

Press Release
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEND Announces Five New Trustees

(October 30, 2018) Meeting Essential Needs with Dignity (MEND) is pleased to announce the election of five new members to its Board of Trustees. The new Trustees are: A. Jabbar Abdi, Benjamin Eyler, Karen Hartshorn Hilton, Linda Klaiss, and Claire Sinclair.

“I am excited to welcome these talented individuals to the MEND Board of Trustees,” said Jamie Anthony, the Board Chairman. “Their dedication to serving our community, and their enthusiasm for seeking new ways to address existing challenges, make them valuable additions to our organization.”

Robin Peacock, MEND Executive Director, looks forward to working with the new Trustees, as well. “As MEND builds its programs to meet the increasing needs of food pantries and their patrons, we are pleased to be expanding our Board, adding to an already dynamic, versatile group. Our newest members will help us continue to shape this organization - building on MEND’s nearly four decades of service - as we strive to go further in addressing the root causes of hunger in our community,” said Peacock.

New Trustee Bios:

A. Jabbar Abdi: Jabbar is a Managing Partner at Sidereal Capital, a private equity firm that invests in select lower middle-market companies. Prior to joining Sidereal, Jabbar was a Managing Director at Cordova, Smart, & Williams, LLC, a middle-market private equity firm where he was a key member of the investment team. Jabbar joined CSW from GE Capital where he held various positions, including Vice President in GE Capital’s Merchant Banking Unit. Prior to his tenure at GE Capital, Jabbar focused on strategy development and implementation in the financial services sector. Jabbar began his career with Furman Selz, a New York-based investment bank where he conducted an assortment of mergers and acquisitions, public equity offerings, and private placements.

Jabbar earned an A.B. from Harvard College and an M.B.A. from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania.

Benjamin Eyler: Ben is a marketing consultant who specializes in branding, content, and customer experience. Prior to going independent, Ben spent over 10 years as a marketing VP at Citigroup, working across various wealth management and banking units. Before joining the corporate world, Ben was a songwriter and musician in New York City—and during that time, performed at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival.

Ben studied English and creative writing at The George Washington University, where he met his wife Karin. The two now reside in Maplewood with their two sons.

Karen Hartshorn Hilton: Karen is a South Orange Village Trustee, and a consultant for Growth for Good, a nonprofit organization providing strategic planning and fundraising planning services. Previously, she served as the founding Executive Director for Emerge New Jersey, where she led the organization in developing a training program, recruiting potential candidates, managing the board of directors and fundraising. She has been an active in South Orange throughout her career. She chaired the board of trustees of the South Orange Public Library for more than a decade, and still serves as the president of the library's foundation. She has been a member of the Junior League for more than thirty years, and is a past president of the Junior League of the Oranges and Short Hills. She has been active with the South Orange and Maplewood public schools as well as the Girl Scouts.

Karen received her B.A. from William Smith College and her Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of Massachusetts. Karen and her husband are in the adventure of a lifetime in raising four children.

Linda Klaiss: Sister Linda Klaiss, a Sister of St Joseph, is a Pastoral Minister in an urban, immigrant Catholic Church in Newark. Although she originally began her ministry teaching elementary and middle school she now works in faith formation at every age level. Sister Linda has been involved in social concerns work throughout her years in parish ministry. She has served on the Justice Commission for the Sisters of St. Joseph, worked with the Refugee Resettlement Program with Catholic Charities, and has been a member of several Human Trafficking initiatives. Presently, she coordinates the Pierre Toussaint Food Panty in Newark, which has been a member of MEND for over thirty years. Sister Linda is also a member of Faith in New Jersey, an interfaith community organizing group working to advance a social and economic justice agenda on all levels.

Sister Linda earned a B.S. degree in Elementary Education from Chestnut Hill College, a Master's Degree in Religious Studies from LaSalle University, and has completed additional Graduate Studies in African American Theology at Xavier University and training in Spiritual Direction from the Center for Spirituality and Justice.

Claire Sinclair: Claire is a staple in the Maplewood/South Orange community. Both she and her husband, as well as her parents and her two sons, were raised here, and she currently teaches Kindergarten at Tuscan Elementary School (in the same classroom where she attended Kindergarten!). Claire has spearheaded community outreach efforts at the school, and in the greater community through her Feed SOMany Facebook group. She regularly coordinates food drives, diaper drives, book drives and pajama drives to benefit those in need.

Claire received her B.A. in Elementary Education from The American University. Recently, she completed her Master's Degree in Restorative Practices, an emerging social science that strengthens relationships in schools and communities to promote social connections.