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Exhibition on Food Insecurity in Baltimore Spotlights School Food Service Workers

Interactive Display at Museum Opens February 10, Follows Smaller Exhibit at City Schools HQ

Baltimore, Maryland -- More than one in four children in Baltimore live in a Healthy Food Priority Area (formerly known as food deserts). Without access to healthy food sources within their neighborhoods, residents are left with little choice but to procure meals from small corner markets, convenience stores, or fast food establishments. Many Baltimore families rely on meals served at city schools to supplement what can be provided at home. The Baltimore Museum of Industry (BMI) explores these issues in the new exhibition ***Food For Thought*** 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.

Food For Thought consists of worker portraits by photographer J.M. Giordano, accompanied by interviews recorded by radio producer Aaron Henkin. Hands-on activities within the exhibition offer visitors an opportunity to engage with the subject matter.

The [exhibition](#) opens on Friday, February 10, 2023 and will remain open through the year.

A smaller version of the exhibition opened in September 2022 in the lobby of City Schools headquarters at 200 E. North Avenue, and will close in June 2023.

“As awareness grows surrounding the inequity of access to fresh healthy foods, we’re excited to be able to shine a spotlight on the important work taking place in City Schools to care for Baltimore’s students. Food service workers tirelessly prepare and distribute meals to their communities. In some instances during the pandemic, these were the only meals families received, as many households depend on schools to provide regular weekday 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.
- When City School buildings closed to students at the start of the pandemic 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
- Total cumulative years of current FNS workers: 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, Safeway, First National Bank, Saval Foodservice, Freestate Electric, and the Delaplaine Foundation.

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The Baltimore Museum of Industry is located at 1415 Key Highway, Baltimore MD 21230. Free onsite parking is available. Tickets and information at www.thebmi.org and on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter at @BMlatWork.