

Hunger News & Hope

A Seeds of Hope Publication

The New Face of Bread for the World:

An Interview with Eugene Cho

by Katie Cook

Most of our readers are familiar with Bread for the World, a Christian advocacy organization whose goal is to influence legislation around issues of hunger and poverty. Bread's mission is "to educate and equip people to advocate for policies and programs that can help end hunger in the US and around the world."

However, our readers may not be familiar with Bread's current president and CEO, Rev. Eugene Cho. As you will read in this interview, Rev. Cho was a pastor for 30 years before taking on his present position. As a pastor, he presented hunger as a central issue before his congregations and founded One Day's Wages, a group that invites people to give a day's wages "to support sustainable relief through partnerships, especially with small organizations in developing regions."

He is co-chair of the US Nutrition CEO Council and serves on the board of Interaction, a name our longtime readers will remember as the largest US-based alliance of NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) and partners.

He also serves on the coordinating committee for the Circle of Protection, a broad coalition of church bodies and ministries that advocate with legislators about hunger and poverty issues.

A native of Seoul, South Korea, Rev. Cho was recently recognized by the Department of Homeland Security as an Outstanding American by Choice.

As the new face of Bread for the World, Rev. Cho has spoken (preached,

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really) in many places about Bread's mission, capturing the attention of his audiences with his passion and humor. I was honored to have the opportunity to spend some time with him to talk about his work.

HNH: I have heard you talk about some things in your upbringing that caused you to be passionate about hunger issues. Would you talk a little bit about that?

CHO: There is probably a handful of things, but the main one is this: as a teenager, as I was maturing, I began to realize that my parents were human. That sounds odd and strange, but as a child you don't know that they're human, that they have their own share of fears and doubts and anxieties. I can still recall the one or two times that I've seen my father weep. When I saw him weep for the first time, it unsettled me, because I had never seen either of them cry. I was a teenager, and I think it started me on a journey in which I realized that they were human, and they had stories. I then had more emotional capacity to ask questions about where they came from, what they struggled with, and what their fears were.

My father was born in what is now called North Korea. When he was a child there was only one Korea,

Even though I'm not a local pastor anymore, my calling as a pastor is still a very significant part of how I see my role as president of Bread for the World.

only one country, so when people ask him, "Are you from the north or the south?" it will take a moment for him to explain, "When I was a child, there was only one country." He was born in a small village outside the city of Pyongyang, which is the capital city of North Korea. That was the first time I realized that hunger and poverty and malnutrition were issues for my parents. I'll never forget it. When we were eating—good food, he would sometimes say out of the blue, "We couldn't afford to even eat rice, we were so hungry."

You might think that this was an example of the hyperbole all our parents share; you know: "I walked 46 miles in the snow, carrying four people on my back," that kind of thing. It didn't really register with me until later, when he was sharing it, and he started weeping.

I still get emotional talking about it. It began to hit me that this wasn't just hyperbole; they were real stories, and it made me that much more inquisitive—and not just in my teenage years; it went into my college years and afterwards.

I'm a father of three, and sometimes I share these stories, and the kids just think, "Wow." I don't always know how much to ask my father, because it's emotional for him, and sometimes for my mother, too. Recently I went to Iraq and Lebanon to do some refugee work and, as I was getting ready to leave, my father was furious. He said, "I can't believe that you're preparing to go to this dangerous place, that you would be leaving your wife and your kids. It's irresponsible. What if something happens to you?" It was very intense. I had to explain to him that I wouldn't go unless I felt that it was safe—you know, all that stuff. Eventually he broke down a little bit and said, "You know, I'm really proud of you." At that time, he was 83 years old. He said, "When I was the age of one of your children, I was living in a refugee camp, separated from half of my family."

There are moments where I'm learning new things that I've never heard. I asked him how it was that he had never shared that story with me. In his imperfect English, he said, "Some things are too painful to share."

So yes; learning more about how my parents endured the Korean War, all that is a formative part of my worldview, my lens, in the work that I do here at Bread for the World.

HNH: If my research is correct, you were a pastor for a number of years before coming to Bread, right?

CHO: Right. I became a Christian at the age of 18. Faith was part of our family, but to use some more charismatic language, I accepted Christ as my savior when I was 18. I went to seminary after three years in college, and right after seminary I entered a full-time pastorate. I have been a local church pastor in several contexts for nearly 30 years. Even though I'm not a local pastor anymore, my calling as a pastor is still a very significant part of how I see my role as president of Bread for the World.

HNH: I can see that, because every time I hear you speak, you're really preaching—which I think is great.

CHO: Yeah, I think you're right. I thought it was really interesting that the board at Bread required that the candidates had to be a minister, with theological training.

HNH: Is that a tradition at Bread for the World?

CHO: Yes, David Beckmann, my predecessor, and

Art Simon before that, were both ordained ministers. It conveys how important faith is in the work we do. They were not necessarily preachers. David Beckmann, as you know, was an economist by training.¹

HNH: He told me that he was ordained as a missionary economist.

CHO: That's right, in the Lutheran church.

HNH: Going back a few years, which college and seminary did you attend?

CHO: I went to the University of California at Davis and then Princeton Theological Seminary.

HNH: So you went from the West Coast all the way to the East Coast?

CHO: Oh, yes. I still remember that drive. There were no cell phones, no GPS. You had to take out this thing called a paper map.

HNH: Where was your first pastorate?

CHO: When I was in seminary, I would drive two and a half hours, each way, to be a youth pastor in Flushing, New York. It was a long drive. The majority of the youth were the children of Korean immigrants, and many of them were latch-key kids. I thought it was strange that so many of them had keys on strings around their necks. Their parents were all working hard to make a living, to survive. I share about that position because, even though I had had experience in other places, I feel like that was my first pastorate. I was deeply invested for a substantive time, and it was incredibly formational for me. They were very special kids, and I had the privilege of being their youth pastor for two years.

HNH: How long have you been with Bread for the World? It hasn't been long, has it? Almost four years?

CHO: It feels like 30. I don't know if that's good or bad. You know, it does feel like there's an asterisk behind that number, and I say that because my first week—well, this is what

happened: I took a red-eye flight to DC, I arrived on Monday morning, I met the board late on Monday afternoon, they voted me in, they had a small reception that Monday night, I said hello to the staff Tuesday and Wednesday, and I left DC on Thursday. On Friday morning, I got an email from my executive director saying, "It looks like we're going to close the office down for about two weeks because of this thing they're calling a coronavirus." And I did not see the staff for another year and a half.

HNH: Oh, my goodness! That must have been hard.

CHO: It was hard, and it continues to be hard. I think when you are adjusting to a new job, a new environment, a new staff, following on the heels and legacy of David Beckmann, who was there for 29 years.... Of course, he was incredibly gracious, but still, following someone like that, and the world is going through COVID, hunger is spiking in unprecedented ways, and [the US] Congress is going through so much challenge, so much polarizing conversation. So, it has been three and a half years, but it does feel longer. I knew it was going to be challenging, but it was a bit more than I had expected. Let's just say it's not how I drew up the plans for a perfect transition.

