In 6 seniors live in poverty. 65% of seniors eligible for SNAP benefits aren’t using them. We could no longer ignore these appalling statistics so two years ago we made senior hunger an organizational priority. Our goal is to connect vulnerable seniors to the nutrition assistance they need.

In our initial program, a one-year pilot called Solutions to Senior Hunger (SSH), we provided training, technical assistance, peer support and funding to 13 Jewish Family & Children’s Service (JFS) agencies in seven states. Our SSH partners conducted over 600 outreach events to raise awareness about SNAP and helped nearly 1,500 clients apply for food benefits, that will help alleviate poor nutrition, hunger and food insecurity among older adults.

In January, we brought all of the partners together to reflect on the program, establish strategies to deepen their impact through advocacy and help them sustain their success moving forward.

The SSH pilot was a success in many ways and we learned a lot:

- Staff were able to reintroduce SNAP to senior clients, who assumed they were not eligible or were deterred by the burdensome application.
- Partners gained a deeper appreciation for the various barriers to SNAP that seniors face (like the reluctance to share personal financial information and the intimidation that accompanies online applications)
- Partners extended their reach and visibility to expand services to communities they might not typically serve
- New relationships and opportunities for collaboration arose with other groups like senior centers, hospitals, universities, etc.
- Armed with more experience and knowledge, many partners became more deeply involved with anti-hunger work in their community

We are proud that the program was such a success, but we recognize that the work is just beginning.

SSH was supported by generous funding from the Walmart Foundation.

When people asked how it was going, I would usually respond with some ambivalence. On one hand, the fact that hunger remains a dire problem in our world makes the work deeply troubling. On the other, I could not be more pleased—and proud of—the growth that MAZON has demonstrated as an organization.

What have we done?

- Clarified our mission as an advocacy organization
- Established an office in DC that advances our leadership of anti-hunger legislative advocacy
- Expanded our presence in Israel
- Developed our State-based advocacy programs with the creation of MAP (MAZON Advocacy Projects)
- Renewed our partnerships with synagogues and clergy
- Expanded our presence on college campuses through the creation of our Hunger Fellows program and our alliance with Challah for Hunger chapters around the country

All of this has been accomplished thanks to the generosity of our supporters—you—and the dedicated efforts of our excellent staff. It has been such an honor to work alongside our President & CEO, Abby J. Leibman. She is a superb leader and there is no doubt in my mind that MAZON will go far under her leadership. Best wishes to MAZON’s incoming chair, Shirley Davidoff, who I know will continue to build on our success.

Thank you to my congregation, Adath Jeshurun, for its generous support while I took on this leadership role, and to my wife Cindy Reich, who I know will continue to build on our success.

Together, we can transform how it is into how it should be.

Lech l’shalom,

Rabbi Harold Kravitz
Board Chair
Why do we tolerate

New reports routinely describe the unrelenting pervasiveness of hunger in America. These reports are devastating and frequently disheartening, but quite often, they are not really new to MAZON.

Every day we are confronted with the reality that hunger

in the United States, through media reports, we own-advocacy efforts and most often by the information shared with us by our grantees partners. We are privileged to work with hundreds of anti-hunger organizations that help to keep us informed, engaged and aware of the issues that impact their communities. With partners in 44 states (and a goal to be in every state?), we learn about the local issues, policies and practices throughout the nation. With our national vantage point we can make sense of that landscape and identify patterns and practices, not just in any given community but nationwide. Over the years, this knowledge has helped us surface and confront cutting edge or persistent issues that too often have gone unaddressed.

What does this look like?

When we learned that the number of military families waiting in line at food pantries was rising exponentially, we called on the Secretary of Defense to fix FSSA so that military families have the resources they need to put food on the table. (Add your support for military families and sign our petition at mazon.org.)

When we learned about the seemingly paradoxical relationship between hunger and obesity, we partnered with food banks to establish nutrition policies to ensure that nutritious food is readily available to low-income families.

When we learned that 2/3 of seniors who are eligible for SNAP benefits aren’t getting them, we crafted a program to break down the barriers that prevent seniors from receiving the benefits they need. (Read more about our successful Solutions to Senior Hunger pilot program on the back page.)

When we learned about the appallingly high rates of food insecurity among American Indian communities, we knew we had to take action. (You can read more about the circumstances faced by Native Americans below.)

This is the crux of our work: to expose the problems that have been hidden from public view or simply overlooked, and to respond in new and effective ways — no matter how challenging, complex or controversial the issue may be. This is how together, we can transform how it is into how it should be.

None of this vital work would be possible without the усилиsh and dedicated work of our Board of Directors. In June, Rabbi Harold J. Kraitz will step down as Board Chair after three years of remarkable leadership. Both MAZON and the anti-hunger movement owe a real debt of gratitude to Harold for his vision, passion and commitment to taking the lead on shaping meaningful solutions to the challenges of food insecurity in the United States and Israel.

Personally, it has been a rare privilege and a true pleasure to work so closely with Harold, who brings intelligence, deep rooted Jewish values, warmth and humanity to all our work together.

Letch Ishalom,

FROM MAZON’S PRESIDENT & CEO

— Abby J. Leibman, PRESIDENT & CEO

THE JEWISH RESPONSE

At your seder, ask
THE FIFTH QUESTION

Why do we tolerate leaders who spend more time belittling hungry children than they do trying to fix the problem of hunger?

Become a Monthly Donor!

Help us minimize expenses and fight for more hungry families. Monthly donations reduce our costs and help us continue and expand our vital work.

Join the MAZON Sustainer Society by pledging to give

Continue and expand our vital work.

Please call 1-800-813-0557 to join our monthly giving program today!

On Passover, you can symbolically “Let all who are hungry, come and eat” 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!

Rural & Remote: HUNGER AMONG NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

A dire reality

Native American children facing starvation are among the most vulnerable in our country, and face the rather logical challenge of putting food on the table. These challenges are unique to those of either rural and remote and indigenous communities.

Food environment

Native American tribes face significant barriers to their hunger-fighting ability to access affordable food. The landscape in which they live is one of challenges and constraints. The barriers create a landscape in which they face a daily struggle to put food on the table.

Our first step

Child Nutrition Programs play a major role in preventing hunger and ensuring children’s health. We have contributed to making these programs more accessible to children in rural areas. That’s the first step in breaking down the barriers to putting food on the table.

Leonard “Leibel” Fein (z”l)

It was with tremendous shock and profound sadness that the Board and staff of MAZON mourned the passing of Leonard “Leibel” Fein on August 13, 2014.

Leibel was more than just the visionary founder of MAZON. He was our inspiration, our touchstone, our mentor, our friend. His vision, passion and commitment to taking the lead on shaping meaningful solutions to the challenges of food insecurity in the United States and Israel. Personally, it has been a rare privilege and a true pleasure to work so closely with Harold, who brings intelligence, deep rooted Jewish values, warmth and humanity to all our work together.

Leibel leaves behind an incomparable legacy of commitment to creating a just world, motivated not simply by doing what’s “right,” but by his belief that working to make the world a better place is an inherently “Jewish” thing to do.

Leibel’s wisdom, his passion and his vision of Jewish social justice have inspired generations of Jewish social justice advocates. We will miss him every day.

May his memory be for a blessing.

Leibel (R) with his brother Rashi Fein (L)