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"Don’t judge your fellow human being until you have reached that person’s place." - Hillel (Pirkei Avot 2:4)

One of Hillel’s most quoted teachings remains a modern-day struggle. Despite our human capacity for compassion, our rational minds tend to scrutinize and stereotype those who need help. Are they deserving of our assistance?

But why are we even trying to determine who is deserving of assistance and who is not? Is the single mom deserving? What about the laid-off dad who hasn’t found another job yet? Or the cancer survivor, who has nothing left after treatments?

Who is it that deserves to live in poverty? No one.

It is not our role to draw such distinctions. Or to punish. Or to judge. Our role as Jews is to care for those who need us. To provide adequate support that allows people to move out of poverty.

It seems to me that we fear someone will take advantage of us. That despite the evidence to the contrary, what if the poor really do have it too easy? What if welfare support and meager SNAP benefits actually do enable recipients to live a comfortable, or even indulgent life?

Such fears are simply not grounded in reality. There’s nothing comfortable about feeding a family on SNAP benefits. When we take a step back and look – really look – at the truth: children get nutritious meals at school (if their family of four makes less than $23,850/year) and single parents receive SNAP assistance (an average of $1.70/meal per person) to help them get through a rough time - don’t we see that these programs are doing exactly what they are supposed to do?

More important, these programs benefit all of us. Our society as a whole improves when children are eating nutritious foods, when parents who must stay home to raise their children are able to do so and when seniors aren’t forced to make impossible decisions such as whether to pay for medication or food.

MAZON’s work is to ensure that hungry people have access to nutritious food today and to create change so that no one goes hungry tomorrow. That’s the Jewish response. No caveats, no judgments.

L’shalom,

Abby J. Leibman

Abby J. Leibman
PRESIDENT & CEO

MAZON NEWS Fall 2014
FROM MAZON’S BOARD CHAIR

MAZON has long embraced advocacy as a critical part of our work, but in recent years, we have strengthened our commitment on many fronts. We sharpened the focus of our grantmaking to make advocacy work a requirement, not an option. We’ve increased our impact on federal policymaking with our D.C. office. And we’re now exploring how we can influence policy at the state-level through our MAZON Advocacy Projects, or MAP.

My Congregation hosted a MAZON-sponsored Minnesota Hunger Summit in 2008 and learned that our state’s schools were struggling with feeding kids whose parents couldn’t afford the school lunch copayment. Following up on this discovery, Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid (a MAZON grantee) determined that schools employed stigmatizing practices to deal with students who went through the lunch line but didn’t have money in their accounts. Their research revealed that 15% of Minnesota school districts had turn-away policies, which literally denied students lunch – going so far as throwing away the lunch tray in front of the child. Others provided an alternative lunch like a sandwich - a nice sentiment, but one that still singled out kids in front of their peers.

After we decided to pilot the MAZON Advocacy Project-Minnesota it became clear that this was an issue on which we could have a significant impact. When we got involved, Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid had been trying for four years, with little success, to get an unfunded bill passed to ensure that no child would be turned away from school lunch. MAP-MN’s research determined that $3.35 million per year would cover the families’ copayments for 62,000 low-income students.

Along the way, as is so commonly true with advocacy work, we met hurdles and unexpected resistance. Change takes time, and lots of dedication. Our coalition grew to 44 organizations and congregations and more than 250 people. By May of 2014, the hard work of our synagogue partners and MAZON supporters paid off as MAP-MN sponsored legislation was unanimously passed with bipartisan support in the MN House of Representatives and then in the Senate Supplemental Budget. Our bill guaranteed that every low-income student would receive hot school lunch and that students could no longer be stigmatized by school collection practices.

We’ve seen firsthand how powerful and effective we can be when we come together and advocate on behalf of those who need our support. Change is possible and you can make a difference.

L’shalom,
Rabbi Harold Kravitz
BOARD CHAIR
1 in 6 seniors lives in poverty. Yet, 65% of seniors who are eligible for SNAP benefits aren’t using them. 1 in 3 food insecure seniors are disabled. 30% must choose between food and medical expenses.