HNH: Was there anything about Bread that surprised you in the early days (besides not being in the middle of a pandemic)? Was there any place where you expected something to happen and it didn't happen that way?

Please see "Eugene Cho" on page 4.



Right: Rev. Eugene Cho, President and CEO of Bread for the World. Photo courtesy of Bread for the World.

Eugene Cho, *continued from page 3*

CHO: That's an interesting question. Nothing has shocked me; I just didn't expect the extent of some things. I had been a member and supporter of Bread for many years. When I was a pastor, we hosted the Offering of Letters,² so I saw it from that perspective. There's no such thing as a perfect organization, but I think I was really surprised at the depth of the work that Bread does. When you think about a car, you just think about the engine, you don't think about all the other contraptions that go under the hood. When you open up the hood and you look inside—I think that's what surprised me, its complexity, its effectiveness.

Another thing that surprised me is how long legislation takes, and the perseverance and tenacity that it takes. I'm the type of person who is always looking for the express lane. If I have one item too many, I'll leave one behind so I can get into the express lane. I'm wanting to stand in front of that microwave to get my food heated in one minute. I've been humbled by how long it takes. Last year, when the President signed into law the Global Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Act,³ I was bemoaning to someone who has significantly more experience as president of an advocacy organization, about how long that legislation took. She said,

"How long did it take you?" and I flamboyantly said, "Three years!" She said, "Wow!" and I thought she was commiserating with me, but then she said, "That's quick!" I think it dawned on me in that moment that I have to adjust my perspective on things. As someone who was not involved in DC, I was always frustrated with how complex things were, and now that I'm involved in the inner workings—I think there's still frustration because some things just take so long. But it just means that you've got to work really, really hard to get things passed. Ultimately, Bread often says that one signature has the power, the capacity, the possibility to impact thousands, if not millions, of lives, which is why we do what we do.

HNH: I think it was Paul Simon, Art's brother, who was a senator, who said that sitting down and writing a letter to your Congressman is almost certainly saving a life. He said that a long time ago, but it is still true.

CHO: You know, people are increasingly cynical about this. Does my voice matter? Will my phone call matter? People are marching and talking and writing, and I think there has to be room to express some of that concern or frustration. Thankfully, Bread works on an issue that I think is a fundamental issue for human life and human flourishing. It's a pathway that allows other things to be possible, right? Someone says education is the most important thing, and I say, yes, it is very important, but if a child isn't fed and nourished, they're not going to be able to study, no matter where they go to school.

Also, thankfully, this is an issue that still maintains a level of bipartisan support, but it's still really, really challenging because the proposed solutions are so different. It's still very important for people to remain engaged.

HNH: What do you think might have changed about Bread for the World since the beginning? In 1991, I saw a sign on the wall in the Bread offices—this was when they were on Rhode Island Avenue—that said, "You have to take your turn washing the dishes. This is a movement, not an organization." That really



Left: Rev. Eugene Cho, President and CEO of Bread for the World. Photo courtesy of Bread for the World.

struck me at the time, but I'm thinking that has gone away. Bread is so much bigger now.

CHO: That's a great question. I have an incomplete answer. I don't know what it was like 34 years ago; I was just six years old. I had just emigrated to the United States. So I don't know. But the opportunity to meet with Art and David last year, to talk and dream and hear their experiences, was a true gift and treasure. But you hear stories, and the truth is that every organization needs to adapt and conform. Every organization. Yes, Bread is larger, it's certainly well known, highly respected in DC, respected among churches. Our board, for example, is more than 30 people. That's a large board. We have members from every congressional district in the United States, and we have members of Congress who, while they are giving their speeches on the floor, take a moment to thank the work of Bread for the World. We're thankful for all of those things.

But what I'm reminded of is that, while things may look different, while our methodology has changed—had to change, will continue to change—our theory of change remains the same. What I mean by that is that Bread exists where we embrace research and analysis, we embrace having a presence in DC so that we can speak to power, and we have a strong grassroots element so as to suggest that the church speak up and embody their faith. Those three things enable us to really have an influence in the work that we do. By fundraising, by the ability to tell stories about the impact on the people that we're coming alongside. That hasn't changed. Our values haven't changed.

One of the first things I did as president was to take the board and staff through a values exercise. You know, when you're so big, and people are coming from all walks of life, people come for different reasons, and I felt it was really important for us to say, "Who are we, and what are we about?" We'll have to figure out how we do our work, but if you don't know who you are or what you are about, then you're going to somehow lose yourself. So we went through a values process. We identified seven values, and I suspect those values haven't changed much since the genesis of the organization. The first is that we value our faith, at a time when there are a lot of challenges and confusion about faith and church in our nation and around the world. Sometimes, when people hear that you are a Christian organization, they get nervous, but I think it's important for us to value our faith. Our faith is why we advocate for our neighbors, near and far, who struggle with hunger and poverty.

HNH: How do you keep doing this, day after day?

CHO: Wow. Now you're going to make me cry. That's a really good question. I think everybody needs to realize that this is a marathon, and not a sprint. People have asked me, "Rev. Cho, what advice would you give to your 25-year-old self?" I always say, "Begin to embrace the theology of the marathon." I think we're so committed to sprinting, when it's really a marathon. You have to prepare yourself emotionally, physically, spiritually and relationally.

I think everybody needs to realize that this is a marathon, and not a sprint. People have asked me, "Rev. Cho, what advice would you give to your 25-year-old self?" I always say, "Begin to embrace the theology of the marathon."

That would be one answer. I think I'm also always mindful of the hope question. What gives us hope? What gives us a sense of purpose? Doing this gives me purpose. Having faith in Jesus gives me hope. Meeting people like yourself, of all backgrounds, of all generations, who care about these issues. The fact that you and I care about a child in Somalia right now who is struggling with hunger. It's hard, it's sobering, but it also gives me hope because it speaks about the beautiful essence of humankind.

Meeting members gives me hope. I've had the chance to travel a lot the past year. There is a woman who lives in Indianapolis in a senior living center; she's in her nineties, and she gathers Bread members every month in her home to do an offering of letters. Every single month. I've had a chance to visit her twice now. That gives me hope. It fires me up. And that kind of story is multiple.

Also, the progress we've made gives me hope. No one wants to do something and it makes zero difference. As we look back at the history of Bread, we can celebrate the progress. And, even when I look back at the three and a half years I've been here, although it would be false for Bread to take sole credit for any of this, we are part of a larger choir of organizations and people that are seeking to make a difference. That gives me the motivation to keep going on.

And I think, if we're honest, you can have hope, and there's still room for moments of doubt, questions, frustration, and I certainly have those as well. I'm constantly asking, "Are we doing enough? Are we meeting this moment?"

Please see "Eugene Cho" on page 7.

