



# MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** March 6, 2008

**TO:** MPTF Board Members

**FROM:** David Tillman, M.D.

**SUBJECT:** WGA Strike Assistance

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As you know, last November MPTF committed itself to helping people affected by the Writers Guild strike. We modified our eligibility criteria to make it easier for people to qualify for assistance and we aggressively publicized our availability. Community social service added staff to accommodate the increased number of calls.

For your information, we have received nearly 1,400 calls since November 5. We have provided assistance with counseling, helped with unemployment applications, health insurance, personal budgeting and financial aid – to over 750 who were directly impacted by the strike. We have made cash grants of nearly \$500,000, and we expect to be providing substantially more to those who qualify. We continue to receive calls from people who are now going back to work, but need help until paychecks start coming in again.

I have included an excerpt from an entertainment industry blog, dated February 22, 2008. This is one of many wonderful comments that we have received from people who have helped by MPTF. These comments are written by a woman, who is an out of work lighting technician who is sharing her experience of getting help from MPTF. I feel it is important to share this with you.

Although MPTF has recently been focusing a lot of time and energy on collective bargaining, I want to assure you that our mission still remains at the forefront.

## **BLOG EXCERPT:**

“A week ago, I filled out an application for a Motion Picture and Television Fund assistance grant – I figured they’d string me along for a few weeks and then give me the sad face as they hit me with a list of restrictions on grants that exclude damn near everybody (like the WGA grants – supposedly for non-writers affected by the strike, but just try and get one).

I had my in-person interview today, and much to my surprise, the extra wonderful social worker cut me a check for next month's rent right there on the spot. Right after I'd

finished spelling my landlady's last name for her, she asked if I wanted some grocery store gift cards.

Why, of course I did. It's food, right? She then handed me four \$50 cards and apologized because she didn't have larger denominations available. Perhaps she mistook my stunned misty-eyed gratitude for pique.

I thanked her profusely, dried my eyes, promised I'd pay them the amount of the rent check back when I started working again ("you don't have to – just if you can eventually. It's a grant, not a loan") and made a beeline for Ralph's...

...I will be enjoying my free food, though – it will also be nice to be able to buy the good toothpaste and not have to agonize over it ("really, do my teeth need to be all *that* white? I'm kind of old anyways").

I love you, Motion Picture and Television Fund. If I ever start working again, I'll donate as heavily as I can.

Plus, if I ever manage to accumulate enough crap to justify my bothering with a will, you'll be in it."