Staggering statistics indeed, which for us carry a strong sense of urgency, given that 10,000 baby boomers turn 65 every day for the next six years. Something must be done.

That’s why we’ve partnered with 13 Jewish Family Service (JFS) agencies in seven states, supported by generous funding from the Walmart Foundation, to address the escalating number of seniors struggling to put food on the table.

The goal of the program is to educate seniors about their eligibility for SNAP and help eligible seniors apply for assistance that could make a difference.

Every step of the way, we find challenges from the seniors’ perspective.

Not surprisingly, everyone finds the application process frustrating. It’s long and tedious, and the website is often busy and will kick off applicants in the middle of an application, meaning they have to start over from the beginning. Something must be done.

Some states require in-person interviews, which can be difficult for home-bound seniors. But when the applications are mailed in, there are long processing times. Thirty days is the mandated wait time, but one of our partners mailed 35 applications and only two of the applicants were notified of their status after 48 days. And unfortunately, tracking down the status of any application at this point in the process is nearly impossible. Something must be done.
Many seniors remain unaware that they might be eligible, so it doesn’t even occur to them to apply. Those who are aware don’t want to take “welfare” away from children who “need it more than they.”

Many have the misguided idea that they’ll only be eligible for the minimum benefit ($16/month) so it’s no wonder that a lot of them feel the hassle isn’t worth the benefit. Something must be done.

Solutions to Senior Hunger™ is addressing the aforementioned frustrations and challenges head-on. Over the course of the program, our goal is to advocate to remove erroneous barriers, educate 15,000 individuals about SNAP, pre-screen 8,000 individuals and assist with 4,000 applications.

Yes, it’s a lofty goal. But it needs to be, because something must be done and we are going to do it.
If the rich man says to the poor man, “Why do you not go and work and get food? Look at those hips! Look at those legs! Look at that fat body! Look at those lumps of flesh!” The Holy One says to the rich person, “It is not enough that you have not given him anything of yours or helped him out, but you must also set an evil eye upon what I have given him?” - Vayikra Rabbah 34:4

Being overweight didn’t used to carry the stigma it does today. In fact, it used to be considered a sign of health. And yet, in this Midrash, God admonishes the wealthy man for presuming that a man who carries excess weight must be well fed. In other words, God reminds him not to judge based on appearances alone.

This lesson feels as relevant and important today as it must have been back then, doesn’t it?

As a society, we’ve gotten pretty good at jumping to conclusions and assuming that we can accurately ascertain the state of someone’s financial affairs based on his/her physical appearance. “If he is big,” we say to ourselves, “then he must be eating too much. Or he’s lazy. Maybe both.” We take the former as evidence that he doesn’t need our help, and the latter that he doesn’t deserve it.

We at MAZON know that hunger and obesity are often correlated. And we know you don’t have to look a certain way to be hungry. It’s far cheaper to fill up on foods with empty calories than it is to eat nutrient-dense but much more expensive proteins and colorful fruits and vegetables.

Instead of scoffing at God’s gifts, let’s continue to work to make healthy and nutritious food more accessible for all low-income families.
Our skilled and powerful network of grantee partners support our advocacy agenda to influence change and strengthen federal nutrition programs - like the Farm Bill, Older Americans Act and Child Nutrition Reauthorization - providing a critical safety net for families and seniors put food on the table. While we can’t share them all, but below you’ll find examples of the incredible impact they have made at the local, state and national levels.

**REACH**

- **252** grantee partners in **44** states
- **1.3 MILLION** advocates in their network

**IMPACT**

**Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard, Indiana**
Serves as a model for combining direct-service and advocacy work at the pantry level.

**Hunger Free Vermont**
Led passage of a bill that expanded free school lunch to all low-income Vermont children.

**Ben Gurion University, Israel**
Developing legislation with the Israeli Knesset to strengthen food security for all of Israel’s impoverished children.
Blanca’s Story from THE NEW FACE OF HUNGER

“My mom doesn’t tell me not to take food, but I ask myself ‘am I really that hungry?’

