

MAZON NEWS™

FALL 2022



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LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

Sukkot — the Jewish festival for harvest — provides us with an opportunity to build a physical space that connects us quite literally with the kinship, labor, and bounty of the harvest. Our tradition asks us to use Sukkot to create connection — to welcome our community in to share in our abundance, to bring people into our lives and our space, and ultimately, intimately, to share food with them.

Our country is our community, in all of its promise and pain, opportunity and challenge. Our broader community, marked at once by enormous need and the blessing of many, like you, who are prepared to meet it. Our task is to question, and to envision, **how can we, as a country, make our abundance available to all? What is the harvest for those who are hungry?**

These foundational questions will remain on our lips far past when our sukkot have been dismantled for the year, and the reverberations of the harmony and dissonance of agriculture and anti-hunger advocacy will only grow stronger as we look ahead to Farm Bill negotiations.

But in this moment, we can sit with this learning: our rabbis share that every person has some abundance that we must offer. This is manifested palpably in a time of harvest, and in a time of need — when everyone has a discrete job to do, and everyone must reap the rewards. At MAZON, we feel it in the incredible support of our community, and in the creativity and passion of our partners. Together, we are driven by our commitment to all communities, especially those that are too often overlooked; we learn from our respective traditions, and they enrich our work, our lives, and our nation. As always, it rings true: together, we will transform *how it is* into **how it should be**.

Chag Sameach and with our gratitude,

Rabbi Joel Pitkowsky

Rabbi Joel Pitkowsky
BOARD CHAIR



Abby J. Leibman

Abby J. Leibman
PRESIDENT & CEO



Expanding Partnerships to Strengthen Tribal Food Sovereignty

Since 2017, MAZON's Emerging Advocacy Fund has built critical capacity for anti-hunger advocacy in 19 states and Puerto Rico. This year, MAZON expanded the program to new states, including Alaska and Hawai'i. Food insecurity issues in these two states are especially unique, stemming from distinct consequences of settler colonialism and extreme geographic isolation of their local food systems. In particular, Indigenous populations face unique challenges relative to their non-Native neighbors, including access to traditional foods and the protection of subsistence rights.

ALASKA

In rural Alaska, grocery stores and fresh produce are few and far between. Complex state, federal, and Tribal land management regimes threaten Native Alaskans' subsistence rights. The vast majority of Alaska's 160,000 Native peoples — nearly 25% of the state's population — rely on subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering for food security year-round. As Valerie Nurr'araaluk Davidson, President & CEO of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, shared, with MAZON's new funding they will "expand food sovereignty efforts, reclaim Indigenous food systems . . . and preserve these important histories for future healthier generations."

HAWAI'I

Nearly 21% of Native Hawai'iian and other Pacific Islanders are food insecure, compared to 7.7% of white people living in the state. MAZON's partners in Hawai'i are launching new initiatives to build a more just, culturally-appropriate food system for all residents. Harnessing federal programs to achieve these goals will be key for their success, and MAZON's support enables our partners on the ground to "pursue critical and effective state and federal policy changes to ensure all of Hawai'i's residents have access to healthy and

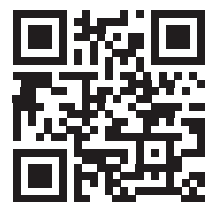


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nutritious food," shared Gavin Thornton, Executive Director at Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law & Economic Justice.

MAZON's Emerging Advocacy Fund builds critical capacity by empowering advocates on the ground and equipping them with the tools to advance real change. In Alaska and Hawai'i, MAZON's support will more than double current anti-hunger policy advocacy efforts. **Through these partnerships, food justice becomes achievable in our country's most food insecure communities, and we're proud to be the catalyst for new projects and progress across the country.**



Learn more about MAZON's partnership grants around the country.

HUNGER IN THE TIME OF HARVEST

Within the temporary walls of the sukkah, we are reminded of the fragility of circumstance and our commitment to protect, defend, and stand with members of our greater community in times of need — regardless of circumstance. Together, we can recognize and break down the barriers for those who cannot enjoy the bounty of the harvest.

Traditionally, biblical matriarchs and patriarchs were “invited” into the sukkah as honored guests; it is said that these ushpizin (Aramaic for “guests”) would refuse to enter a sukkah where those struggling with poverty were not welcome. We invite you to honor the tradition of welcoming ushpizin into your sukkah by sharing one of MAZON’s stories of hunger in America. Display this poster to spark conversations about hunger in the time of harvest. Find more posters, each highlighting a different person and question, at mazon.org/sukkot.

Monday, October 10th is both the first day of Sukkot and Indigenous People’s Day.

