Dear friend of MEND,

It is with great excitement that Upper Valley MEND proudly presents our 2017 - 2020 strategic plan to you this month. MEND has been a staple service provider in the Upper Wenatchee Valley for nearly 30 years, working as a bridge for neighbors to support neighbors in our rural valley. This new strategic plan will guide our efforts through 2020 and lead Upper Valley MEND to develop programs and services that meet the ever changing needs of our community with dignity and respect.

Started as a small food bank in the basement of the United Methodist Church in Leavenworth, over the years Upper Valley MEND has grown and expanded. We have worked to stay large enough to help meet the basic needs of thousands of individuals in the Upper Valley, while remaining small enough to be nimble, scrappy and efficient.

Over the last year, Upper Valley MEND board members, staff and community stakeholders have deliberated over MEND’s past and dreamed together about MEND’s future. Hundreds of people have lent their time and thoughts to this effort through interviews, focus groups, planning meetings and surveys. This strategic plan will both continue to refine the programs that currently exist, and expand into new areas as community needs morph and change.

For the first time, we’ve divided our services up not by program, but by the four areas of need we serve. As we work to help our neighbors break the bonds of poverty, we’ve used community feedback to determine that MEND has the greatest impact in the lives of our clients by providing assistance in these areas: hunger relief, housing, healthcare and lifeskills development. These strategic pillars will allow MEND services to support each individual we serve, helping meet their unique needs, whatever they may be.

By meeting the basic needs of the most vulnerable people in the Upper Wenatchee Valley, MEND services make it possible for people to get back on their feet, and to stay on their feet. You can view the full plan at uvmend.org. Thank you for taking this journey with us.

Sincerely,

Kaylin Bettinger
Upper Valley MEND Executive Director
Talking Bones: more than just a chopstick

by Mary Rossing
Jubilee Program Manager

At Jubilee our hand-crafted goods are made around the developing world. Limited means and resources means that artisans utilize materials that are readily available, inexpensive or, best of all, free! Often free materials are simply leftovers from daily life that would otherwise be discarded.

A perfect example of this are the bone chopsticks. These chopsticks provoke a lot of questions about their origin - there must be something about the shape and size of these long thin sticks that customers, especially children, find intriguing. They are great conversation starters about what life is like halfway around the world. The exchange usually goes something like "Wow, cool! Bone chopsticks!" and then, somewhat alarmed, "Hey, whose bones are these anyway??"

"Well, whose do you think they are these anyway??"

somewhat alarmed, "Hey, whose bones are these anyway??"

"Well, whose do you think they are these anyway??"

Immediately a face with very big eyes looks up. "I don’t know…"

"Well, whose do you think they are these anyway??"

"Well what kind of meat do you eat? What do you do with the bones when you’re finished?"

The conversation then leads to what someone in Kenya might eat and how people that are clever can use leftover things to make something beautiful and useful that we might eventually see in a store and like to buy. Pretty soon those bone chopsticks are telling a much bigger story and a basic concept of Fair Trade is starting to make sense to a new generation.

Not a bad day’s work for an old pair of bones. The bone chopsticks have an elegant design and are cool and smooth to the touch. A world away from their humble beginnings as the leftovers from someone’s dinner.

Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers.

Meeting needs today and into the future

by Bob Mark
Community Cupboard Manager

As we continue to search for a new home for the Community Cupboard, we’re reminded on a daily basis of why the Cupboard is such an important resource for the community. As one food bank client recently commented, "I live in a 32-unit senior apartment complex where most of us are on fixed incomes, and we depend on you guys. Because of you, none of us will starve! You guys are the heart and soul of this community, I don’t know what we would do without you.”

We hope they never have to find out what life would be like without the Cupboard, but as we look toward the future, things will certainly look different.

The Cupboard needs to move out of its existing space by the end of 2019. For the last year, Upper Valley MEND staff, board and community members have worked together to determine the best course forward. Taking into account input from hundreds of community members through surveys, focus groups and meetings, the MEND board determined that, at least in the short term, the Community Cupboard should split into two separate locations. The food bank will move as soon as a suitable location is found, the thrift store before the end of 2019.

