



Meeting Essential Needs with Dignity, Inc.

Annual Report 2016



Meeting Essential Needs with Dignity (MEND) is an interfaith network of 16 food pantries located throughout Essex County, NJ.

Our anti-hunger coalition, the largest in Essex County, has been providing food to those in need since 1980.

MEND is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.

From our Chairman



Since MEND's inception in 1980, our 16 member pantries have served over 1.7 million residents of Essex County. In 2016 alone, the number of people served by our pantries reached over 109,000, 35% higher than five years ago, and 63% above 2009, when the recession hit. Families, seniors, and single households are all welcome, and more than one-third of those fed through our pantries are children.

This year, in addition to securing more food for those in need, we focused on improving the nutrient quality of the food we provide throughout our food pantry network. Many of our patrons lack regular access to fresh and healthy foods, and some are at risk for nutrition-related health issues, or represent more vulnerable populations with special nutrition needs, such as children and seniors.

We revised our Mission Statement to focus our efforts on providing fresh and healthy food to our patrons. To that end, we piloted our *Healthy Pantries, Healthy Patrons* program, which is designed to improve our clients' access to fresh and healthy food and to provide information on nutrition and techniques for preparing healthy meals on a limited budget. Through this program and others, MEND has formed strategic partnerships with like-minded organizations, such as the New Jersey Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, to make a greater impact.

MEND pantries are no longer responding only to emergency situations, such as fires, floods, and temporary job loss, as they were years ago. Today our MEND pantries regularly address chronic hunger, and they strive to meet the essential needs of patrons on a constant and continuing basis. In recognition of this structural change in the widespread economic basis of poverty and hunger, the MEND Board of Trustees took the step of changing the organization's name from Meeting *Emergency* Needs with Dignity to Meeting *Essential* Needs with Dignity.

Because supplying *food alone will never solve the hunger crisis*, we must work harder and smarter to seek ways to address poverty and hunger issues at their core. With the critical support of our partners, donors, and volunteers, our goal is to craft solutions for our patrons that will foster independent lives for themselves and their families.

Jamie Anthony
Chairman, MEND Board of Trustees

From our Coordinator

This year, MEND marked its 37th anniversary. Thirty-seven years of growing, evolving service has helped countless numbers of people with needed food and support services throughout Essex County. We are proud to share our commitment to residents of Essex County, and our accomplishments, in this Annual Report.



In 2016, the MEND network provided food to over 109,000 people in need. National and local studies show that the number of people facing food insecurity is increasing, despite improvements in the economy. According to the 2016 “Map the Meal Gap” study conducted by Feeding America, Essex County has the highest concentration of food insecurity in NJ. In Essex County, 18.6 percent of residents - 148,323 people - are food insecure. If this social problem continues at its current rate, 2017 will see us serving more people than ever before.

We at MEND are constantly seeking ways to provide nutritionally-balanced food packages to our neighbors, by providing a vital network that links our food pantry patrons with fresh and healthy food options, as well as other essential services. This year, we launched the *Healthy Pantries*, *Healthy Patrons* and *Summer Hunger Busters* programs to help our patrons have better access to healthy, nutritious food year-round. We purchased new refrigerators and freezers to improve pantries’ ability to collect, store and distribute more perishable items, we partnered with several like-minded organizations to increase our nutrition resources, and we improved the overall quality of food that we distribute throughout our food pantry network. We are proud of our accomplishments, but much work needs to be done.

I am grateful to everyone who makes the work of MEND possible - our many food pantry volunteers, community partners, donors, sponsors and Board of Trustees. Your support is vital to our success. Whether donating your time, money, talent, or food, together we will help those who need it most, and make an important difference to the health and well-being of our communities.

Sincerely,
Sharon Reilly-Tobin
Coordinator

MEND Mission

MEND works to alleviate hunger in Essex County by supporting our network of food pantries. Support includes fresh and healthy food, funds, social services referrals, volunteers, and a forum for member pantries. MEND advocates for policies to improve the quality of life for those in need in the County.

