



MAZON NEWS™

FALL 2020

**HUNGER AND THE
U.S. PRESIDENCY**

Page 4

**HELPING
OUR HEROES**

Page 6

**WASTING TIME
FOR GOOD**

Page 7

LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

Wisdom and compassion. At MAZON, we frequently urge our leaders in government and in our communities to use both to steer them in making decisions, laws, and policies. We see these as twin guiding stars for meaningful and effective leadership, and we rely on them often in our work to end hunger.

This mission is grounded in, and guided by, Jewish values and traditions that command us to care for those in need — not to judge them, but to support them; not to blame them, but to encourage them; not to vilify them, but to see them as *b'tselem Elohim* — made in the image of God.

The enduring devastation wrought in America by the COVID-19 pandemic and the persistent injustices of racism in our country have revealed just how grave the consequences are when our leaders fail to meet challenges with wisdom and compassion. It is clear that this Administration has failed us — all of us — but particularly those of us who are struggling with hunger.

Back in February, before many of us realized the full scope of the pandemic in the United States, nearly 40 million Americans were already food insecure. In the months since, not only has the pandemic spread its devastation, but the scourge of hunger now affects almost 80 million Americans. Had our leaders been guided by wisdom, they would have listened to medical and scientific experts and taken the steps to curb the spread of the virus, and yet they did not. Had our leaders responded with compassion to those left bereft, without jobs, without homes, without loved ones, they would have provided long-term and sustained support, and yet they have not.

Our tradition teaches that we have a responsibility to act when things are unjust, when the vulnerable are crying out, when the system is broken. And in a democracy like the United States, who is best situated to make systemic change? Those who are in elected office. Who can demand that they make that change? All of us.

That's what democracy is about. It is about ensuring that our leaders truly represent the best of America. This means that we care for all Americans, including those who are vulnerable — not excluding them. This is a country founded on the promise of justice. It's a country founded on the promise of fairness. It's a country founded on the promise of inclusion — but those promises have not been kept for everybody. Until these powerful promises are true for everybody, we just have to keep working. That's a commitment we do not make lightly; we make it very strongly.

We know that you share our commitment, and that you are with us shoulder to shoulder in this fight to ensure justice for all those facing hunger and inequity. You, too, are guided by wisdom and compassion, and together we will not rest until these guiding stars are embraced and fulfilled by our leaders.