Separating the two services allows us to focus on creating the best possible model for each service. For example, the food bank would like to implement more of a shopping-oriented model, where clients have more choice with the food items they take home each month. The thrift store would benefit from more space to offer an expanded range of goods and provide customers with an improved shopping experience. Expanded space would also allow the thrift store to take more donations of household goods and clothing, which have traditionally been limited to a two-bag per day, due to limited storage and sorting space.

The ultimate goal of this process is to improve the quality of services we offer our clients and customers, and of course, we want to ensure that wherever we end up calling our new home, the Community Cupboard continues to be an important resource and, as some would say, the heart and soul of this community.

"...we depend on you guys. Because of you, none of us will starve! You guys are the heart and soul of this community. I don’t know what we would do without you.”

Fixed-income community member and food bank client

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Teeth need care too

by Terri Weiss
Upper Valley Free Clinic Manager

Did you know that dental cavities are the number one childhood chronic disease and the leading cause of school absences? This is a problem that the Tooth Fairy feels strongly about and has decided that she has to spread the message in the Upper Valley.

Her first stop was the Lake Wenatchee Fire and Rescue Family Safety Day on May 27. The Upper Valley Free Clinic had a table at the event and the Tooth Fairy came along to flit among the more than 200 kids and parents. She handed out toothbrushes, toothpaste, stickers, books about teeth and how to look after them, and coins taped to her business card. Yes, even the Tooth Fairy has a business card these days.

If you missed her at Lake Wenatchee, don’t worry, the Tooth Fairy will soon be visiting Leavenworth-area preschools, elementary schools, and community events to share information about the education and prevention outreach done through our Upper Valley Free Dental Program.

Oral health is a BIG deal, so who better than the Tooth Fairy to take on this challenge?

Swing for Smiles still driving it home five years in

This was the fifth year that the Kahler Glen Ladies Division held the Swing for Smiles golf tournament to raise money for the Upper Valley Free Dental Program. Turnout this year was up, with 80 lady golfers from all around North Central Washington playing a string scramble format at Kahler Glen Golf Course. The ladies raised $4,837.30, which will go to support free dental evaluations the first Monday of every month at the Cascade Medical Center, and discounted dental treatment. Many businesses from Lake Wenatchee, Plain, Leavenworth and Cashmere contributed either as sponsors or donated to a raffle. Our thanks to all who participated in, or supported, this wonderful event.

Did You Know? A polyphyodont is any animal whose teeth are continually replaced. In contrast, diphyodonts are characterized by having only two successive sets of teeth. Polyphyodonts include most toothed fishes, many reptiles such as crocodiles, polecats, and most other vertebrates. Mammals (that’s us) are the main exception.

Don’t Forget - the Free Clinic is here to help!
Medical: 6:30 – 8 pm each Monday
Dental: 6:30 to 8 pm the first Monday of each month

Take me out to the ballgame!

by Carl Florea
Cornerstone Community Resident Manager

Cornerstone Community residents continue to thrive in a home with a balance of fun, activities, leisure events, education and community engagement. This summer our residents, along with several family members, were able to take an overnight trip to the west side of the state. We took in a Mariners game, spent a night in a hotel, and then went to visit animals native to the northwest at Northwest Trek Wildlife Park in Eatonville, WA. This trip included opportunities for education as well as pure, old-fashioned fun. We believe that it is important that our residents experience the full expression of life in a community - an opportunity to be productive, to contribute time and energy through volunteer activities, and to interact with family, friends, and the larger community. We are blessed to live in a community that understands these needs for our residents, and supports them in so many ways - by giving to our activity fund, by volunteering at Cornerstone, and by supporting them in community events. Our supporters truly make the difference for our residents in assisting them to live life to the fullest!

Top: Cornerstone Community residents enjoy a Mariners ballgame, just one of their activities on a summer trip to the west side.