MEND 2016 Accomplishments

- MEND increased the amount of fresh and healthy food provided through its food pantry network.
- MEND developed new, and cultivated existing, strategic partnerships.
- MEND significantly increased its fundraising efforts with foundations and corporations through a new, active grant writing process.
- In March, MEND held its second Annual MEND fundraising gala.
- MEND changed its name and updated its Mission Statement to reflect its goals for addressing poverty and hunger in today's environment.



MEND Launched Two Healthy Food Programs

In 2016, MEND launched two pilot programs to provide its food pantry patrons with more nutrient-dense fresh and healthy foods: *Summer Hunger Busters* and *Healthy Pantries, Healthy Patrons*.

1. Summer Hunger Busters

While many children have access to federally-funded school-based feeding programs, in New Jersey only 19% of children eligible for free or reduced-price meals participate in a summer feeding program due to distance or capacity constraints.

To fill this meal gap, MEND created its *Summer Hunger Busters* program to provide supplemental food packages to families in need with school-aged children. Over 9,000 pounds of healthy kid-friendly food were distributed through our pantry network during July, August, and early September. MEND included literature about healthy eating in the food packages.



Program funders included The Fraentzel Foundation, Walmart Foundation's Community Grants Program, The Junior League of the Oranges and Short Hills, and The Orange Orphan Society.

2. Healthy Pantries, Healthy Patrons

MEND's *Healthy Pantries, Healthy Patrons* program is based on our belief that *all people should have access to fresh and healthy foods, regardless of their socioeconomic status*. This program provides pantries with more fresh and healthy foods for their patrons.

- MEND distributed over \$10,000 in grocery store gift cards to its pantries that were specifically designated for healthy food purchases;
- MEND distributed over 8,000 pounds of fresh produce and protein items through its food pantry network;
- MEND purchased refrigerators and freezers for three food pantries and the MEND warehouse, to improve and increase cold storage for perishable foods; and
- MEND provided a driver and van, and reimbursed three pantries for truck rental costs, to collect and transport donated and purchased fresh and healthy food.

The following funders contributed toward the success of the *Healthy Pantries, Healthy Patrons* program in 2016: The Schumann Fund for NJ, Investors Bank Foundation, Christ Church Short Hills, WhyHunger, and The Provident Bank Foundation.



MEND's Strategic Partnerships Increased Impact

- MEND developed new, and cultivated existing, strategic partnerships during 2016, which allowed it to increase its community impact.
- New Jersey Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (NJAND) selected MEND as its 2016-17 community service partner:
 - MEND worked with NJAND to revise our food drive communications materials to stress the need for fresh and healthy food donations.
 - A representative from NJAND trained food pantry managers about healthy, cost-neutral food substitutions they could purchase for their pantries.
 - NJAND hosted a “Be Smart for Your Heart Health” cooking demo class at a MEND food pantry.
- MEND partnered with several organizations, including Giving Garden, Amp Your Good, LLC, America’s Grow-a-Row, DMC Publishing, Group One Investments of Newark, and NJAND to increase our impact.
- America’s Grow-A-Row is working with MEND to establish a pilot Free Farm Market during the summer and fall of 2017.
- WhyHunger hosted a collaboration meeting with MEND in the summer of 2016 to discuss ways to address poverty as the root cause of hunger, and invited MEND to tour two food pantries in New York. WhyHunger featured MEND on its website in April 2016 in recognition of National Volunteer Month.



- MEND received a donated school bus from Group One Investments of Newark. The bus is currently being converted for use as a mobile food collection vehicle and food pantry.



- Kings Food Markets partnered with MEND on healthy eating in several ways. It supported the conversion of the school bus to a mobile pantry. Kings' store managers coordinated with MEND in important in-store food drives. Also, Kings provided 240 turkeys to MEND pantries at Thanksgiving.
- Junior League of the Oranges and Short Hills (JLOSH) collaborated with MEND for a day of service. JLOSH volunteers transported, packed, and distributed donated food at a MEND food pantry, purchased a month's supply of fresh bananas, and provided additional funds for holiday hams.
- Because food pantry patrons have essential needs beyond food, MEND coordinated donations of knit hats, scarves, and blankets from Emily's Hats for Hope Initiative, and donations of feminine products from the 28 Days Project. MEND also conducted its annual Help-A-Family at Christmas program again this year, and was able to provide grocery store gift cards and holiday gifts to 41 families in need.