Remembering Art Simon

by Katie Cook

Art Simon died November 14. He was 93. Although I learned, to my sorrow, that many people in the anti-hunger world don't remember him, I'm convinced that his influence on the movement has been incalculable. He was the founder and first president of Bread for the World, the nation's preeminent Christian advocacy organization that, for very close to 50 years, has been "urging US decision makers to do all they can to pursue a world without hunger."¹

Art began his journey as an anti-hunger activist when working as a Lutheran minister in the late 1960s and early 1970s in New York City's Lower East Side. His work in providing emergency assistance in this neighborhood inspired him to inquire as to why people were hungry in what he often called "the wealthiest country in the world."

To respond to the systemic causes of hunger, he and a committee of seven Protestants and seven Catholics founded Bread for the World in 1974. He worked at Bread for 16 years. In 1975, the organization launched the first Offering of Letters campaign.²

Also in 1975, Simon published his first book, *Bread for the World*, which literally changed people's lives. Among these was the popular travel writer Rick Steves, who is, now, at press time, leading a fundraiser to support Bread's work. Steves told Religion News Service that someone gave him a copy of the book when he was a student, and it opened his eyes. He learned that hunger was as much about politics and economics as it was about food, and that we can be "accidental accomplices in keeping people poor."

Art's brother, US Sen. Paul Simon (D-IL), was, in many ways, an important public face for Bread while he was in office. He was a longtime advocate of social justice and managed to introduce significant and successful legislation to alleviate hunger and poverty. He urged people to write letters to legislators and national leaders as part of Bread's Offering of Letters, saying that sitting down to write a letter to Congress was "almost certainly saving someone's life."

I first met Art Simon in 1990, when he came to Waco to speak at Caritas of Waco's annual Feast of Caring. I was on staff at Caritas at the time, and, during the few days he was here, he taught me something that became the DNA of my anti-hunger career. Knowing fully well that he was visiting an organization that was all about direct, emergency assistance, he said, "The solution to the problem of hunger walks on two legs—being personally involved with the poor, as you are, and being involved in public policy."

Simon retired from Bread just as I was beginning my work as a hunger editor. (In fact, his successor, David Beckmann, started work at Bread on the same day that I started at Seeds.) Simon went on after that to work for five years at the Washington office of the Christian Children's Fund. From there he very generously wrote articles for Seeds that spoke wisdom to some of the more controversial topics we addressed.

David Beckmann, on hearing of Art's death, wrote this tribute:

Arthur Simon led the development of Bread for the World from a prayer into a powerful, nationwide movement to get our nation's elected leaders to help end hunger. In the 50 years since Art started organizing, Bread for the World and its members across the country have played a leadership role in expanding and improving poverty-focused international aid.



Photo courtesy of Bread for the World

Eugene Cho, Bread's current president and CEO (see the story that begins on page 1 of this issue) had this to say:

When I consider the many millions of people around the world whose lives have been changed for the better because of the policies and programs created and improved by anti-hunger activism; when I see the 200,000-strong citizen's movement that Bread is today; when I hear from individuals about how Art's message and work led to a new orientation in their life toward justice; I feel an enormous weight of gratitude.

Art published a number of books besides *Bread for the World*. Two came out before the founding of Bread—*Faces of Poverty* and *The Politics of World Hunger* (with his brother Paul). He also wrote *Christian Faith and Public Policy*, and, in 1999, *Grace at the Table* (with David Beckmann). He later wrote *How Much is Enough? Hungering for God in an Affluent Culture* and *The Rising of Bread for the World*. Just four years ago, he wrote *Silence Can Kill: Speaking Up to End Hunger and Make Our Economy Work for Everyone*.

He received numerous prestigious awards (such as the Presidential Hunger Award for Lifetime Achievement) and honorary degrees for his work, but he never lost touch with his grassroots beginnings. He never lost touch with Bread. He never stopped believing in the importance of advocacy for hunger issues. He told the Religion News Service in 2019, "Sometimes it just takes reaching that tipping point in the public sense of things that hunger is an outrage in a country as wealthy as ours."

—Katie Cook is the *Seeds of Hope* editor. Sources: Religion News Service, *Bread for the World*.

Endnotes

1. This statement is from the Bread for the World website (www.bread.org). See more about Bread in the interview with Eugene Cho starting on page 1 of this issue.
2. Each year, Bread asks people of faith to contact members of the US Congress and other national leaders, urging them to support bipartisan legislation that is carefully researched and chosen by staff policy teams. Many congregations and groups collect the letters and bless them before sending them to Washington. This is called the Offering of Letters. (See the Spring 2023 issue of *Hunger News & Hope* for more information.)

Eugene Cho, continued from page 5

HNH: What do you think will be happening in the anti-hunger world five years from now?

CHO: I'm glad you asked that question. Sometimes we can be so engrossed in the work right now because the need is so high, that we're not spending enough time allowing our imagination to run, to ask the question "What if?" I think globally we're going to see more and more effort around the terminology of localization, where you want to see more resources and solutions be at the hands of local leaders, local organizations, local agents. That will be very important. We're just starting off with that.

I think nationally what I would like to see is for hunger to become a national priority. And it's not. It's seen as just one of those things you have to deal with. Lots of those myths: "those poor people," "those people" who are on welfare, "those people" who are on SNAP. I don't think people understand why people are on SNAP or why 9 million children in the wealthiest nation in the world are hungry. That's the question all of us should be asking. And we're not. It's more of an afterthought.

In order for us to live in a nation where we have in essence eradicated hunger, it's going to require some sort of revolution to take place. That's what I'm hoping for.

—Katie Cook is the *Seeds of Hope* editor. In 1991, in her first *Seeds* story, she interviewed David Beckmann. This was shortly after he began work as the Bread for the World president.

Endnotes

1. See "A New Leader at Bread for the World: An Interview with David Beckmann," *Seeds Magazine*, Vol 14 No 2, February 1992, p 10.
2. Through the Offering of Letters, Bread members and partner congregations across the US contact their representatives to support the bills. (For more about the Offering of Letters, see "Focus on the Farm Bill: Bread for the World's 2023 Offering of Letters," *Hunger News & Hope*, Vol 23 No 1, Spring 2023.
2. The Global Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Act was signed into law in October 2022. Bread staff members work with bipartisan Congressional sponsors, sometimes even helping with the creation of bills.

Culinary Medicine:

Using Food to Heal

by Linda Freeto

At this writing, the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays are before us. The smell of turkey roasting in the oven permeates our homes. Good food is set before us as we sit at the dining room table, in awe of the colors and smells of a feast. Did you know that this feast is also medicine for our bodies, minds and spirits? Not only is the feast before us medicine, but every time we put food and drink in our mouth, we are taking medicine: *culinary medicine*.

What is culinary medicine? For many years we have heard doctors and dietitians talk about the importance of our habits and eating quality foods that are most beneficial to our bodies. "Eat more fruits and vegetables," doctors say. "Drink eight glasses of water every day," dietitians tell us. This is not new advice. However, what is new is the scientific study of the effects of food and drink on our bodies in the field of medicine.