Below: Flashback! To cool you down after a hot and smoky summer, a look back at the Cornerstone residents and friends having a fun but chilly time at the 2017 Special Olympics.
by Sheryl Stansell  
Housing Programs Manager

"Housing is a human right," so the saying goes. But what is a young mother to do when she has a four-year-old, one on the way, and is unable to work due to pregnancy-caused pain? On top of that, she has a past employer who is not paying her wages and she has two months rent due.  

Upper Valley MEND strives to help meet each of these needs with dignity by providing emergency assistance to families and individuals that are facing homelessness, eviction, shut-off notices and lack of funds to get to work. In this case, Upper Valley MEND worked with local churches, the Salvation Army, the City of Wenatchee and the client's property manager to prevent the family from being put out on the streets.  

While this family may have a difficult road ahead, we at Upper Valley MEND will continue to aim towards our goal of making the Upper Valley a livable community for everyone.

Fire prevention grant awarded to Aldea Village

Losing your home to a fire is a devastating experience. At a time when wildfires are causing more damage to homes and businesses each year, it is wise to be as proactive as possible. Aldea Village was one of 150 communities nationwide to secure a project funding award from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and State Farm™ to support activities aimed at reducing potential loss of life, property and natural resources to wildfire. The $500 award will be used to to install a sprinkler system that benefits the entire Aldea neighborhood.

Emergency Assistance - a much-needed service

MEND Staff
Kaylin Bettinger  
Executive Director
Bob Mark  
Community Cupboard Program Manager
Carl Floresa  
Cornerstone Resident Manager
Mary Rossing  
Jubilee Global Gifts Manager
Sheryl Stansell  
Housing Programs Manager
Chelsea Evans  
Community Harvest gleaning coordinator

Koa Inn, Community Harvest
Sara Evans  
Finance Manager
Pamela Nelle  
Development Manager
Catalina Arenlano  
Administrative Assistant & Community Cupboard staff
Laurie Peek  
Community Cupboard and Jubilee Assistant Manager
Mary Downs, Alejandro Mure, Judy Rector  
Community Cupboard staff

Alisa Franklin  
Jubilee staff

MEND Board of Directors
Brian Koblenz  
President
Cindy Rudolph  
President-elect
Chuck Reppas  
Treasurer & Secretary
Denise Roberts  
Assistant Treasurer
Bridget Grove  
Cindy Garza
Dan Wilkinson  
Julie Smith
Andy Lane  
Becki Subido

by Chelsea Evans and Koa Inn  
Community Harvest Gleaning Coordinators

Cherry-stained teeth and apricot juice running down the chin should be a part of everyone’s summer experience in this valley of abundant fruit. Community Harvest volunteers and donors are working hard to make this happen.  

It is such a joy to see the reactions of food bank patrons when they open the fridge at the Community Cupboard to find fresh local fruits and vegetables waiting for them there.

"Cherries are my favorite!" or "I love apricots!" are phrases that now make my heart warm.  

It has been an honor to help facilitate this program that brings local produce into the homes of those in need across Chelan and Douglas counties. The Community Harvest project aims to provide local food banks with 25,000 pounds of fresh produce this growing season through our gleaning efforts and the generous donations of local farms.

Picked, packed, provided: all thanks to you

We wish we had the space to provide a profile on each person that helps with the gleaning process because this program could not succeed in its mission without the dedication of each and every one. There is the farmer, orchardist, or backyard donor that graciously allows us to glean produce at their property, the volunteer that gives of their precious time to help pick the produce, sometimes travelling from Wenatchee to Plain to labor in the hot sun. When the produce is delivered to the Community Cupboard, the volunteers and staff help to unload and package the food so that it can be given out that very same day. Finally, staff at the Community Action Council warehouse in Wenatchee make it their mission to distribute the remaining produce as quickly as possible so that nothing spoils or goes to waste.

These combined efforts provide a living example of the true definition of a Community Harvest.

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