M y childhood was very beautiful. We had a two-bedroom house in Country Club Gardens. It wasn’t the best house, but it was ours. If we wanted McDonald’s, we’d go to McDonald’s. We had toys. We used to be really spoiled.

Four years ago, when I was 10, my dad left us. He didn’t help us at all. We were okay for a while because my mom made good money cleaning houses and working banquets at a big hotel. Everything started going downhill when construction dried up here. It affected everyone. People started cleaning their own houses and my mom lost lots of work. Then my mom had an operation and things got worse. She couldn’t work for a while and became late with the mortgage and struggled to get us food. The bank took away our house and we got placed in public housing.

Food is very important in our culture. We went from having really, really big dinners with all kinds of things to making the best of whatever we had in the refrigerator – mostly eggs and tortillas. At first, my mom would say ‘we don’t have groceries today, but I promise we’ll go buy them tomorrow.’ Then tomorrow came and we’d ask about buying groceries and she’d say ‘we don’t have money for food.’

This made my mom cry a lot. She didn’t do it in front of us, but I knew she was crying. I had to be strong for my mom and sisters.

Read the rest of Blanca’s story at mazon.org/blanca

WE WELCOME NEW STAFF

Rabbi Erin Glazer, Senior Engagement Officer
Erin brings considerable experience as a congregational rabbi and social justice advocate. Most recently, she served a large suburban congregation in New Jersey, creating a Mitzvah Garden and partnering with lay leaders to increase anti-hunger programming and advocacy initiatives within the community. Prior to that, Erin worked at the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism and the National Council of Jewish Women. Erin graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park with a degree in Government and Politics and a minor in Jewish Studies. She received Rabbinical Ordination and a Master’s in Hebrew Letters from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.

Jonathan Rich, Development Assistant
Jonathan brings a passion for social activism within the Jewish community. He graduated from the University of Georgia with a Bachelor’s Degree in Sociology and after moving to Los Angeles, he worked in Development at Temple Beth Am. Most recently, he completed the Jeremiah Fellowship at Bend the Arc, which guides fellows on the organizing and advocacy skills to become successful social justice leaders.
We recently launched a fundraising platform on mazon.org that makes it incredibly easy to set up a fundraiser, share with family and friends and track your progress. We love watching you fundraise (and raise awareness!) to end hunger, and stories like this one are especially inspiring.

Jeff Danovsky and Jon Burbey decided to combine the training for an Ultra-Marathon (yes, even longer than 26.2!) with a fundraiser for MAZON, calling it, the “Race to End Hunger.”

Jeff tells us that, “Hunger can be an unknown issue, and I think many Americans would be surprised that food insecurity exists in our own backyard, our schools, and our cities. People are struggling, and although we may not know their names or faces, it’s happening. Unfortunately it’s a bit ‘out of sight out of mind.’

We need to do more and we need to get the word out. This can be accomplished through advocacy and education, the work MAZON focuses on.”

After just over seven hours, Jeff and Jon completed an incredible 31 miles, and they raised almost $4,000 to help end hunger.

We’re impressed by both feats! Thank you.

The Emergency Food System is an important part of the change, but it can’t be the only answer. We can’t donate a bag of groceries at Thanksgiving and Yom Kippur and feel this is enough. It’s not.

GIVE A GIFT TODAY
This Yom Kippur, you can symbolically “share your bread with the hungry” by making a gift to MAZON.

Give a gift today by using the attached envelope, visiting mazon.org or by calling us at (800) 813-0557.

Thank you for your generous support!

We’re grateful for all of our supporters, thank you!

We would like to give a special thanks to California State Assembly Speaker Emeritus John A. Pérez for including MAZON in his recent birthday celebration!
OUR GRANTEES

In 2014, MAZON awarded $4.25 million in grants to 254 anti-hunger organizations that help us to advance our mission in their communities.