Stay safe and well,

Liz Kanter Groskind

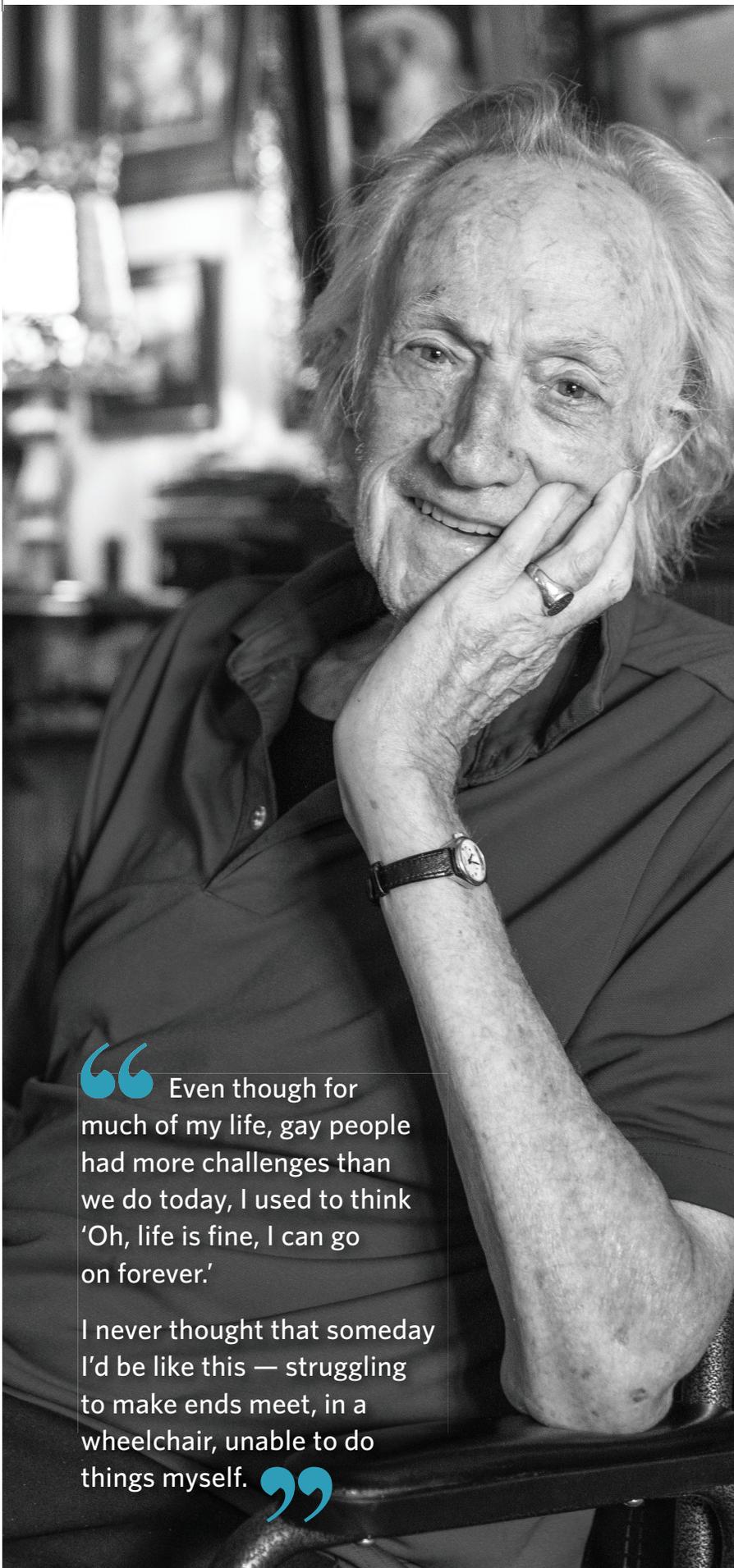
Liz Kanter Groskind
BOARD CHAIR



Abby J. Leibman

Abby J. Leibman
PRESIDENT & CEO





This Is Hunger: Alex's Story

MAZON was proud to be the motivating force behind new research about food insecurity among LGBTQ seniors, released earlier this summer by the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law. The report — “We’re Still Hungry: Lived Experiences with Food Insecurity and Food Programs Among LGBTQ People” — is part of the Institute’s larger *Pathways to Justice* project about poverty and economic insecurity among LGBTQ people.

The report confirmed what we at MAZON have seen and heard in communities across the country: that food insecurity among LGBTQ seniors is prevalent, devastating, and complicated.

This painful reality is illustrated by the story of Alex, an 81-year-old gay man in Gramercy Park, New York, who struggled to pay for food even before he suffered a series of strokes.

“I can’t manage to cook. I can no longer work at the antique shop. For a while, my situation really depressed me. Now, five days a week, I get Meals on Wheels delivered. These meals are the only way I can get a balanced meal now, which I need to regain my strength.”

We know that LGBTQ seniors typically face unique and persistent challenges to accessing services offered through the charitable food network, in addition to escalating barriers to federal nutrition safety net programs. We are working with partners like The Williams Institute to explore vital policy changes that will protect these vulnerable Americans when they need assistance.

“ Even though for much of my life, gay people had more challenges than we do today, I used to think ‘Oh, life is fine, I can go on forever.’

I never thought that someday I’d be like this — struggling to make ends meet, in a wheelchair, unable to do things myself. ”

THIS IS HUNGER

is a powerful, immersive digital video experience that explores who struggles with hunger in America and why. Available for your group and individual viewing with accompanying curriculum at mazon.org/this-is-hunger.

HUNGER AND THE U.S. PRESIDENCY

Food insecurity has surfaced as a focus of debate among policymakers, particularly as the rates of hunger continue to grow in the wake of COVID-19. But for decades, ending hunger has been a bipartisan priority among American policymakers, and for generations, U.S. Presidents have campaigned, debated, and spoken about this issue:

GEORGE WASHINGTON
(1775)

"Let no one go hungry away. If any of the kind of people should be in want of corn, supply their necessities ..."



ABRAHAM LINCOLN (1865)

"With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan."



