

MAZON NEWS™

SPRING 2023



Special Edition:

THE HUNGER MUSEUM™

LETTERS FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

Dear Friends,

This newsletter is a very special one for me. I have the joy of introducing you to MAZON's remarkable, fully virtual, and yet very *real* new project: The Hunger Museum™. I am so excited about this innovative experience that tells the story of hunger in America for the past 150 years — and how we once almost ended it. By learning from our history, we know we can, together, shape and achieve a better future.

The Hunger Museum reveals the inflection points in our country's history with hunger, and the complexity of what informed and influenced those moments.

But how to tell that story? What began as a mere timeline (and a brief flirtation with a podcast) evolved into a fully virtual museum, built gallery by gallery, exhibit by exhibit, artifact by artifact. We wanted to honor the complexity of people's lives from era to era, the many influences that create both barriers and opportunities, and the systemic issues that permeate America's history of hunger.

I am deeply proud of the team that brought this museum to fruition. Our talented professional partners and staff, a group at once creative and incisive, brought their expertise, passion, and commitment to build a beautiful virtual space for this evocative story of struggle and hardship, triumph and change.

It's at once humbling and exhilarating to see The Hunger Museum introduced to the world, having nurtured it from that initial vision to the immense body of work it became. I know that the time is right for this. We know inherently as a people the value of looking back to glean a greater understanding, and through that understanding, forging a path forward to a better future.

Let's learn together. Then together we can change *how it is* into ***how it should be***.

Sincerely,



Abby J. Leibman
PRESIDENT & CEO





Visit hungermuseum.org



Dear *Chevra*,

Abby has shared the *what* of The Hunger Museum™; I'm here to share the *why* — and the *why you*. But I'll start with the *why me*.

Working to fight against systemic hunger in this country is vital to who I am, and who I am as a Jew. Hunger offends me. It offends my sense that every human being is made in the image of God. It offends my understanding that our government must care for all those in need. That's at the core of my involvement with MAZON.

My appreciation for The Hunger Museum really stems from my commitment to reaching as many people as we can, so that people can gain a better understanding of what *is* possible, from what *was* possible.

It is my hope, and our mission, that you join us in this understanding. That our community incorporates this thread of history into the countless ways we express some of our dearest values as a people: pursuing justice and caring for the most vulnerable among us. Just as the stories of our people drive our understanding and engagement with the world, so too will this story of our country drive how we change it, how we bend public will towards justice.

The *shehecheyanu* is a prayer to mark time, to mark something new, to mark something anew — which could not feel more resonant to me in the launch of this as a project and as a tool of transformation. And so if I may: *Baruch atah, Melech haolam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higiyanu laz'man hazeh*. Blessed are You, Sovereign of all, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Joel Pitkowsky
BOARD CHAIR



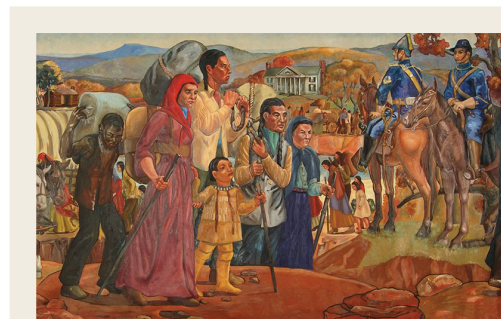


EXHIBIT HIGHLIGHTS

The Hunger Museum™ explores the social and political history of hunger in America — how we almost ended hunger, and how we can work together to do it again. Here are just a few of the hundreds of artifacts you will see at hungermuseum.org

Indigenous Dispossession and Displacement

The Indian Removal Act of 1830 authorized the federal government to negotiate (and/or coerce) treaties that forcibly transferred Cherokee, Muskogee (Creek), Seminole, Chickasaw, and Choctaw Nations to territories west of the Mississippi River, known as reservations. Resistance efforts failed, resulting in the “Trail of Tears” in 1838, during which thousands of Cherokees died. Many other tribes faced similar displacement and loss of life. This policy and others like it disrupted Indigenous communities’ relationship to traditional food sources, replacing fishing, hunting, and gathering with distributions of food rations that forced reliance on government-provided food.



Jane, Elizabeth. “The Trail of Tears.” 1938. Oklahoma Historical Society.



Immigration from Europe

About 24 million migrants moved to and through the U.S. during the late 1800s and early 1900s, mostly residing in cramped, poor, and segregated working class enclaves in overcrowded cities. Jacob Riis hoped this image — from his book “How the Other Half Lives” — would evoke sympathy and inspire progressive-minded New Yorkers to demand reform.

“Children sleeping on Mulberry Street.” 1890. From Jacob Riis’ book, *How the Other Half Lives*. Museum of the City of New York.