Alabama
Bay Area Food Bank, Theodore

Arkansas
Arkansas Foodbank Network, Little Rock

California
Alameda County Community Food Bank, Oakland
Amador-Tuolumne Community Resources, Jackson
California Association of Food Banks, Oakland
California Food Policy Advocates, Oakland
California Hunger Action Coalition, Los Angeles
Catholic Charities, Diocese of San Diego, San Diego
Community Action Partnership of Kern, Bakersfield
Community Action Partnership of Orange County, Garden Grove
Daughters of Charity Ministry Services, Lynwood
Familia Center, Santa Cruz
Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County, Paso Robles
Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano, Concord
Food For People, Eureka
FOOD SHARE, Oxnard
Foodbank of Santa Barbara County, Santa Barbara
Foodlink for Tulare County, Inc., Visalia
Foothill Unity Center, Inc., Monrovia
Fresno Metro Ministry, Fresno
Hunger Action Los Angeles, Los Angeles
Imperial Valley Food Bank, El Centro
Jewish Family and Children’s Services, San Francisco
Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles
SVA, Los Angeles
Los Angeles Community Action Network, Los Angeles
Los Angeles Federal Credit Union
Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, Los Angeles
Project Chicken Soup, Culver City
Public Counsel, Los Angeles
Redwood Empire Food Bank, Santa Rosa
Sacramento Hunger Coalition, Sacramento
San Diego Hunger Coalition, San Diego
San Francisco Food Bank, San Francisco
Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties, San Jose
Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County, Watsonville
Senior Community Centers, San Diego
St. Anthony Foundation, San Francisco
St. Joseph’s Family Center, Gilroy
St. Margaret’s Center, Lennox
St. Mary’s Center, Oakland
Sunnyside Community Services, Sunnyvale
The Resource Connection Food Bank, San Andreas
Union Station Homeless Services, Pasadena
Western Center on Law and Poverty, Los Angeles
Westside Food Bank, Santa Monica

Colorado
Care and Share Food Bank for Southern Colorado, Colorado Springs
Denver Urban Ministries, Denver
Hunger Free Colorado, Centennial
Jewish Family Service of Colorado, Denver
Metro CareRing, Denver
Weld Food Bank, Greeley

Connecticut
FOODSHARE, Bloomfield
Connecticut Food Bank, East Haven
Connecticut Association for Human Services, Hartford
Jewish Federation Association of Connecticut, Hartford
End Hunger Connecticut!, Hartford
Brass City Harvest, Waterbury

District of Columbia
Bread for the City, Washington, DC
D.C. Hunger Solutions, Washington, DC
Food & Friends, Washington, DC

Florida
Beverly Bootstraps Community Services, Inc., Beverly
Boston Medical Center’s Grow Clinic for Children, Dorchester
Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee, Cambridge
Community Servings, Jamaica Plain
Falmouth Food Bank, Falmouth
Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, Hatfield
Greater Boston Food Bank, Boston
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Boston
Project Bread & the Northeast
Regional Anti-Hunger Network, East Boston
Worcester County Food Bank, Shrewsbury

Georgia
Atlanta Community Food Bank, Atlanta
Development in Gardening, Atlanta
Georgia Budget and Policy Institute, Atlanta

Hawaii
Kauai Independent Food Bank, Lihue

Idaho
Idaho Community Action Network, Boise
The Idaho Foodbank, Boise
Idaho Hunger Relief Task Force, Garden City

Illinois
A Just Harvest, Chicago
Greater Chicago Food Depository, Chicago
Heartland Health Outreach, Chicago
Illinois Hunger Coalition, Chicago
Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago/EZRA
Multi-Service Center, Chicago
Northern Illinois Food Bank, St. Charles
The ARK, Chicago
The Global FoodBanking Network, Chicago

Indiana
Community Harvest Food Bank of Northeast Indiana, Fort Wayne
Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard, Bloomington
Kentucky
God’s Pantry Food Bank, Lexington
Jewish Community of Louisville, Louisville
Kentucky Association of Food Banks, Berea