MEND Increased its Fundraising Efforts

MEND conducted two successful food-raising and fundraising events in 2016 - its Annual MEND Gala and its Action Against Hunger Food Drive - and committed to seeking additional corporate and foundation grant support for its programs.



MEND hosted its second annual “Evening of Gratitude and Celebration” on March 3, 2016, during which it recognized Kings Food Markets for its continuing support. Kings Food Markets has partnered with MEND for more than 20 years, through direct financial support, donated turkeys, and allowing MEND to host food drives at its Essex County stores. Rich Durante, President and COO of Kings, was honored at the event for the ongoing successful partnership between MEND and Kings.

In September, MEND partnered for the 20th year with the North Jersey Media Corporation for its annual Action Against Hunger food drive. Twelve of MEND’s pantries provided 78 volunteers at 10 grocery stores throughout Essex County, and raised 6,095 pounds of food and \$1,356.

For the second year, MEND was a designated beneficiary of *Suburban Essex Magazine’s* Best of Essex Readers’ Choice Awards program.

In November 2015, MEND hired a grants consultant to help it grow and diversify its funding. As a direct result, during 2016, MEND received 10 grants totaling \$45,400 to support its programs. Before 2016, MEND received less than \$5,000 in grant funding annually.

MEND Changed its Name and Updated its Mission

MEND made two strategic changes in 2016 to reflect the economic and health realities affecting its food pantries and patrons in recent years.

First, MEND began the process of changing its name from “Meeting Emergency Needs with Dignity, Inc.” to “Meeting *Essential* Needs with Dignity, Inc.” Many of our food pantry patrons are employed, but consistently struggle to make ends meet due to the high cost of living in Essex County. Do they spend their limited funds on food, or rent, or car payments, or medical treatments? Do they “heat or eat,” as the saying goes? Sadly, we are no longer providing food only for limited, emergency situations. Instead, our pantries regularly address chronic hunger, and they strive to meet the *essential* needs of patrons on a constant and continuing basis.

Second, MEND modified its Mission Statement to include the provision of “fresh and healthy food.” Previously, it had simply referenced “food.” Several factors influenced this decision, including:

- The impact of eating a variety of fresh and healthy foods on overall health;
- The vulnerable population served by MEND, which includes many children and elderly, and those with health issues such as diabetes, overweight, and hypertension;
- The lack of access by our patrons to affordable healthy foods in Essex County; and
- The increasing reliance on MEND food pantries to provide food packages for Essex County residents.

MEND has committed to improving the nutrient quality of the food it distributes through its food pantry network. Along with the update to our Mission Statement, this commitment is reflected in our new programming - *Summer Hunger Busters* and *Healthy Pantries, Healthy Patrons* - and in our new partnerships with organizations that are similarly focused on improving the overall health of our local communities.

MEND 2016 Pantry Statistics

PANTRY	CLIENTS SERVED	ADULTS	CHILDREN
Apostles' House, Newark	5,029	66%	34%
Blessed Sacrament Church, Newark	2,963	67%	33%
Bloomfield Church on the Green	2,172	62%	38%
Church Women United Food Pantry, Irvington	2,594	67%	33%
Elizabeth Ave. Presbyterian Church, Newark	1,349	92%	8%
First Hopewell Baptist Church, Newark	6,670	70%	30%
First Seventh Day Adventist Church, Montclair	3,567	61%	39%
Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, West Orange	5,980	60%	40%
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, East Orange	1,482	53%	47%
Interfaith Food Pantry, Orange	27,261	58%	42%
Our Lady of Sorrows Church, South Orange	18,800	64%	36%
Parish of the Transfiguration, Newark	7,012	78%	22%
Roseville Presbyterian, Newark	5,153	67%	33%
St. James A.M.E. Church, Newark	10,637	60%	40%
St. Joseph's Church, Maplewood	3,317	65%	35%
St. Mary's Church/Pierre Toussaint, Newark	5,491	59%	41%
Total number of clients served	109,477	63%	37%

