

ACBL Unit 380  
1214 E. Madrid  
Las Cruces NM 88001

March 31, 2014

District 17, ACBL Charity Foundation  
Flo Newlin  
13888 E. Chenango Drive  
Aurora, Colorado 80015

Dear Selection Committee:

ACBL Unit 380 in Las Cruces NM is pleased to nominate the **Mesilla Valley Community of Hope** for a grant of \$5,000 from the ACBL Charitable Foundation.

The Mesilla Valley Community of Hope serves the area's homeless and unemployed populations, providing them with the resources they need to transition out of homelessness. In 2012-2013, the organization served 2,654 clients (about nine new clients daily). Of this number, 11% were veterans.

The Mesilla Valley Community of Hope is especially worthy of this grant because of the broad range of services they offer to the homeless population. Not only do they provide day shelter services, but they operate a Resource Room, which offers a broad range of classes to the clients; they employ a Social Security Disability Manager, who is especially skilled in working through disability claims; and they operate a number of housing programs, which directly address the issue of homelessness. Most notably, they collaborate with the local Housing Authority to offer housing and support services to homeless veterans. The Community of Hope collaborates closely with the City of Las Cruces and takes advantage of multiple community volunteers.

In responding to the large number of people living on the street, the Mesilla Valley Community of Hope has developed Camp Hope, an innovative Tent City Project, where residents live in tents, residing under rules that the residents have participated in developing. Residents develop social and organizational skills that help them transition out of homelessness.

The details of these programs are explained in Attachment A. Also attached are the IRS Letter of Determination, the Certificate of Incorporation by the NM State Corporation Commission, and a flow chart showing the ways in which services are provided.

We hope you will give this application high consideration.

Yours truly,

Evelyn Colson,  
President, ACBL Unit 380

**ATTACHMENT A**  
**Mesilla Valley Community of Hope (MVCH)**

**999 W. Amador  
Las Cruces, NM 88005**

**Day Shelter Services:** Showers :Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, hygiene products for showers are donated); lockers 8am-4pm; laundry=one load/week; case management; mail, voicemail, phone; IDs, birth certificates, notary public, Pro bono attorneys on Wednesdays, internet, bus tickets, gas vouchers.

**Resource Room Trainings:** MVCH has a formerly homeless staff member that organizes classes in the Resource Room: Nurses, Resume Writing, Creative Writing, Blogging, Music, Computer skills, etc. Volunteers to do trainings are welcome.

**Social Security Disability Case Manager:** Sue, the lead case worker is trained to help clients apply for Social Security disability benefits in an expedited manner. It can take 1-2 years to get a determination; Sue's turn-around wait time is 85 days. She has a higher approval rate than the national average. Sue helps with work history, obtaining medical records, and coordinates with doctors for those who may not have a doctor. For those that are approved, MVCH helps them get into housing. Once on disability, they are enrolled in Medicaid so they have insurance.

**Housing Programs:** All clients must be homeless/near-homeless to be eligible.

1. Transitional Housing. MVCH houses clients for up to 24 months in apartments around Las Cruces. The rent is subsidized; clients pay 30% of their income toward the rent. If the client does not have income, they must obtain income while in the program. MVCH conducts monthly home visits and tracks client progress. When clients exit the program, they take over the rent themselves. (funded by HUD).
2. Short term (0-3 months) and medium term (4-9 months) rental assistance: Subsidized rent, home visits apply (funded by the NMMFA).
3. Shelter Plus Care: Permanent housing for clients in apartments around Las Cruces. Rent subsidized, home visits apply. Clients must have a permanent disability verified by a medical professional and must be receiving services for the disability. (HUD funded)
4. Abode Inc: Permanent Housing Group Home for Chronically Homeless (which means clients have been homeless for a determined amount of time and have a permanent, doctor-verified disability).
5. Veterans Housing: Partnering with the Mesilla Valley Public Housing Authority to use their apartment complex to house homeless veterans only (22 units at this time). Using the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority funds to house veterans for medium term housing. Home visits and subsidized rent apply. 5 classes offered onsite per week for veterans in the multi-purpose room.

6. Sue's House: HUD funding for a program to permanently house 4 chronically homeless/disabled women in a residential 4-bedroom home. MVCH provides ongoing supportive services.

7. Supportive Services for Veteran Families: Funding from the VA to provide services to Veterans that are facing homelessness. Comes with some funding for Temporary Financial Assistance.

**Camp Hope:** Since November 2011, Camp Hope, a Tent City, has provided access to resources and a safe place for the homeless to reside while transitioning out of homelessness. The camp is mostly self-governing with its own security/safety team. Many have transitioned out of homelessness into our programs (including veterans, seniors, women) and many have received or are awaiting disability benefits approval. Ongoing projects to bring the camp up to City codes.