Louisiana
Louisiana Food Bank Association, Baton Rouge
Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadia, New Orleans

Massachusetts
Beverly Bootstraps Community Services, Inc., Beverly
Boston Medical Center’s Grow Clinic for Children, Dorchester
Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee, Cambridge
Community Servings, Jamaica Plain
Falmouth Food Bank, Falmouth
Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, Hatfield
Greater Boston Food Bank, Boston
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Boston
Project Bread & the Northeast
Regional Anti-Hunger Network, East Boston
Worcester County Food Bank, Shrewsbury

Maryland
Jewish Community Services, Baltimore
Maryland Hunger Solutions, Baltimore

Maine
Maine Equal Justice Partners, Augusta

Michigan
Access of West Michigan, Grand Rapids
Center for Civil Justice, Saginaw
Focus: HOPE, Detroit
Food Bank Council of Michigan, Lansing
Forgotten Harvest, Oak Park
Gleaners Community Food Bank, Detroit
Yad Ezra, Berkley

Minnesota
Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches, Minneapolis
Hunger Solutions Minnesota, St. Paul
Legal Services Advocacy Project, Minneapolis
Open Arms of Minnesota, Minneapolis
Saint Paul Area Council of Churches, St. Paul
Second Harvest Heartland, St. Paul
White Earth Land Recovery Project/Native Harvest, Callaway

Missouri
Jewish Family & Children’s Service, St. Louis
Migrant Farmworkers Project, Kansas City
Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, St. Louis
Missouri Rural Crisis Center, Columbia
Missouri Association for Social Welfare, Jefferson City

Mississippi
Public Policy Center of Mississippi, Jackson

Montana
Missoula Food Bank, Missoula
Montana Food Bank Network, Missoula

North Carolina
Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina, Raleigh
Jewish Family Services of Greater Charlotte, Charlotte
MANKA FoodBank, Asheville
Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina, Charlotte
Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest North Carolina, Winston-Salem
New Hampshire
Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter, Inc., Nashua

New Jersey
Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ
Elijah’s Promise, New Brunswick
Freehold Area Open Door, Freehold
Jewish Family & Children’s Service of Greater Mercer County, Princeton
Mercey Street Friends, Trenton

New Mexico
Kitchen Angels, Santa Fe
New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty, Albuquerque
New Mexico Association of Food Banks, Albuquerque
Roadrunner Food Bank, Albuquerque

Nevada
Food Bank of Northern Nevada, McCarran

New York
Council of Senior Centers and Services of New York City, New York
Dutchess Outreach, Poughkeepsie
Empire Justice Center, Rochester
FOCUS Churches of Albany, Inc., Albany
Food Bank for New York City, New York
Food Bank of Central New York, Syracuse
Food Bank of the Southern Tier, Elmira
God’s Love We Deliver, New York
Health and Welfare Council of Long Island, Hempstead
Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, New York
Help from People to People, Nanuet
Hunger Action Network of New York State, Albany
Hunger Solutions New York Inc., Albany
Island Harvest, Mineola
Jewish Community Council of Canarsie, Brooklyn
Just Food, New York
Neighbors Together, Brooklyn
New York City Coalition Against Hunger, New York
Part of the Solution (POTS), Bronx
Project Hospitality, Staten Island
Rockland Jewish Family Service, West Nyack
Schenectady Inner City Ministry, Schenectady
St. John’s Bread and Life, Brooklyn
Syracuse Jewish Family Service, Syracuse
The Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine, New York
The ASAP Foundation, Valatie
West Side Campaign Against Hunger, New York

Ohio
Children’s Hunger Alliance, Columbus
Cleveland Foodbank, Inc., Cleveland

Pennsylvania
Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, Harrisburg
Community Action Committee of the Lehighton, Bethlehem
Community Legal Services, Philadelphia
Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger, Philadelphia
Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, Duquesne
HIAS Pennsylvania (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), Philadelphia
Hunger-Free Pennsylvania, McMurray
Jewish Family and Children’s Service of Greater Philadelphia, Philadelphia
Jewish Family & Children’s Service of Pittsburg, Pittsburgh
Just Harvest Education Fund, Pittsburgh
Jewish Family Services of York, York