Each MEND pantry provides non-perishable foods for those in need, and most include personal hygiene and baby care products (as needed) within their food packages. Shelter is available at Apostles' House for families. Soup kitchens are sponsored by First Hopewell Baptist Church, Blessed Sacrament Church, Elizabeth Avenue Presbyterian Church, Parish of the Transfiguration, and St. James A.M.E. Church.

MEND 2016 Financial Results

PUBLIC SUPPORT/REVENUES	2016
Contributions - cash	34,523
Contributions - food	112,961
Grants	50,400
2016 Gala	23,925
TOTAL PUBLIC SUPPORT/REVENUES	221,809
EXPENSES	
<i>Programs</i>	
Food Support	152,650
Food Coordinator	17,250
Mobile Pantry	5,000
<i>Fundraising</i>	
2016 Gala	8,710
2017 Gala	1,925
Grants Consultant	12,650
<i>Administration</i>	
Operations	3,826
Marketing & Communications	2,182
TOTAL EXPENSES	204,193
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	17,616

MEND 2016 Donors

Faith-based Donors

Alleluia Fund for Outreach	Grace Presbyterian Church, Montclair
Apostles' House	Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, West Orange
Blessed Sacrament/St. Charles Borromeo Church, Newark	Morrow Memorial United Methodist Church, Maplewood
Bloomfield Presbyterian Church	Notre Dame Church, North Caldwell
Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu-Chi Foundation, Cedar Grove	Prospect Presbyterian Church, Maplewood
Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Newark	Roseville Presbyterian Church, Newark
Christ Church in Short Hills	St. Philomena's Sharing Office, Livingston
Community Church of Cedar Grove	St. Catherine of Siena Church, Cedar Grove
Elizabeth Ave. Weequahic United Presbyterian Church, Newark	St. James Social Service Corp.
First Hopewell Baptist Church, Newark	St. Mary's Catholic Church, Nutley
First Lutheran Church, Montclair	St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church, Cedar Grove
First Presbyterian Church, Caldwell	St. Kiril & St. Melody Macedonian Orthodox Church, Cedar Grove
First Seventh Day Adventist Church of Montclair	Temple Sholom of West Essex, Cedar Grove
Glen Ridge Congregational Church	The United Presbyterian Church, Cedar Grove

Community Donors

28 Days Project	Garden State Kitchen	Porky Products, Inc.
ACME, Upper Montclair	GB Clark & Co.	The Prudential
ADP, Parsippany	Haddon House Food Products	Shop Rite of Belleville
Alleluia Fund for Outreach	Imperial Distributors	Shop Rite of Livingston
America's Grow-A-Row	Interfaith Food Pantry of the Oranges	Shop Rite of Nutley
Amp Your Good, LLC	Investors Foundation	Shop Rite of West Caldwell
Ashlee Anthony Design	Junior League of the Oranges and Short Hills	South Orange BPOE 1154
Bimbo Bakeries USA	Kings Food Markets, Inc.	Stop & Shop, Bloomfield
BPOE South Orange Lodge 1154	Kings, Maplewood	Stop & Shop, South Orange
Bridges Outreach Inc.	Kings, Montclair	The Fraentzel Foundation
Brinton Brosius Inc.	Kings, Livingston	The Orange Orphan Society
CBA Industries	Kings, Short Hills	The Provident Bank Foundation
CIT, Livingston	Kings, Verona	The Schuman Fund for New Jersey
Community Food Bank, Hillside	North Jersey Media Foundation	Transit-Oriented Properties, LLC
Day Pitney LLP	O'Gorman Motors	Walmart
Eastern Fish Company	Pierre Toussaint Food Pantry	
Emily's Hats for Hope		
Freewalkers		

MEND Donors (continued)

