she opens up a toy gift. Times are very tough for Iris, a single mom who works at a manufacturing company that makes airplane parts. She struggles to provide the bare minimum since her work hours were reduced recently. Christmas was going to be more challenging but with MEND, she was able to obtain the basic necessities as well as a wonderful present for her daughter. For the past two years that she has received assistance, she has been truly grateful for the resources she has been able to access. She said that her life has changed for the better because of MEND's support.



The True Meaning of Volunteering

A long time volunteer at MEND, Bertha Warren knows the real meaning of giving. She first volunteered as a MEND English as a Second Language teacher eight years ago and soon branched out to serve on the Christmas Program Committee. Her mantra: Volunteering is giving back. She continues to coordinate the registration process for the Christmas baskets every year. The massive production—the application process, gift collection, and distribution—still amazes her. She emphasized that the need for more volunteers and donations is greater now than ever; 1,000 applicants enrolled this year within the first week of registration, as compared to a few weeks to reach that number in the past. As long as she is healthy and able, Bertha said that she is committed to volunteering with MEND.



A Merry MEND Thank You!

Happy Holidays! We hope you've been able to see the impact you have made this year to help our neighborhood families who need it the most. In 2010, because of your generous support, MEND responded to our community's growing needs by significantly increasing our distribution of food and clothing, medical, dental and vision services, and education and training classes. We plan to do even more in 2011, so please continue to support MEND's work that is changing lives, with the assurance that our agency continues to be cost effective and volunteer-driven.

Thanks to our volunteers: Young-Ji Lee, Vanessa Valdes, and David Jimenez for developing this update!