In the last 16 months, $259,784 worth of food was donated to the Community Cupboard. The majority of this (68%) came from local grocery stores through grocery rescue. Upper valley MEND’s produce gleaning program and local residents donated 26%. Two percent came from government sources.

Rising inflation is driving up the cost of living and Upper valley MEND’s programs are seeing an increase in use. Donors have continued to provide a helping hand to their neighbors facing a tough time. Most of Upper valley MEND’s donations come from private individuals (86%), a clear sign of the level of care that community members have for each other.

Affordable Housing is Good for the Individual and the Community

Leah Taylor was born and raised in Leavenworth. She works as a neurodiagnostic technician at Central Washington Hospital. Her youngest son is a student at Cascade High School. Her roots, and her future, are in the Upper Valley, but without Upper Valley MEND, she could not have afforded to buy a home here.

“It means the world to me to have my own home,” she said. “It’s an investment. When you have your own house, it’s like a savings account and you get a return on your investment.”

Upper Valley MEND’s affordable homeownership program provides Upper Valley families, individuals, and employees the opportunity to purchase high-quality homes at a price they can afford.

Twenty years ago, Leah bought one of 10 affordable homes in Alpine Heights, a neighborhood built by Upper Valley MEND in Leavenworth. Another 10 homes were later built across town in Aldea Village.

Since 2001, 32 families have owned the 20 homes that are part of the program. Over the past decade, the cost of housing in the Upper Valley has increased steadily, vastly outpacing local wages. During and after the COVID-19 pandemic, housing costs jumped significantly as demand for both rentals and homeownership increased.

The lack of affordable rentals and entry-level homeownership opportunities impacts every aspect of community life. Local employers struggle to hire staff. Families move away because they can’t find a place to live. Seniors are faced with tax burdens they can’t afford long after their homes are paid off.

Upper Valley MEND continues to work on affordable housing in the Upper Valley. Our strategic plan calls for 15 more affordable homes by 2027. We are building partnerships and advocating for funding in an effort to build more homes, so that more families can put down roots and live in the community they love.

“This is our community, and we need to take care of it for future generations,” Leah said. “I love the school district. I love the small-town community feeling. All the things I did as a child, I want my kids to experience.”

To learn more about affordable homeownership through Upper Valley MEND, or to see if you qualify to join our waitlist, visit uvmend.org/housing.
Upper Valley MEND - Meeting Each Need with Dignity

Upper Valley MEND envisions an empowered community with equitable access to food, housing, wellness, and economic security.

**Food**

Community Cupboard food bank is open six days a week from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to provide anyone in need with supplemental groceries, personal hygiene items, and household supplies. The Cupboard operates a shopping model, where customers shop using monthly points, the number of which is based on household size.

For more information call Community Cupboard at (509) 548-6727 or visit at 219 14th St., Leavenworth.

MEND’s gleaning program uses the power of volunteers and the generosity of partner growers to harvest excess or unmarketable fresh produce from local farms and orchards. We distribute these local, often organic, fruits and vegetables at Community Cupboard and other food banks in Chelan and Douglas Counties. The program runs from May through October and is a wonderful way to bring healthy produce to those in need and reduce food waste.

For more information, or to volunteer, call Rachel at (509) 548-0408.

**Economic Security**

MEND’s social worker provides support for community members in challenging times. We can help with financial assistance for rent, mortgage, utility, and transportation costs, and medical bills. We can also help people connect with other available resources in the Wenatchee Valley. Walking alongside someone in need, we help them build a plan to improve stability.

For more information call (509) 548-0408.

**Housing**

At Upper Valley MEND, we know home is where it all starts. Our affordable homeownership program holds land for the benefit of the community and provides affordable housing for low and moderate-income community residents unable to afford a market-rate home.

To get on the waitlist for future homes or for more information call Kaylin at (509) 293-4428.

**Wellness**

The Upper Valley Free Clinic offers free healthcare for anyone without health insurance or who cannot afford their co-pay. The clinic is held on Monday evening from 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at Cascade Medical Center in Leavenworth. We provide urgent care and referrals for specialized care, and can help with the cost of prescriptions.

For more information call (509) 548-0408.

Upper Valley MEND partners with local dentists to provide urgent and preventative care for anyone needing dental care who does not have dental insurance or cannot afford their co-pays. We assist with the cost of urgent dental services, including exams, X-rays, tooth extractions, and simple fillings. We also assist with the cost of dental services like dentures, partial dentures, and single tooth replacements.

For more information call Terri at (509) 393-8271.
All of Upper Valley MEND’s programs and the governance of the organization are supported by volunteers.

Volunteers gave 7,079 hours of their time to help the Upper Valley community in the last 16 months.

Chris Kahn volunteers for various tasks with Upper Valley MEND. As well as helping with administrative tasks, Chris recently helped at two Earth day booths to spread the word about the gleaning program.

“I am driven to help,” Chris said. “I don’t believe that people make a choice to be in need. But I hope that, when in the right place at the right time, I can offer a hand up without judgement.”

Sherry Thompson (right) has been living in the Upper Valley for seven years. She wanted more connections in the community. A quick Google search connected her with the Das Thrift Haus sorting center, where she now sorts donated items with long-time volunteer Jane Lee (left) on Mondays. Jane has also volunteered as a nurse at the Upper Valley Free Clinic since 2019. Their gifts of time and expertise help make the Upper Valley a better place for everyone.

Upper Valley MEND is blessed with many dedicated volunteers who are like family. We recently lost long-time volunteers Andi Fletcher, Stuart Emig, and Ron Koch. Upper Valley MEND’s human services director Bob Mark is pictured here with Ron’s widow Joanne and MEND’s executive director Kaylin Bettinger with daughter Piper. Bob honored all that Andi, Stuart and Ron gave to their community at the 2022 Volunteer Appreciation BBQ.

Upper Valley MEND has expanded most of its services to residents living in the Cascade and Cashmere School Districts.

Your Purchases Support MEND Services

Jubilee Global Gifts is a non-profit Fair Trade retail store selling hand-crafted items from artisans around the world. All proceeds from Jubilee help provide food, housing, and healthcare for local families in need. The store is full of beautiful gifts for all occasions and was recently updated to be wheelchair and stroller accessible.

Das Thrift Haus, nominated for the World’s Best Thrift Store 2022, is the Upper Wenatchee Valley’s home for low-cost clothing, household items, and unexpected treasures. A dedicated team of volunteers and staff receives, sorts and sets out donations. All proceeds from Das Thrift Haus help support Upper Valley MEND’s services.
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Jubilee Global Gifts
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