Individual Donors

Ashlee Anthony	Assemblyman Thomas P. Giblin	Margaret Nolan
Jamie Anthony	Margie Goldsmith	Megan O'Neill
Jamie Anthony, Jr.	Florence and Garrett Gray	Lisa Ozer
Claire and Elliot Asarnow	Karen Gray	Thomas M. Panitch, DDS
Floyd Avilo	Barbara and Arthur Griffa	Robin and Daniel Peacock
Suzanne Babb	Lindsay Haug	Pastor Doris and Willie Peterson
Margaret Baggaley	James Highsmith	David Pisani
Peter Barnett	Anna Hooper	Grandy Prendergast
Lynn and Don Blaesser	Laura and Ronald Housley	Ellen and Edward Purcell
Helen Brooks	Linda and John James	Laura Romaine
Alison V. Bryant	Assemblywoman Mila M. Jasey	Audrey and RK Rowe
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Marie D. Burnett	Catherine L'Insalata	Kelly Sandler
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Grace and Dr. Patrick Ciccone	Kathleen and Gerald Leventhal	Mayor Lester Taylor III
Gina and John Clark	Jeff Lichtenstein	Elaine and Anthony Thompson
Alison Corbin	Catherine Lloyd	Megan and Jeffrey Thompson
Brett and Jonathan Cortell	William Longaker	Elaine Sinclair and Anthony Thompson
Ruby Cribbin	Sandra LoPiccolo	Sharon and Gerald Tobin
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DeAnne Dixson	Elizabeth McCoy	David Tuck
Margaret Dooley	Marie and Frank McGehee	Barbara and Bruce Turnbull
Lillian Dunn	Joyce and Daulis Murphy	Tony Vauss
Lisa and Rich Durante	Anna Nelson	Joan Walsh
Benjamin Eyler	Joan Netsky	Catherine Willis
Sule Oygur and Joseph Fischi	Susan Newberry	
Lise Franchette		

MEND 2016 Board of Trustees

Name	Board Position	Affiliation
Jamie Anthony, Jr.	Chairman	Capital Asset Finance Professional (1966-2013)
Garrett Gray	Secretary	Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary Minerals Technologies, Inc. (1992-2005)
Kate Cahill	Treasurer	Financial Services Executive (1977-2010) Pantry Manager, Our Lady of Sorrows Church
Helen T. Brooks	Trustee	Pantry Manager Blessed Sacrament Church
Alison Bryant	Trustee	Pantry Manager Church Women United
Reverend Doris Peterson	Trustee	Pastor and Pantry Manager Elizabeth Avenue Presbyterian Church
Mary Trinity	Trustee	Director of Grants Management NJ Coalition to End Domestic Violence
Sharon Reilly-Tobin	Trustee	Program Manager Catholic Charities (1984-present)

MEND 2016 Advisory Board

Jamie Anthony
Prospect Presbyterian Church
Maplewood

St. Philomena's Sharing Office
Newark

Sharon Reeves
Roseville Presbyterian Church
Newark

Helen Brooks
Blessed Sacrament Church
Newark

Gwen Johnson
First Hopewell Baptist Church
Newark

Sharon Reilly-Tobin
Emergency Food & Nutrition
Network - Catholic Charities
East Orange

Alison Bryant
Church Women United
Irvington

Sister Linda Klaiss, SSJ
St. Mary's Church, Newark

Zhan La'Quer-Douglas
St. James Emergency Food Pantry
Newark

Yahaira Rodriguez
The Apostles' House
Newark

Kate Cahill
Our Lady of Sorrows Church
South Orange

Beverly Mozone
St. Joseph's Church
Maplewood

Tina Scheid
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Cynthia Cumming
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West Orange

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Renee Scott
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Church, Montclair

Barbara Griffa
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
East Orange

Pastor Doris Peterson
Elizabeth Ave Presbyterian
Church, Newark

Diane Stein
Interfaith Food Pantry of the
Oranges, Orange

Anna Hooper
Church of the Transfiguration
Newark

Don Cornell
Bloomfield Presbyterian Church
Bloomfield