

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 8, 2022
Claire Mullins
Baltimore Museum of Industry
410.369.8253 cell
cmullins@thebmi.org

New Exhibition Spotlights City Schools Food Service Workers During Pandemic

Preview at North Avenue Office Precedes Larger Exhibition at Baltimore Museum of Industry

Baltimore, Maryland -- The Baltimore Museum of Industry (BMI) presents ***Food For Thought***, an exhibition highlighting local unsung heroes of the pandemic: Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) workers at Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools). These workers kept communities fed while schools were closed and learning transitioned to virtual in 2020-2021. Baltimore City FNS staff prepare and distribute more than 88,000 meals every day and served more than 11 million meals in the 2021-22 school year. Many families rely on these meals to supplement what can be provided at home.

Food For Thought consists of worker portraits by photographer J.M. Giordano, accompanied by oral histories recorded by radio producer Aaron Henkin. The exhibition opened on September 6 in the lobby of City Schools headquarters at 200 E. North Avenue. The lobby is available to the public during normal business hours, and there is no charge for admission. The exhibition will close in June 2023.

This preview exhibition precedes a larger exhibition set to open in January 2023 at the Baltimore Museum of Industry.

“We’re delighted to be able to shine a spotlight on the workers who cared for Baltimore’s students and their families throughout the pandemic by tirelessly packaging and distributing meals to their communities. In some instances, these were the only meals families received, as many households depend on schools to provide regular meals to their children,” says Beth Maloney, director of interpretation at the BMI and part of the curatorial team for ***Food For Thought***.

To understand the need that FNS workers meet, here’s a look at Baltimore’s food insecurity statistics:

- 23.5% of Baltimore City residents, and 28.3% of Baltimore’s children, live in Healthy Food Priority Areas (formerly known as food deserts), where access to fresh food is limited.

- Access to fresh food is not evenly distributed in Baltimore: 31% of Black residents and 8.9% of white residents live in Healthy Food Priority Areas (formerly known as food deserts).
- When City Schools had to shut down due to COVID-19 in March 2020, FNS employees opened 28 emergency grab & go meal sites with pre-packaged meals and fresh produce, as well as offering home delivery for medically fragile and high-needs students.
- Number of students in the district (2021-2022 school year): 77,807
- % of schools serving free student meals: 100%
- Average number of meals served/day: 88,596
- Number of staff in Food and Nutrition Services department: 573
- Cumulative years of service: 6,656

Food For Thought is supported by the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, and was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Baltimore City Public Schools Food and Nutrition Services department, McCormick and Co., Southway Builders, the Edward St. John Foundation, and Saval Foodservice.

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The Baltimore Museum of Industry is located at 1415 Key Highway, Baltimore MD 21230. Public hours are Wednesdays thru Sundays from 9 AM - 3 PM. Free onsite parking is available. Tickets and information at www.thebmi.org and on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter at @BMlatWork.