

MEMORANDUM

MENDing Poverty

June 2011: MEND's EMERGENCY FOOD UPDATE



MEND's *Emergency Food Program* continues its efforts to provide nourishment to almost 200,000 community members in need each year. This critical operation mainly assists the working poor and single-parent families and utilizes a broad network of volunteers and organizations. The MEND food bank collected over \$5 million in donated food and distributed 31,290 food boxes in 2010, a 36% increase from 2009. Each food box is thoughtfully packed with a three-day supply of emergency food and when appropriate, the boxes are personalized for special requirements such as diabetic meals, infant formula, or a birthday cake. Collaborating with 30 different organizations and over 120 volunteers, MEND's Foodbank is quite possibly the largest and most efficiently-run food pantry in Los Angeles. The *Emergency Food Program* is but one component of MEND's Food Department; other services include the Stop Summer Hunger Campaign, hot meals for MEND clients several days each week, cooking classes, garden project, and much more.

"A Way To Give Back"



One warm August day, while at the MEND Center to pick up an emergency food box, Richard Torrez's wife, Sandra, handed him a flyer that announced that MEND needed a volunteer driver to pickup donated food from local grocery stores. Both Sandy and Richard saw this as "a way to give back" to MEND for the help they had received. Since then Richard has been driving for the MEND Food Bank every other Saturday for the past 2 years. "Just because we don't have much, doesn't mean we have nothing to give" he says. This is a lesson that he tries to pass on to his sons and grandchildren who take turns helping him out on the route. "I want them to learn that it's cool to help others." Sandra initially sought out MEND's emergency food services because despite Richard's piecemeal work they "were just short at the end of the month." Richard, who was without work when he began volunteering, was hired by a moving company in May of this year, and has no plans to stop volunteering. "I grew up around the corner from MEND. These are people I know. I'm volunteering to help my neighbors."



Stop Summer Hunger Food and Fund Drive



The Food Bank at MEND promotes collaboration between schools, businesses, and community groups to support over 30 food pantries and social service organizations throughout L.A. In July and August, MEND is expanding its partnerships through the *Stop Summer Hunger Campaign* to meet the substantial increase in demand for food assistance since last summer. Richard Weinroth, Foodbank Director, explained that many children go hungry when services like the school meal program are unavailable during the summer months. There is room for more: he added that the campaign needs more sponsors, volunteers and food drive coordinators to keep MEND's warehouse stocked to meet the growing demand.



You Can Help! The *Emergency Food Program* is only successful because it is driven by dedicated volunteers. Volunteers interview clients, solicit and pick up food donations, pack and distribute food boxes, and most importantly, impact community members who are most in need. Learn how you can help by contacting (818) 897-2443 at MEND.

Thanks to Young-Ji Le and Luke Ippoliti for developing this update!

MEND- Meet Each Need with Dignity is a non-profit 501© organization.
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