Just for fun, I looked up some of the top favorite American foods on the web. According to Ranker.com,¹ the top five foods in the US are: cheeseburgers, chocolate chip cookies, French fries, fried chicken and New York Style pizza. Another website, "In the Kitchen with Matt," claims that the top five favorites are: potato chips, donuts, ice cream, chicken tenders and soft drinks or soda.²

Did you notice there is no mention of vegetables or fruits? Unless you want to count French fries as a vegetable.

Everyone has an opinion of our favorite foods. Although all these foods taste great and most Americans eat them every day, they are not good for a daily eating habit for your body, mind and spirit. Dietitians and doctors are becoming more and more concerned by the American diet. With fast-food restaurants like McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) popping up beyond the United States, the American diet is causing health risks on a daily basis worldwide.

According to a report from the "Front-of-Package Nutrition Rating Systems and Symbols," the Standard American Diet (SAD) is "too high in calories, saturated fats, added sugars, and sodium."³ The human body needs fiber, calcium, potassium and vitamin D to make it function in the best possible way.

In short, the American diet is making people sick.

As scientists and those in the field of medicine study the effects of food on the human body, culinary medicine is emerging as a new field of study. Knowledge is increasing in the understanding of how food choices affect the healing and well-being of the human body.

Scholars at the University of Arkansas have developed a leadership role in a culinary medicine degree. The university is integrating courses that expand an outreach program of "patient-centered care on Health meets Food" in medical studies.⁴ Researchers in the medical field are taking a hard look at the health aspects of food preparation and healing of the body.

I was in the hospital in Waco for several days last summer, and before I left the hospital, a dietitian came to talk to me about food choices and preparation. The hospital doctor who oversaw my care also took a few minutes to talk about food choices.



Photo by Marco Verch

Food has become part of medical treatment.

Two aspects of culinary medicine involve moving from frying foods to baking them and eating more meatless meals. This includes eating more black beans, brown rice, apples, broccoli and salads. There is nothing wrong with having a great hamburger with all the trimmings and fries on the side occasionally, but a daily dose of these foods is seriously damaging our health.

The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas (UTSW) launched the program "Health

The important connection between healthy eating habits and the healing of body, mind and spirit has become more than talking about good gardening skills and the right way to cook vegetables.

meets Food" in 2017. The program provides medical students the opportunity to learn by preparing food in the teaching kitchen in the University's Department of Nutrition.⁵

As students become more efficient in their knowledge and skills, they go out to local elementary and middle schools to teach nutrition information and how to make healthy eating choices. The program has been successful. Now UTSW is expanding the Health meets Food program into its residency program and the UTSW Pediatric Gastroenterology Fellowship Program.⁶

Interest in culinary medicine at UTSW has increased greatly. The university is now working to expand the program into the Development, Communications, Marketing and Public Affairs departments.

Culinary Medicine is not only being taught at the University of Arkansas and the University of Texas Southwestern. It is rapidly spreading across the United States. The important connection between healthy eating habits and the healing of body, mind and spirit has become more than talking about good gardening skills and the right way to cook vegetables. The connection gives all of us the opportunity to find healing not just in a bottle of pills but using what is put on the dining room table as a way of healthy healing through diet.

—Linda Freeto, a frequent contributor to Hunger News & Hope, has received a number of Associated Church Press (ACP) awards for her Special Section reports in the HNH theme issues. Her special report on Women and Poverty from the summer 2016 issue was included in ACP's compilation,

Best of the Christian Press 2016. A founding member of the Seeds Council of Stewards and former volunteer Business Manager, Linda is once again serving as a Council Member.

Endnotes

1. Ranker.com is a website that features polls on entertainment, brands, sports, food, and culture.
2. Matt Taylor, "Most Popular Foods in America," *In the Kitchen with Matt* (blog).
3. Kiersten Hickman, "Ugly Side Effects of the American Diet," *Eat This, Not That!* Galvanized Media, September 2021.
4. "Culinary Medicine Program, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences," published by *Health meets Food*, a web publication of the Culinary Medicine Specialist Board in McLean, VA. Health Meets Food is also the name of the curriculum produced by the board.
5. "Culinary Medicine Program at University of Texas Southwestern," published by *Health meets Food*.
6. Ibid.

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Innovating to End Rural Hunger: The Meals-to-You Program

by Lori Kanitz

One of the most perplexing ironies of hunger in America is that, though ample food resources exist, enough to provide every American with three healthy meals a day, approximately one in 10 Americans is food insecure, meaning they do not know when or where they will get their next meal. Texas is currently the second most food insecure state in the nation, ranking only behind Arkansas.¹

With the end of pandemic-era public benefits this last year, childhood poverty has skyrocketed, from an

The Baylor team decided to find an innovative solution. What if, instead of requiring rural children to come to the food, we brought the food to them?

historic low of 5.2 percent in 2021 to 12.4 percent in 2022.² Poverty is the single greatest predictor of food insecurity, with lasting negative outcomes on learning, mental and physical health, and future earning potential, all of which perpetuate generational poverty.

Founded in 2009, the Baylor Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty at Baylor University seeks to create a world without hunger by utilizing a three-pronged

approach synthesizing research, practice and policy to cultivate scalable solutions. Its core conviction is that no one sector can end hunger. We therefore approach hunger solutions utilizing multisectoral collaboration. We engage partners ranging from local school food service directors to the global World Food Programme to conduct groundbreaking research.

One crucial lesson emerging from nearly 15 years researching hunger is that there is no one-size-fits all solution. Every community has resources and challenges, both visible and invisible—from its schools to its soil—affecting its ability to flourish. Working to find innovative hunger solutions must therefore begin with attentiveness to these various conditions.

The Rural Hunger Challenge

In 2015, Jeremy Everett, the Collaborative's executive director, was serving on the Congressional bipartisan, 10-member National Commission on Hunger, when he discovered that, while federally funded summer meal programs for children were highly successful at reducing summer food insecurity in urban and suburban areas, rural Texas households often fell through the cracks.

Traditional USDA summer food programs require children come in person to an approved meal site. For rural families, this is challenging. Barriers such as transportation, work schedules, and distance to congregate meal sites make accessing those meals difficult. For example, a rural household may live an hour's drive from an in-town summer meal site. That equals a two-hour round-trip just so a child can have lunch. Because nearly 40 percent of school districts in Texas are rural, nearly half the state's school children potentially lack access to nutritious food during the summer.

An Innovative Solution

The Baylor team decided to find an innovative solution. What if, instead of requiring rural children to come to the food, we brought the food to them? In 2019, the USDA partnered with the Collaborative to fund a three-year demonstration project to test an innovative mailed-meal-box concept we called Meals-to-You (MTY), in which each week for the duration of the summer break, each eligible child in a participating



school district would receive a box of shelf-stable, nutritious food. Each box contained five breakfasts, five lunches, and five snacks that met USDA meal patterns and nutritional requirements.