On this day when Jews around the world reflect on themes of harvest, scarcity, and the peoplehood of food and foodways, MAZON

invites you to learn more and educate your community about Indigenous food sovereignty using our resources. Please visit mazon.org/sukkot for more information.



DENYS'S STORY

// My parents came to America for a better life. But on the salaries of a night custodian and daycare aide, we struggled. I thought that because I was born here, we'd have better opportunities, but that's not how it is for me. I can stretch SNAP for three weeks, buying basics a little bit at a time. I buy one peach, so there is only one to eat. When the kids go to school full-time, I hope to go back to work and eventually go back to college. But I'll need a good paying job to save up for school, and then I'll probably need to hire a babysitter when I'm at school. How will I pay for it all? I worry but I stay optimistic for my kids. Everything is for my kids. //

MAZON | A Jewish Response
To Hunger

This Sukkot, help MAZON ensure that everyone has access to the bounty of our nation's harvest. Learn more and take action at mazon.org.



Historic Advancements in Israel

In Israel, where over one quarter of the population faces food insecurity, MAZON leads a powerful anti-hunger advocacy coalition of 17 partner organizations. **Even during this time of great political instability in Israel, our coalition has achieved historic success. Last year, we secured funding to address food insecurity in Israel's national budget — a profound milestone that sets an important new precedent.**

Past budgets have included provisional allocations for food and hunger-related programs, but the Israeli government has never introduced permanent, secured funding until now.

The Knesset's historic budget allocated 46 million shekels (the equivalent of about \$14.6 million) for dedicated anti-hunger programs, plus an additional 60 million shekels (about \$19 million) for food insecurity in other budget lines. As noted by Eli Cohen, Executive Director of MAZON's partner Pitchon Lev, our coalition was able to "achieve something that no one else has been able to do in Israel's



72 years of existence." However, this is far less than MAZON and our partners called for (we estimate the actual need is nearly 2 billion shekels), so we continue to fight for policies and funding to address the shocking levels of hunger in Israel.

Acts of tzedakah are an intrinsic part of Judaism. But just as in the U.S., charitable organizations in Israel cannot feed every hungry person in their community; they were conceived to meet short-term needs and respond to emergency situations. Systemic problems like food insecurity demand systemic solutions, the likes of which only lawmakers and governments can provide.

In raising the visibility of hunger in Israel and policies to address it, food insecurity has become a central discussion point in Israeli civil society, government ministries, and Knesset committees. In fact,

MAZON and our partners initiated the launch of a new Knesset caucus on "Food Rescue and Food Security," and the majority of Knesset's 120 Members have already joined.

MAZON's coalition was also a leading force in the formation of Israel's new National Council of Food Security. Professor Roni Strier, the Council's Chairman, said that **MAZON is a "vital change agent in the landscape of food security in Israel.** MAZON has become the main community organizer of the food security organizations in Israel." We are now advising the Council, and the Knesset more broadly, on how best to advance meaningful and long-lasting solutions to hunger in Israel.

Together with our partners, MAZON is building the infrastructure to prioritize food security — and ultimately longterm, government-led solutions to end hunger for all Israelis.



THE HUNGER MUSEUM

A project of MAZON



SAVE THE DATE

Join us for an exciting virtual event to celebrate the launch of The Hunger Museum | **DECEMBER 15, 2022**

We are looking forward to sharing MAZON's new and groundbreaking project to illuminate the history of hunger in America — and the opportunities to create a future without it. The Hunger Museum is an unprecedented digital experience grounded in Jewish values, a combination of innovative art, history, and action that has become the hallmark of MAZON's work to end hunger. Visitors to The Hunger Museum can digitally wander through immersive exhibits, exploring the influence of social, cultural, and political movements on hunger in America — the collection of moments, of decisions, that have resulted in today's hunger crises. Hunger is solvable — the proof is in our history.



For museum and event sponsorship opportunities, please contact Rebecca Ward at rward@mazon.org, or by phone at **(424) 208-7203**.

10850 Wilshire Blvd #400
Los Angeles, CA 90024
mazon.org

BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR!

Invest in the fight to end hunger. Please call us at
(800) 813-0557 or visit mazon.org to join our
monthly giving program today!

LEGACY GIVING AND GIFT PLANNING

Find out about giving through your will, life-income
gifts, or other creative ways to support MAZON.
Please contact Sarah Pratter at spratter@mazon.org
or by phone at (424) 208-7228.

WHO IS MAZON?

Inspired by Jewish values and ideals,
MAZON is a national advocacy
organization working to end hunger among
people of all faiths and backgrounds
in the United States and Israel.

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mazon.org | (800) 813-0557 | hello@mazon.org

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