

## Alissa's Journey

Alissa, 28, hit rock bottom six years ago. She remembers that time as though it was just yesterday.

Her downward spiral began when her relationship turned abusive, and ended with her fleeing home and leaving her children behind.

She explains, "I had to leave my home and my three little angels .... If I hadn't, they would have taken them away."

### **So a local park became home.**

Afraid and alone, Alissa was still confident she had made the right decision. But, surviving was harder than she'd expected.

Alissa recalls, "I'm not going to lie. It was rough."

Finally, she befriended another homeless woman who seemed to know her way around. Alissa's new friend was familiar with MEND and brought her in to get help.

"I ate breakfast and took a shower," she says. "I was so grateful!" she added. Alissa also received fresh clothing to change into and food to-go.

But, she wanted more. Talking to our frontline staff, she learned of resources that could qualify her for job training at MEND. She decided on a plan.

"Joining the program was a step in the right direction to beginning a new chapter in my life," Alissa says.

That was then. Now, thanks to donors like you, Alissa is back on her feet.

She completed her job training at MEND's Medical Clinic, studied for, and became a certified Medical Assistant. She found a place to stay, and even better news, she got her children back!

Alissa never imagined MEND could be the missing link in getting her life in order. But we did, because we have seen so many countless transformations, just like Alissa's.

"I'm just so grateful because MEND played a large role in helping me go back home to my kids," says Alissa.

**We're so proud of Alissa, and so grateful to you, our donor, who made her journey out of despair possible.**



# GIVING HOPE

MEND accepts financial and in-kind donations to support our services to the community. Please call us at 818.686.7320 or visit our website at [MendPoverty.Org](http://MendPoverty.Org) for ways to give.

## BECAUSE OF YOU

Because of you, MEND fed, clothed and provided compassionate care, with dignity and respect, to thousands of the most vulnerable people in our community.



[MendPoverty.Org](http://MendPoverty.Org)

10641 N San Fernando Road | Pacoima, CA 91331



\*Names and photos may have been changed to protect privacy.

# 2018 IMPACT REPORT





## Donato Shares His Story

The first time Donato and his wife needed MEND's services was in 1998 – 20 years ago. They had just gained custody of their grandchildren due to their daughter's drug addiction. But adding grandchildren to their home created a financial strain they were unprepared for.

*They needed help.*



And, for a couple of years MEND helped close the gap for Donato's family, until they were able to provide for them on their own.

Now 20 years later, Donato is back.

At 82 years young, he is no longer physically able to hold a regular job. Instead, he recycles cans to make a living.

He explains, "We make \$800 a month and it goes to rent a room in a home me and my wife share."

Donato adds, "I pick up food at MEND for the both of us and sometimes I'll pick up a pair of pants and shirt for my wife. It makes me feel good to bring her something."

Grateful, Donato says, "MEND changes lives. People have a hard time finding a way to live, and MEND takes some stress away ... helping out."

Donato and his wife are a typical example of the people that MEND serves, and it is thanks to people like you that we are able to "help out".

## THE IMPACT YOU MADE IN 2018

**38,601**



individuals and families benefited from the Food Bank

**6,191**



Clinic Visits

**9,671**



service encounters for homeless individuals and families

We distributed **2,644,586** lbs. of food in 2018



**23,223**



Clothing Center encounters

**1,761**



Volunteers

**655**



Job Trainees

**2,194**



enjoyed a festive food box, gifts and holiday brunch

MEND began in the early 1970s as an answer to the challenges facing a growing number of struggling San Fernando Valley residents – poor children and their struggling families. Over the decades, we have expanded our services and yet our commitment remains the same as at inception: to serve the most vulnerable and to meet their immediate and long-term needs *with dignity* and respect.



## MEND'S Life Changing Programs

MEND's **Medical, Dental and Eye Care Clinics** offer general medicine, dentistry and optometry, along with chronic disease treatment & management, women's health, basic labs, pharmacy, and more.

**MEND's Emergency Food Bank** is the largest in the San Fernando Valley and serves the most vulnerable people in our community, primarily families that are struggling to make ends meet and individuals experiencing homelessness. In 2018, the Food Bank benefited over 38,000 individuals onsite, and reached an additional 222,237 individuals in Los Angeles through 80 food distribution partners.

Our **Homeless Care Services** supported 100-120 homeless men and women a week, offering a hot and nutritious meal prepared by our Food Bank, clothing and hygiene kits, and a generous to-go bag of ready-to-eat food. We also offer referrals to other agencies, including housing and mental health agencies.



The **Clothing Center** at MEND exists to meet the clothing needs of severely low-income families and homeless individuals and distributes (free of charge) such essentials as clothing, shoes, and diapers.

In fall 2018, we launched our long-planned **Family Support Program**, which is currently case managing 18 high-need families. Our program will help them overcome poverty and thrive.