Rhode Island
Rhode Island Community Food Bank, Providence

South Carolina
Lowcountry Food Bank, North Charleston
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center, Columbia

Tennessee
Community Food Advocates, Nashville
Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands, Nashville
Mid-South Food Bank, Memphis
Second Harvest Food Bank of Northeast Tennessee, Gray

Texas
Center for Public Policy Priorities, Austin
Feeding Texas, Austin
High Plains Food Bank, Amarillo
Houston Food Bank, Houston
International AIDS Empowerment, El Paso
Regional East Texas Food Bank, Tyler
San Antonio Food Bank, San Antonio
South Plains Food Bank, Lubbock

Utah
Crossroads Urban Center, Salt Lake City
Utahns Against Hunger, Salt Lake City

Virginia
Federation of Virginia Food Banks, Norfolk
Feeding America Southwest Virginia, Salem

Washington
Asian Counseling and Referral Service, Seattle
Children’s Alliance, Seattle
Food Lifeline, Shoreline
Jewish Family Service of Seattle, Seattle
Lifelong AIDS Alliance, Seattle
Northwest Harvest, Seattle
SeaShare, Bainbridge Island
Washington Food Coalition, Seattle

Wisconsin
Hunger Task Force, Milwaukee
Wisconsin Council of Churches, Sun Prairie

Regional
South East Public Benefits and Training Group, Jackson, MS
Western Region Anti-Hunger Consortium, Seattle, WA

National
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Washington, DC
Congressional Hunger Center, Washington, DC
Feeding America, Chicago, IL
Food Research and Action Center, Washington, DC
Migrant Legal Action Program, Washington, DC
Move For Hunger, Neptune, NJ

International
The Survivor Mitzvah Project, Los Angeles
Israel
Avda Center, Tel Aviv
Be’er-Sova, Be’er Sheva
Ezrat Avot, Jerusalem
Food Security Information, Education and Advocacy Project, Beer-Sheva
Keren B’Kavod the Humanitarian Aid and Emergency Relief Fund of the IMPJ, Jerusalem
Latet - Israeli Humanitarian Aid, Tel Aviv
Leket Israel, Ranana
North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry, New York
The Jaffa Institute, Jaffa
Yad Ezer L Haver, Haifa
Yad Ezra V’Shulamit, Jerusalem
YEDID: The Association for Community Empowerment, Jerusalem

Argentina
Fundación Banco de Alimentos, San Martin, Buenos Aires
El Salvador
The SHARE Foundation: Building a New El Salvador Today, Berkeley, CA
Haiti
Friends of the Children of Lascabobas, New York, NY
Lambi Fund of Haiti, Washington, DC
Niger
Rain for the Sahel and Sahara, Newmarket, NH

South Africa
Ikamva Labantu, Cape Town
Southern African Union of Temple Sisterhoods, Johannesburg, Gauteng

South America
New El Salvador Today, Berkeley, CA
Friends of the Children of Lascabobas, New York, NY
Lambi Fund of Haiti, Washington, DC
Rain for the Sahel and Sahara, Newmarket, NH

North America
New York City Coalition Against Hunger, New York
Children’s Hunger Alliance, Columbus
Cleveland Foodbank, Inc., Cleveland

Other
Ezrat Avot, Jerusalem
Keren B’Kavod the Humanitarian Aid and Emergency Relief Fund of the IMPJ, Jerusalem
Leket Israel, Ranana
Lamb Foundation of America, New York
Friends of the Children of Lascabobas, New York, NY
Lambi Fund of Haiti, Washington, DC
Rain for the Sahel and Sahara, Newmarket, NH

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MAZON | A Jewish Response To Hunger

10495 Santa Monica Blvd. Suite 100
Los Angeles, CA 90025
mazon.org

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mazon.org
(800) 813-0557
mazonmail@mazon.org

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