

This proposed, acquisition **fundraising letter** was written for Mail America's client, *The Southern Maine Agency on Aging*.

12/03/2008

Mr. and Mrs. Jim Silverman
New Harbor, ME 04554

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Silverman,

Linda R. was down to her last \$27. Her savings were gone. The bills were piling up. She was frustrated and scared. Now in her sixties, this proud woman who'd worked hard all her life, was wondering where she'd be living next week - or where her next meal was coming from.

Haven't we all feared this for ourselves or our loved ones at one time or another?

What Linda didn't know was that her life was about to turn around... But before I tell you how, let me share Linda's story with you.

It's the story of someone not born into privilege. In fact, growing up, Linda hardly even knew her father. Determined to shed her skin, Linda left home at 16 and soon after got married. Lacking a high school diploma, college wasn't an option. But, there was one major quality Linda *did* possess.

“Determination” - to build a better life for herself and her family.

And what a full life it was! For a while, she hauled lobsters with her husband down at Pine Point. Then she settled into waitressing for years at the Golden Rooster and the Marshview Restaurant in Saco, while raising six – yes six – wonderful children...

And yet, hard as Linda worked, she couldn't seem to get ahead. When Linda finally reached retirement age, she was unable to juggle basic living expenses with health needs. Her savings just evaporated. It finally came to a head last spring.

A proud, fiercely independent woman, Linda refused to burden her children with her problems. But, for the first time in her life, Linda was scared. Scared of a future that had a “Dead End” sign written all over it. “Had it all come to this?” she thought.

But just then? A friend told her about us – *The Southern Maine Agency on Aging*.

The minute Linda walked through our doors, Stephanie Hall, one of our social workers immediately rolled up her sleeves.

Linda never had continuous health care. Indeed, she hadn't even seen a doctor in 22 years! (The medical needs of her children always came first.) Stephanie immediately found affordable health insurance for Linda - and other benefits like food stamps to stretch her fixed income.

“The Agency is a godsend...”

“And things are 100% better,” Linda says. She now has doctor's appointments lined up and can finally afford groceries, heating oil, gas and medicine.

Even Linda's children are amazed at her transformation. They now see their mother – who refused to burden them with her problems – as **happy and relaxed** for the first time in years.

So, that's Linda's story... But it's not unique. In fact, Linda is just one of the countless “small miracles” we witness every day here at the agency. And yet, the stark reality is - **we can't do this alone**. We're just the vehicle. It's your generous donations that make the real difference!

In these hard economic times, older adults that are especially vulnerable. Those on fixed incomes will become even more exposed to the high costs of food and heating oil this winter.

Times like these test our compassion.

Given these uncertain times, I'm certain of one thing. We'll survive. We always have. But the real question is - will we help others survive?

Think about it for a moment. Is Linda so different from you or I? She spent all those years raising a family and working hard. Serving us great meals on the weekends. (How many of our sons and daughters did the exact same thing?) And she always did it with a smile. Remember?

Now it's our turn to return the favor. Not just to Linda. But to all the *other* Lindas, who worry about food and heating oil this winter. It's not a handout. It's a **“helping hand.”** One neighbor to another. And who among us hasn't needed *that* from time to time?

The time is now!

Forgive me for being direct. But these older adults need your helping hands right now. Not tomorrow. Not next week. But now! The chill of winter is already upon us.

So, here's my promise to you... As Executive Director of SMAA, I personally guarantee that your generous gift of \$25, \$50 or \$100 today will **turn a life around**

tomorrow! A life just like Linda's. Our 2009 Annual Fund is waiting to bestow these "small miracles" on deserving older adults. But we can't do it without you.

It's so simple... Just check off the amount of your donation inside the enclosed envelope, along with your check today. Or, you can donate securely online at SMAAA.org

Oh, one small correction... Linda was *almost* right. We're not "the godsend."

You are!

Gratefully yours,

Laurence W. Gross
Executive Director

PS: Your generous donation **today** will also support our "Meals on Wheels" program – supplying nutritious meals to all 53 towns in York and Cumberland counties.