THEODORE ROOSEVELT (1903)

"Of course, there are always some men who are not affected by good times, just as there are some men who are not affected by bad times. But speaking broadly, it is true that if prosperity comes, all of us tend to share more or less therein, and that if adversity comes each of us, to a greater or less extent, feels the tension."



FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
(1937)

"The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little."



HARRY TRUMAN (1949)

"We have rejected the discredited theory that the fortunes of the Nation should be in the hands of a privileged few. We have abandoned the 'trickle down' concept of national prosperity. Instead, we believe that our economic system should rest on a democratic foundation and that wealth should be created for the benefit of all."



DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (1953)

"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone."



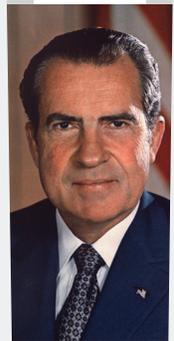


JOHN F. KENNEDY (1961)

"If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich."

LYNDON B. JOHNSON (1964)

"Unfortunately, many Americans live on the outskirts of hope — some because of their poverty, and some because of their color, and all too many because of both. Our task is to help replace their despair with opportunity."



RICHARD NIXON (1969)

"Nowhere has the failure of government been more tragically apparent than in its efforts to help the poor and especially in its system of public welfare."

GEORGE H.W. BUSH (1989)

"I have spoken of a thousand points of light, of all the community organizations that are spread like stars throughout the Nation, doing good. We will work hand in hand, encouraging, sometimes leading, sometimes being led, rewarding. I will go to the people and the programs that are the brighter points of light, and I will ask every member of my government to become involved. The old ideas are new again because they are not old, they are timeless: duty, sacrifice, commitment, and a patriotism that finds its expression in taking part and pitching in."



BILL CLINTON (1996)

"All of us have to rise to this challenge and see this [welfare reform bill] not as a chance to demonize or demean anyone, but instead as an opportunity to bring everyone fully into the mainstream of American life, to give them a chance to share in the prosperity and the promise that most of our people are enjoying today. And we here in Washington must continue to do everything in our power to reward work and to expand opportunity for all people."



GEORGE W. BUSH (2008)

"The American people are generous and compassionate people. We believe in a timeless truth: To whom much is given, much is expected. And so therefore at home we are working to ensure that the neediest among us can cope with the rising food prices."

Helping Our Heroes

For nearly a decade, MAZON has been confronting hunger among veterans — urging policymakers to understand the unique needs and barriers to food security facing the men and women who bravely served our country. We believe that those who fight for our freedom should never struggle to feed themselves and their families. Yet the painful reality is that nearly 1.4 million veterans rely on SNAP to keep food on the table, and too many other veterans struggle with hunger without assistance from programs like SNAP.

This year, we have taken major steps to advance this initiative to confront veteran hunger:

- MAZON strengthened our longtime collaboration with the **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs** by signing a formal partnership agreement with the agency to ensure veterans have reliable access to food. Far too many veterans don't even know about SNAP nor how to access it. Once they learn about it, they can still be discouraged from applying based on misinformation about its availability to veterans, by the overly complicated application process, and by feelings of shame. Our efforts focus on eliminating these barriers to ensure all veterans receive the vital assistance to which they are entitled.
- MAZON launched a new partnership with the **PsychArmor Institute**, a national nonprofit organization that provides free education and support to people who work with, live with, or care for veterans. We released a new

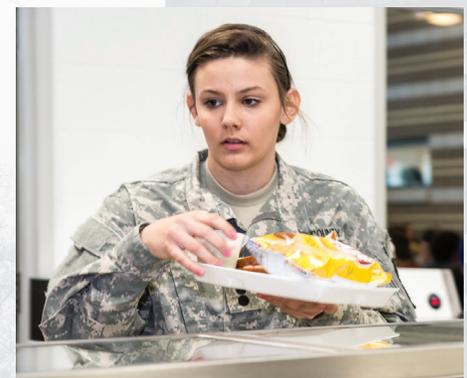
training course entitled “Veteran Food Insecurity: Bringing Solutions to the Table” with a powerful introduction from Senator Tammy Duckworth. The 15-minute video course educates veterans and veteran service providers about the scope of food insecurity, the unique challenges facing veterans, and the importance of programs like SNAP. Learn more at mazon.org/psycharmor.