The first summer, the MTY program mailed more than 325,000 meals to more than 4,000 children in 19 rural school districts in east and west Texas. The following summers, the program expanded to include other school districts in Texas, and also in rural Alaska, New Mexico and Utah. The program was so successful, the USDA twice approved additional funding to expand and extend MTY through the summers of 2022 and 2023.

In addition, when the COVID-19 abruptly forced school closures in spring 2020, the USDA asked Baylor to scale up the MTY model to meet school children's ongoing need for meals during the public health crisis. This became the "Emergency Meals-to-You" (eMTY) program, shipping boxes to 43 states and Puerto Rico. The pilot and emergency MTY programs combined served approximately 42.5 million meals to 301,000 rural children over five summers.

Multisectoral Collaboration

The rural locations inherently posed unique challenges for shipping food boxes. Many rural addresses were non-standard—if they existed at all. In addition, food had to be fun to eat, nutritious, shelf-stable, and able to be consumed with minimal preparation. In Texas *colonias*, for example, households often lacked electricity needed for food preparation or refrigeration. In Alaska, infrastructure challenges meant food boxes had to withstand the extremes of frontier weather and wildlife.

Meeting these challenges required forming innovative public-private partnerships that leveraged the existing infrastructure of school meal programs, school district and state administrations, as well as food distributors. Since they knew best their state and local communities, state agencies and local school district personnel were indispensable voices, which led to improvement in the program each summer.

Our food distribution partners, McLane Hunger Solutions, PepsiCo Food for Good and Chartwells (pandemic only) masterminded ways to leverage their shipping technologies and purchasing power—in highly disrupted supply chain environments—to acquire and distribute food boxes that still met all USDA requirements. Our shared-power approach proved crucial to the program's success.

Research and Policy Impact

But did Meals-to-You improve food security? To answer the question, each year the MTY program was externally evaluated by an independent team of researchers from the Urban Institute. The Institute gathered data on all aspects of the program—from shipping to the nutritional value of box contents, to participant satisfaction—with the goal of identifying best practices that could guide future iterations of food interventions

The report's findings indicated that not only were most households (about nine of 10) satisfied with the program, but also that the more rural a household was, the more significantly the program reduced food insecurity.

to low-income families in rural communities. The result is a substantial body of data signaling its promise as a highly effective intervention in some of the most remote regions in the country.³

The report's findings indicated that not only were most households (about nine of 10) satisfied with the program, but also that the more rural a household was, the more significantly the program reduced food insecurity. In 2020, for example, "estimated reductions per additional week of meals were about twice as large relative to participants in less rural areas."⁴ Importantly, participants reported it also reduced the hidden burdens of food insecurity, such as emotional stress on caregivers and the stigma that children experienced when getting food assistance at public sites.

The Collaborative's multisectoral approach, integrating public service, policy, and research, resulted in Congress passing legislation in the December 2022 Omnibus Bill making non-congregate meal programs, such as Meals-to-You, a permanent option for every school district in the nation. The existing federally funded feeding programs will always meet a crucial need. However, now states have another tool in their food security toolbox to help ensure rural children also will have nutritional food during the summer months. —Dr. Lori Kanitz moved in 2020 from a career as a professor to become the director of the Innovation Hub at the Baylor Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty (formerly the Texas Hunger Initiative), where she manages multimillion dollar grant-funded projects designed to improve food security.

Endnotes

1. Matthew P. Rabbit, et al, *Household Food Security in*

Please see "Meals to You" on page 19.

art courtesy of World Hunger Relief, Inc.



Garden in Old Coal Mine Helps Feed 2,000 People a Month

DONIE, TX—The NRG Dewey Prairie Garden has been helping put fresh produce on locals' tables since it began harvesting in April 2022. The fruits and vegetables it yields are distributed between six food pantries and go to serve about 2,000 people each month in remote areas. However, this is not the only way this garden serves the community; the garden is also part of the effort to reclaim an old coal mine that primarily reaches into the Texas town of Jewett. Lignite coal lies closer to the surface of the earth, so the mining of it results in destroyed wildlife habitats, polluted rivers and other ecological damage.

To combat this, the Texas Railroad Commission, since 1977, has required companies to post a bond for each mining site they open and restore the land in old, unused mines. The reclamation process takes several years to complete and often starts while the mine is still in use.

The Jewett mine's restoration started a mere year after the site became active in 1984, but since the NRG Energy company began using cleaner-burning coal from Wyoming to fuel its electric power plant instead, all efforts at Jewett shifted to focus on restoration. So far, 3,500 acres of the former mine have been replanted with native grasses and the company is creating 700 acres of wetlands.

Overall, 5,590 acres of the 35,000 acre mine have been fully reclaimed. In addition, plans are in motion to expand the Dewey Prairie Garden by nine acres so even more people may benefit from it.

—Compiled by Joanna Hardy. Source: Alejandra Martinez, "At a shuttered Texas coal mine, a 1-acre garden is helping feed 2,000 people per month," Texas Tribune, July 14, 2023.

Food Thefts in Ethiopia Drive WFP to Revise Distribution System

ROME, ITALY—In May of this year, the World Food Programme (WFP) and US Agency for International Development (USAID) suspended food aid in Ethiopia's Tigray region after receiving reports of theft. About 7,000 tons of wheat and 215,000 liters of food oil were stolen before they could be delivered to the starving populace.

This phenomenon was originally thought to be limited to Tigray, but, once widespread diversions were uncovered in June, the blockage was applied to the whole country. According to aid workers' accounts, members of the Ethiopian government were padding their wallets with money from black market sales. As a result, the estimated 20 million people in Ethiopia who desperately need humanitarian assistance after experiencing civil war and a historic drought are left to suffer. Cindy McCain, the WFP's new executive director, expressed regret over the WFP's delayed response to the disaster.

Though other forms of aid such as nutrition assistance, school meals and agricultural programs remain in motion, food distribution is halted until the WFP can ensure rations are reaching their intended destinations. The Ethiopian government is allegedly being more transparent and cooperative, but the WFP is still updating its system for tracking and tracing commodities and beneficiaries. These changes will be applied to all WFP operations to prevent similar situations from occurring elsewhere. At press time, no dates had been given for when the changes will take effect.

"[The diversion is] something that we will learn from and will never happen again," McCain promised, "Not on my watch, it won't."

—Compiled by Joanna Hardy. Source: Teresa Welsh, "'Not on my watch:' McCain vows Ethiopia food theft won't happen again," Devex Newswire, July 2023.

Joanna Hardy, the summer 2023 intern at Seeds of Hope, is a resident of Aledo, TX, and a Professional Writing & Rhetoric major at Baylor University.

Migrant Crisis Tests New Yorkers Who Thought They Supported Immigration

NEW YORK, NY—New Yorkers have long been known for their acceptance of the influx of migrants. They live in a state where the beautiful Statue of Liberty, the symbol of freedom, democracy and welcome, rests on Liberty Island in New York Harbor. The statue was given to the United States by France in 1886 and displays the words, “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.” It represents hope, freedom and justice.

