

# MEMORANDUM

## MENDING Poverty

### SEPTEMBER 2011: MEND'S NEWLY RENOVATED COMPUTER LAB PROGRAM UPDATE



As a part of the Rose Education and Training Center at MEND, the Computer Lab offers free basic and advanced computer courses in three 14-week sessions. Over 300 adults learn to use the internet and computer programs each year to advance their careers as well as gain technical skills. Clients have access to a newly renovated lab with 21 flat-screen computers and 2 printers. Dinora Cubias, Computer Lab Coordinator, along with 13 volunteers currently operate six classes in a friendly, student-centered environment. As an added service, staff members refurbish donated computers to sell to clients at an affordable price. Dinora perfectly captures the purpose of the lab: "It's a rewarding feeling to know that we are making a difference in our community through the education of computer skills."

#### MARGARET'S MIRACLE

Margaret Tucker completed the beginner's keyboarding class and is now taking a class on Excel, a skill she hopes to use in her future job. Like many, she was laid off from work when the recession hit hard three years ago. Desperate for resources, she discovered that MEND offered free computer training besides the food and health services she also needed. "I am very fortunate to be able to get medicine and take classes at the Education and Training Center at no cost because I have no income and MEND did not turn me away." She returns her gratitude by volunteering at the Information Desk in the MEND Lobby and encouraging others in similar situations. She recently shared her positive experience at the MEND Donor Acknowledgement Reception where she had the opportunity to personally thank the people who answered "her prayer for a miracle."



#### TONY -- THE "FIXER-UPPER"

The Computer Lab at MEND has "never been this good" according to Tony Castelli, a volunteer who helped with its recent renovation. A co-volunteer and friend whom he met during a computer repair class at the North Valley Occupational Center introduced him to MEND a year ago. Since then, he has become the go-to IT support staff. His work ranges from networking to refurbishing donated computers, not to mention the maintenance of the lab which now has unique computer stations made of metal and tempered glass. He feels "relevant" when he volunteers and loves the fact that he can help in tangible ways. When clients ask about a computer problem, he quickly responds by saying, "Bring everything here and we'll get it fixed."

#### VIRTUAL REALITY: MEND COMPUTER LAB NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT!

Volunteers are always welcome but an even greater need is for basic office supplies such as printer paper, writable CDs and DVDs, ink cartridges and toner which are in constant shortage. For more information on how to volunteer or make donations, please contact Dinora Cubias, Computer Lab Coordinator, at 818.686.7332 or email [dinora@MENDpoverty.org](mailto:dinora@MENDpoverty.org).



*Thanks to our volunteers, Young-Ji Lee and Bob Mayers, for developing this update!*

**MEND - Meet Each Need with Dignity is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization.**

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