- Josh Protas, MAZON's Vice President of Public Policy, testified before the **U.S. House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity** in a hearing entitled “Reviewing the Availability of Resources to Address Veteran Hunger.” In his testimony, Protas emphasized that negative public perceptions of SNAP have unfortunately been heightened in recent years, in part due to harmful rhetoric used by some Members of Congress and the Administration. This has created a chilling effect and added to the stigma that often causes veterans to feel reluctant to seek help and apply for SNAP.



In the wake of COVID-19, we are concerned that veterans struggling with illness, economic hardship,

and mental health issues are not receiving the assistance they need and deserve. MAZON will continue working with Members of Congress, the Administration, military and veteran service organizations, and our network of local partners around the country to ensure that our leaders act with wisdom, compassion, and urgency in responding to this critically important issue.



MAZON also continues to call attention to hunger among currently-serving military families. For nearly a decade, we have called on policymakers to confront the painful reality that food pantries operate on or near every military base in this country, quietly serving military families who struggle to put food on the table. We are currently urging Congress to create a “Military Family Basic Needs Allowance” in this year’s National Defense Authorization Act. This allowance, spearheaded by MAZON, provides a bipartisan solution to the shameful and long-overlooked problem. No one — especially those who make significant sacrifices for our country — should go hungry in a land of plenty.

By the Numbers: COVID-19 and Hunger*

There have been
OVER 7 MILLION
cases of COVID-19 in the U.S. and
OVER 210,000 PEOPLE
have died from the virus



Grocery food prices
have increased



in the last year



OVER 10% OF HOUSEHOLDS

are struggling with food insecurity, with rates much higher among Black, Latino, and Native American households



It has been

OVER 6 MONTHS

since Congress passed a COVID-19 Relief Bill



Food banks are expected to face a

6-8 BILLION MEAL SHORTFALL

in the next year

Boosting SNAP benefits by 15% would result in an

» **EXTRA \$25 PER PERSON PER MONTH** «

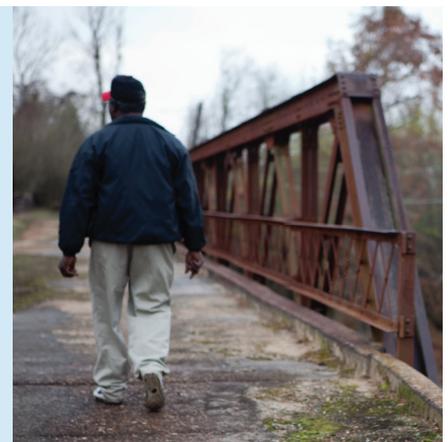
*Data as of October 2020

MAKE A GIFT TODAY

Join MAZON in ensuring every person can meet their most basic of needs — food on their table, and confidence in a better tomorrow.

Your support is both a commitment to immediate assistance for those facing hunger in the wake of the pandemic and to future action to protect the most vulnerable among us.

Donate today by visiting [amazon.org](https://www.amazon.org) or calling us at (800) 813-0557.



MAZON

A Jewish Response
To Hunger

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

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Los Angeles, CA
Permit No. 2674

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 spratler@mazon.org or by phone at (424) 208-7228.

PRESIDENT & CEO

Abby J. Leibman

CHAIR

Liz Kanter Groskind

TREASURER

Rabbi Joel Pitkowsky

SECRETARY

Morgan J. Powell

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sara M. Albert
Julie Singer Chernoff
Leonard A. David
Shirley Davidoff
Michelle Goldman
Steven Krikava
David A. Lash
Randall Lewis
Richard Loewenstein
Theodore R. Mann
Ana Mendelson
Talia Rosen
Daniel Segal
Carolyn Schwarz Tisdale
Leonard Fein (z"l)

NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

Rebecca Bar
Susan C. Bass
Rabbi Jacob Blumenthal
Harry Hauser
Rabbi Rick Jacobs
Adam Lehman
Leslie Lichter
Hazzan David Lipp
Rabbi Hara Person
Rabbi Stanley T. Schickler
Rabbi Deborah Waxman, Ph.D.

AT-LARGE ADVISORY MEMBERS

Rabbi Wayne Dosick
Rabbi Lydia Medwin

LEGAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Erwin Chemerinsky, *Chair*

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.

REACH US

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

JOIN US ON SOCIAL

@MAZONusa