The Food Stamp Program

The 1933 Food Stamp Pilot Program aimed to simultaneously address the needs of two populations during the Great Depression: families and farmers. It was designed to maximize accessibility and efficiency by making surplus goods available through grocery stores and markets. By dispersing stamps directly to consumers, the program aimed to boost the “purchasing power” of struggling families, enabling them to visit the vendors they trusted and to purchase a wider variety of low-cost foods, which in turn, would boost the finances of food vendors and stabilize crop prices.



“A woman using food stamps to purchase her groceries in Allentown, Pennsylvania.” 1939. Bettmann Archive/Getty Images.



An Unequal Recovery

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's expansive New Deal was built on a fragile rural-urban coalition that included racist stakeholders, which often resulted in the exclusion of communities of color from programs that brought relief and stability to white Americans.

Bourke-White, Margaret. "At the Time of the Flood In Louisville Kentucky, 1937." Life magazine. The LIFE Picture Collection © Meredith Corporation.

General Motors Frigidaire

In the postwar age of consumerism, corporate advertisers marketed technological advances — in this case kitchen appliances — to a rising middle class of white suburban homemakers to improve the quality of their families' lives, promoting a suburban lifestyle that encouraged women to leave the war-production workforce and return home.

"New Frigidaire Refrigerators by General Motors." Advertisement appearing in the Saturday Evening Post. 1948. Curtis Licensing.



Walk for Decent Welfare

By the time the Walk for Decent Welfare reached Washington, DC in 1968, it had spanned 150 miles, touched dozens of cities, and had been joined by some 6,000 people. The protesters — mostly women of color and their children — demanded their roles as caregivers be recognized, valued, and financially supported, highlighting the vitally important need for meaningful government programs to feed families, and showcasing the barriers at the intersection of racism, sexism, and paternalism in those programs.

Rotter, Jack. "National Welfare Rights Organization March, Washington D.C." 1968. Courtesy of George Mason University Libraries.

Museum FAQs

How do I visit the museum? Does it cost anything?

The museum is available to the public at hungermuseum.org, and admission is free.

Who is this for? Who should visit?

The museum is for students. For adults. For Members of Congress and state and local officials. For synagogue social action committees and interfaith volunteer groups. For book club members and doctoral students. The Hunger Museum™ is for anyone interested in the history of hunger, anti-hunger activism, and the social welfare house of cards we have built in the United States.

Why a virtual museum?

The Hunger Museum is purpose-built for digital space. We wanted to make it as interactive and immersive as possible, while still ensuring that it would be accessible to anyone with access to the internet. In service of that immersive goal, we like to call the museum a “2.5-D experience.” We worked with a real architect to create full architectural renderings

for our museum — if it did exist in real life, this is what it would look like. We positioned the museum as if it were located on the National Mall in Washington, DC — on a currently empty lot between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Holocaust Museum.

Will there be tours? How do I book?

Yes! Tours are available for groups of eight or more individuals and they will take place on Zoom. **Please email museum@mazon.org** to arrange a tour for your synagogue, book club, class, or other community group. We look forward to learning with you.

Is it accessible?

The Hunger Museum site was designed and developed to meet accessibility standards and assure an inclusive experience for users of all backgrounds. The renderings of the museum itself, though it will remain virtual, were also designed with

accessibility in mind. If there are any accessibility needs we have not addressed that would benefit your experience of the museum, tours, or another aspect, **please email museum@mazon.org**.

What are the hours?

You can join us from 10am-5pm, except Mondays and federal and Jewish holidays. We’re kidding, it’s virtual — the museum is always open.

Will there be snacks?

Yes, if you bring them. Snacks are always recommended. But remember not to touch the artifacts while eating. (You’ll smudge your screen.)

Are you sure you don’t want to build it?

We are very, very sure. If we were that flush with funds, we would find other uses for them in pursuit of our mission.





The Hunger Museum Wishing Tree

MEMBERSHIP AT THE MUSEUM

Become a Member of The Hunger Museum™ and you will have extraordinary access to digitally wander through immersive exhibits exploring the influence of social, cultural, and political movements that have resulted in today's hunger crisis in America. Members receive a welcome gift, priority access to pre-scheduled guided tours, access to members-only events, early access to new exhibits, and free admission to museums across the country through the Reciprocal Organization of Associated Museums (ROAM) program.

Your membership enables MAZON to continue building and improving this all-virtual experience

through the creation of new exhibits, expanded learning resources, and engaging programs and events. **Visit hungermuseum.org/membership** to become a Member or gift a membership today!

Patron opportunities are also available for those who want to deepen their commitment to supporting The Hunger Museum. **Please contact Rebecca Ward (rward@mazon.org)** to learn more about Patron packages that include enhanced membership benefits that offer meaningful engagement and learning experiences for you and your community or organization.

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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