However, with more than 110,000 migrants recently moving into the city of New York, the Siena College Research Institute has been polling New Yorkers on their attitudes toward these migrants. “People are extremely internally conflict(ed),” said institute director Don Levy.

Research also showed that large majorities of New Yorkers believe that immigrants bring a “new vitality” to the country, and that new migrants only want a better life for themselves and their families. And most New Yorkers “reject the suggestion that immigrants want handouts or that they bring crime and drugs” into the United States. One New Yorker interviewed said that her parents were immigrants to the US after the Holocaust. They were looking for a better life in a new home.

But the current influx is causing concern. A special education teacher in Jamaica, Queens, she said that her already overcrowded school “recently took in 132 students, many of whom do not speak English.”

For the past 20 years, New Yorkers have experienced a greater number of migrants moving into their communities and neighborhoods. This has become a “serious problem” to some, causing them to want to slow the flow of immigrants. For them, migrants have become a “burden” rather than a “benefit.”

Levy said that the poll showed that New Yorkers were divided evenly: one third hold “negative views” of the migrants; one third are “resolutely supportive;” and one third are in the middle.

Once, the immigration issue was an abstraction for New Yorkers—something you heard about in the news or on television. But today, the abstraction has become real.

—Compiled by Linda Freeto. Source: John Leland, “Migrant Crisis Tests New Yorker Who Thought They Supported Immigration,” New York Times.

SDG Hunger Goal Slumps Further Behind 2030 Target in Key UN Food Report

ROME, ITALY—In 2012, the member countries of the United Nations chose 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), hoping that at least most of them would have been implemented by 2030. In recent years, many have begun to wonder if this is still possible.

A recent UN Global Food Security Report stated that there has been a stabilization in the number of hungry people since the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the tracking number to eliminate hunger by 2030, as proposed in SDG Goal 2, is being pushed further and further away from its original target.

The 2023 UN Global Food Security Report said that “in 2022, between 691 million and 783 million people were hungry, 122 million more than in 2019 before the pandemic. Globally 2.4 million people, or 29.6 percent of the population, did not have regular access to food.” Nearly 900 million people face severe food insecurity each day.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation’s (FAO) Chief Economist Maximo Torero told Devex News that if the world had not faced the worldwide devastation of COVID-19, “we would have seen a decline [in hungry people].” Torero also stated that, if the war in the Ukraine had not happened, there would be more of a decline in the number of hungry people. “We are very far from where we should be for achieving

[Continued on page 14.](#)



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Sustainable Development Goal 2 (eliminating hunger), set in 2015 by the UN General Assembly.”

Even though the goal to eliminate hunger by 2030 was already improbable, reaching the goal is now further out of reach. Projections show that there will be more than 600 million people undernourished by 2030. One of the specific goals was to increase the number of breastfeeding children for the first six months of life. This one action would reduce the number of children being stunted under the age of five. At the present rate, this target remains unachievable. Children who are low in weight for their height are more than double the number in the 2030 goal.

Latin America, which had a strong system in place to help people who faced food security before the COVID-19 outbreak, did not see a big increase in hunger. However, Africa, which did not have a cohesive system to help those in need before the pandemic, was devastated during and after the pandemic. “Africa didn’t have the capacity of absorption, didn’t have that capacity of social protection programs which were very well targeted,” Maximo Torero said.

Torero went on to say that the public sector, private sector, international financial institutions and foundations all have a role to play in helping improve access to nutritious food.

“Although the news [is] not good because the numbers are very high, I still think that the fact that it has stabilized in spite of the additional shock of the war tells us that now we have a window to turn this [around].” Torero said.

—Compiled by Linda Freeto. Source: Teresa Welsh, “SDG Hunger Goal Slumps Further Behind 2030 Target in Key UN Food Report,” *Devex Newswire*.

Israel-Hamas Conflict Deepens Humanitarian Crisis

GAZA—Over the past several weeks, the world has watched the escalation of war in the Middle East. Fighting between Israel and Hamas is not something new, but this time the war will have a major impact on humanitarian aid to the region, according to several United Nations (UN) agencies.

The Gaza Strip was the home of more than 2 million people, including 1.7 million Palestinian refugees. The militant organization Hamas has ruled Gaza since

2007. On October 7, Hamas began firing thousands of rockets into Israel, starting a new faze of the ongoing conflict to increase the disruption of life in Israel. The rockets caused more than 900 deaths, and Hamas militants took more than 100 people hostage.

Israel responded by declaring war on Hamas and began a military campaign, launching an attack on Gaza that killed more than 700 people. On October 9, Israel ordered a complete siege against Gaza. This meant no electricity, food or fuel for the Gaza population, according to Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed deep distress at hearing Israel’s announcement.

The UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine Refugees in the Near East has more than 13,000 staff on the ground in Gaza, now working with almost 2 million Palestine refugees. At the time of this report, the agency stated that they were sheltering 137,000 individuals who are displaced, and disruption to food aid is affecting 113,000 families.

Secretary-General Guterres appealed to the Israeli government and Hamas militants to allow delivery of humanitarian aid into Gaza. “I urge all sides and the relevant parties to allow the United Nations access to deliver urgent humanitarian assistance to Palestinian civilians trapped and helpless in the Gaza Strip,” he declared.

Israeli missiles struck UNRWA facilities where families were sheltered, and Hamas threatened to execute hostages if Israel continued to attack “without prior warning.” At the time of this report, the UN Security Council had not reached “a clear position on the violence,” while the United States and its allies had issued a joint statement “supporting the Israeli position.”

NOTE: The United States has been hampered in making any firm commitment to provide aid, because the majority Republican leadership of Congress were not able to elect a Speaker of the House for several weeks after Kevin McCarthy was forced to step down. The House elected Republican Speaker Mike Johnson in mid-November. However, Congress has still not been able to move forward.

—Compiled by Linda Freeto. Source: Helen Murphy, “Israel-Hamas Conflict Deepens Humanitarian Crisis,” *Devex Newswire*.



Teaching Fish Farming in Zimbabwe Produces Food, Income, Enthusiasm

ZIMBABWE – For many years, we have heard about food crises in many places around the world, about the lack of nutritious food and clean water to drink. Low agricultural production and periods of droughts continue to persist in many places. And yet, people from all walks of life are finding ways to make a difference in the health and welfare of their communities and beyond.

Sister Ester Machechera, currently the postulant director of the congregation of Missionary Daughters of Calvary Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe, says she grew up within a loving, large farming family. There were nine children born to this farming couple who worked with the land and taught their children to love and care for the land as well.

The experience of working with her hands turned Sister Ester toward agricultural economics. She attended the Catholic University of Zimbabwe, headquartered in Harare, focusing on business management and information technology. Equipped with her early life experience in farming and her college degree, Sister Ester chose agriculture as her life's work.

Sister Ester introduced the sisters living in the missionary community to organic farming, crop rotation and biological pest control, as well as other methods. Their crops were successful. Now the sisters

teach others how to grow crops for their families and share them with others in the community.

Sister Ester said that the failure of Zimbabwe's government to develop the country's infrastructure continued to cause low agriculture production and the lack of environmental changes. However, these obstacles did not deter her from moving forward.

The farmers of Zimbabwe not only experience hardship caused by human beings, but they also face natural disasters—flooding, cyclones, rising temperatures and COVID—that cause homelessness and increased poverty. Families are going hungry, and families are struggling to find answers for all these issues.

Sister Ester and the Sisters of the Missionary Daughters of Calvary are committed to working with other Zimbabwean women, who typically provide food for their families, and the larger community to use healthier farming practices. A new practice that Sister Ester has launched is building and caring for fish farms.

The farmers select the kind of fish they want to grow. Fish is high in protein. The fish farms create additional income and improve water management. The farms have been built near the congregation to provide security so no one can get in and take the fish. One fish farm nurtures more than 2,000 Zimbabwe bream fish on the Zambezi River. They held the first harvest last April, and they are now planning to expand the ponds.

Right now, the Sisters are taking care of and harvesting the fish, as well as teaching the community new methods of farming. They hope that by taking the lead in this new venture, the community will use these new methods of caring for the earth and climate, while providing quality food for their families and others.

—Compiled by Linda Freeto. Source: Ester Machechera, "Teaching Fish Farming in Zimbabwe Produces Food, Income, Enthusiasm," National Catholic Reporter.

Linda Freeto, a frequent contributor to Hunger News & Hope, is a founding member of the Seeds Council of Stewards and former volunteer Business Manager. Her writings have received a number of Associated Church Press awards.

Shining a Spotlight on the Invisible Workforce

A Review of the Netflix Docuseries

Working: What We Do All Day

by Joanna Hardy

In 1974, Studs Terkel released a nonfiction book titled *Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do*. It contained interviews of people from all kinds of backgrounds and fields and shared what work meant to them and how it influenced their lives.

Terkel's unique approach of directly asking average working people about their experiences was revolutionary. His book quickly became a bestseller and went on to inspire multiple later works from a

Broadway musical of the same name to a graphic novel adaptation.

Now, with *Working* approaching its fiftieth anniversary, former US President Barack Obama has been inspired to recreate Terkel's project for current audiences. His efforts culminated in the limited

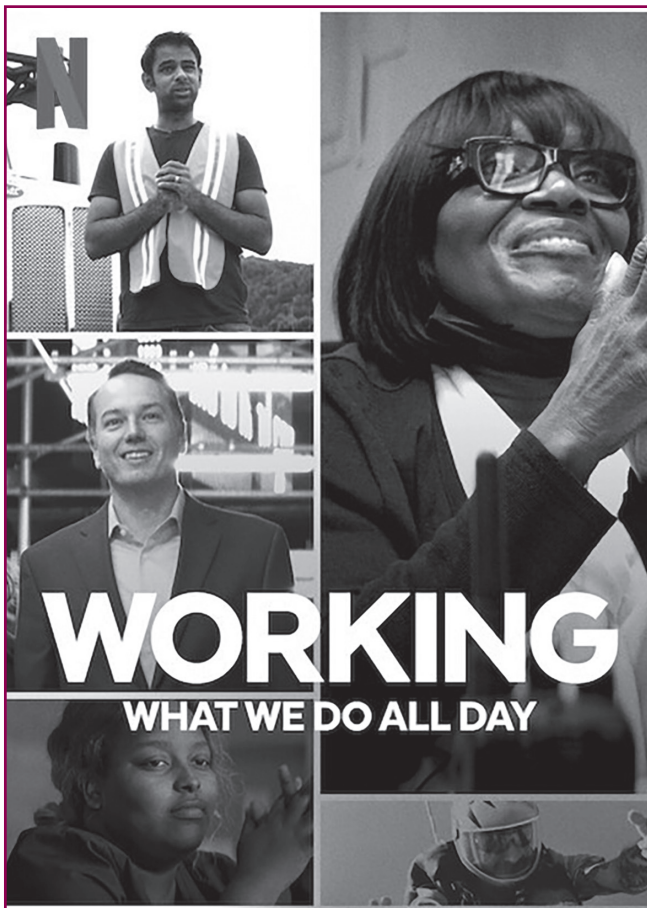
Working illustrates how different positions play off one another and how everything is connected in a huge ecosystem of employment—even if the connections are not immediately evident.

docuseries, *Working: What We Do All Day*, which was released on Netflix in May 2023.

Working was produced by Concordia Studio and the Obamas' own Higher Ground Productions. It was directed by Caroline Suh with Barack and Michelle Obama serving as the executive producers, among others. The docuseries is divided into four parts with an average length of 46 minutes per episode. Each episode is structured similarly to Terkel's novel in that the audience learns about the experiences of a certain category of workers.

For instance, the first episode follows three service workers in different fields. The workers' levels on the corporate ladder rise a step or two with each episode, going from entry level to supervisor, then to high-ranking positions like the general manager and finally all the way to the head of the company in the final episode.

Nearly all the workers are employed by the same three companies and fall into the hospitality, home care or tech industries. Barack Obama serves as the host and accompanies each worker on their job or personal



resource review

errands; however, a lot of time is also spent without him present, so most of the focus is on the workers.

As can be expected from a title like *Working: What We Do All Day*, each person's segment of the episode share what their responsibilities are on the job as well as other details, such as how long they have worked for their employer. However, this is not all that *Working* covers. The docuseries also invites the audience into these people's lives for a few moments.

We hear these workers' stories—how they arrived where they are now, about their passions, whether their jobs match those passions or merely pay the bills, what they value in work and about their hopes for the future. We even see bits of what their family lives are like and the struggles each person is forced to face.

The show also has segments narrated by Obama that touch upon subjects including the shrinking middle class, how FDR's New Deal changed employment as we know it, labor unions, artificial intelligence, and what responsibilities we have to our fellow men and women.

Following this line, *Working* illustrates how different positions play off one another and how everything is connected in a huge ecosystem of employment—even if the connections are not immediately evident.

For example, one of the service-level workers the audience follows is a delivery driver for Uber Eats in Pittsburgh. Later episodes follow employees at Aurora, which is a tech company based in Pittsburgh working to develop self-driving vehicles.

The Uber Eats delivery driver is not employed by Aurora, yet their work could eventually eliminate the need for drivers like her and cost millions their jobs. When the CEO of Aurora is asked about job loss, he does not deny it will occur, but believes the tradeoff will be a net win for humanity's health and safety.

Working's reception thus far ranges from mixed to positive. The docuseries holds an IMDb rating of 6.7 out of ten. While audiences on Rotten Tomatoes gave *Working* a decent average score of 3.7 out of 5 stars, only four out of nine critics gave it a positive rating. Although some parts of the docuseries such as the amount of focus placed on service workers were praised, some critics expressed disappointment in the narrowness of the series' scope and its portrayal of the company bosses.

Because *Working* is so short, the only three companies it follows are Aurora, At Home Care and Tata Group.

As a result, it can seem like each company is being used as a representative for its respective industry when the same job could be a vastly different experience in similar businesses. Most of the people interviewed are also employed by these same companies run by the CEOs in the last episode, which could have led to a final product biased in the companies' favor.

We hear these workers' stories—how they arrived where they are now, about their passions, whether their jobs match those passions or merely pay the bills, what they value in work and about their hopes for the future.

However, a more common criticism regarded the gentle way the docuseries treats CEOs. It is wonderful that the company heads in *Working* are all ethical, visionary leaders, but, according to some *Working* reviews, these bosses are the exceptions and not the norm.

Instead of holding the less ethical companies accountable, the docuseries simply asks several hypothetical questions about a world with more ideal working conditions. Several critics found this response weak and lacking in conviction, especially considering previous episodes had clear stances on subjects such as a worker's right to unionize.

With all of this taken into account, one question remains: is Obama's docuseries worth watching? This writer believes so. In the final episode, Jeanette, the founder and CEO of At Home Care, says, "To me, the logical thing to do would be talk to the people that's doing this stuff [meaning the service work] every day. That's where they are failing."

The original quote is in reference to politicians who didn't know the extent to which Medicare cuts would affect home care workers, but the meaning can be extended to include anyone unaware of the demanding nature of so-called "unskilled" labor.

Working does a fantastic job of showcasing industries and workers whose struggles and importance too often go unnoticed. It is also interesting to note the similarities and differences in the workers' priorities as the show ascends the company hierarchy.

Please see "Working" on page 19.

A Death in the Seeds Family:

Sally Lynn Askins, Our Resident Artist

Just a month before press time for this issue, and the night before our 2023 *Sacred Seasons* Advent/Christmastide packet went out, the Seeds family lost our resident artist, Sally Lynn Askins (see the photo below). She died suddenly and unexpectedly, just after attending a Thanksgiving service at Seventh & James Baptist Church, where the Seeds offices are housed.

Sally became involved with the Seeds ministry around 15 years ago, when she began attending Seventh & James. Sally was a design professor in the theatre department at Baylor University for many years. Raymond Bailey, who was pastor then, had studied in theatre as well as religion, and often incorporated drama in worship. This, among other things, drew Sally to Seventh, where she sang in the choir and served as a deacon for many years. During the Thanksgiving service, just hours before her death, she said that one of the things for which she was most grateful was finding community in the church.

After joining Seventh, she soon learned about the Seeds ministry and offered to create art for our publications—especially the worship resources. She created new angels for the four weeks of Advent (and sometimes for Christmas Day and Epiphany Sunday) every year for 13 years.

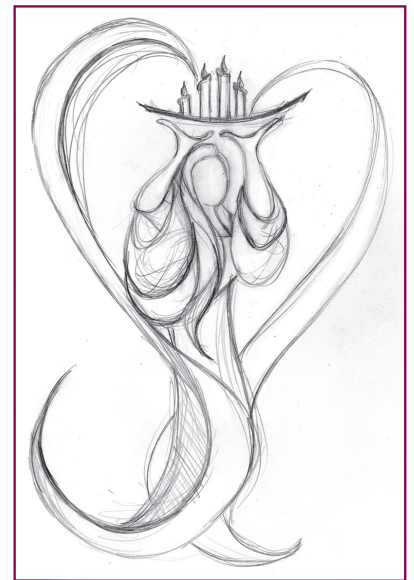
The 2023 Advent/Christmastide packet included 13 of her angels from years past, in addition to the five she had just finished. For a special 2016 Advent packet dedicated to C. W. (Wally) Christian, she borrowed the creche he had carved and lovingly drew all 14 pieces for use in the packet.

She also created art for many Seeds Lent/Easter and Hunger Emphasis packets. Some of these pieces debuted in special exhibits, including “The Art of Compassion,” a Seeds art show where her work was central. In 2007, she became a member of the Seeds Council of Stewards. She has served as vice president or president for the Council since 2008.

Sally was born in Ardmore, OK, in 1953, and moved to the north Dallas, TX, area as a child. She studied art and theatre at Stephen F. Austin University in Nacogdoches, TX, where she earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a Master of Arts. She then went on to earn a Master of Fine Arts at Trinity University in Dallas.

She taught in theatre departments at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, TX, and at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, AZ, and she worked at the Dallas Theatre Center for some years. She taught at Baylor from 1993 until May of this year, when she retired. She also designed costumes for the Willis Ballet Theatre International Tours, including for *The Nutcracker*.

You will see on the next three pages (including the *Sacred Seasons* ad on page 19 and the art on page 20) some examples of the art Sally lovingly created for Seeds publications. She is missed by the Seeds family, her family, and her many friends and students. —lk



Left: Sally Askins, at her retirement reception in May with Seeds Council president Michael Long (left) and acting business manager John Segrest. Photo by Dawn Segrest.





Meals to You, continued from page 11

the United States in 2022, USDA Economic Research Service, ERR-325, October 2023.

2. *Poverty in the United States*, U.S Census Bureau, September 2023.

3. Emily Gutierrez, et al, *Evaluation of the Meals-to-You Pilot: Findings and Implications*, 2019-2021. Urban Institute, September 2022. (Editor's note: For more information, another report was released just before press time: Poonam Gupta, et al, *Experiences and Outcomes from the 2023 Meals-to-You Program*, Urban Institute, December 2023. All of the reports are available on the Urban Institute's website.)

4. Ibid.

Working, continued from page 17

Although the docuseries might have been more effective if a wider variety of businesses and industries were included, the sense of getting to know each individual as they share their experiences makes it easier to relate to everyone. Even the former President. In fact, part of the entertainment value in the series is watching him interact with regular citizens. All in all, *Working* is a fine series with plenty of substance to offer viewers.

—Joanna Hardy, the summer 2023 intern at Seeds, is a resident of Aledo, TX, and a Professional Writing & Rhetoric major at Baylor University.

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Quotes, Poems & Pithy Sayings



art by Sally Lynn Askins

In every age, no matter how cruel the oppression carried on by those in power, there have been those who struggled for a different world. I believe this is the genius of humankind, the thing that makes us half divine: the fact that some human beings can envision a world that has never existed.

— Anne Braden,

Civil Rights leader from Louisville, KY

Statement of Purpose

Seeds of Hope is a private, independent group of believers responding to a common burden for the poor and hungry people in God's world, and acting on the strong belief that biblical mandates to feed the poor were not intended to be optional. The group seeks out people of faith who feel called to care for poor and vulnerable people; and to affirm, enable and empower a variety of responses to the problems of poverty.

Editorial Address

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Seeds also produces *Sacred Seasons*, a series of worship materials for Advent, Lent and an annual Hunger Emphasis—with an attitude "toward justice, peace and food security for all of God's children." These include litanies, sermons, children's and youth activities, bulletin art and drama.

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