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### **THIS IS HUNGER Tour Stops in STL & KC: Brings Together Bi-Partisan and Interfaith Groups to Learn About & Fight Hunger**

ST. LOUIS, Missouri..... Missouri ranks second in hunger and seventh in food insecurity nationally, but hunger remains hidden and unrecognized all around us. **MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger** is working to build hunger awareness and advocacy to end hunger through ***This Is Hunger***, a traveling, museum-quality interactive display. The display was in St. Louis from July 5-7 and now moves on to Kansas City for July 9-13.

United Hebrew Congregation at 13788 Conway Road, St. Louis County, the Federation of Reform Temples, and Empower Missouri hosted the St. Louis stop of the ***This Is Hunger*** tour. Highlights of the St. Louis stop included a Legislative Reception with state and federal elected officials on July 5 and a Hunger Shabbat interfaith worship service on July 7, led by the Federation of Reform Temples, and attended by more than 150 people.

A bi-partisan mix of state and federal office holders came to the Legislative Reception. Mary Beth Luna Wolf, District Office Director for Sen. Roy Blunt, offered this message from Sen. Blunt: "Families in every community across the nation struggle with food insecurity. It's not just an urban or a rural problem. It's a challenge that is felt in each of our neighborhood and one in which we all have a responsibility in addressing."

Brendan Fahey, Deputy Director for Sen. Claire McCaskill, added on behalf of Sen. McCaskill: "The prevalence of hunger in our communities is not just a social issue but a moral one as well. This is why I commend all the tour organizers for raising awareness of this critical issue and also empowering our communities to take action."

Rep. Dean Plocher (R-St. Louis County) and Sen. Jill Schupp (D-St. Louis County), co-chairs of the St. Louis Regional Caucus of the Missouri General Assembly, invited all caucus members to attend. Those present included Rep. Plocher, and state representatives (alphabetically) Joe Adams, Doug Beck, Courtney Allen Curtis, Jean

Evans, Mark Matthiesen, Tracy McCreery, Sarah Unsicker, and Cora Faith Walker, plus aides representing Michael Butler and Joshua Peters.

The tour now continues in the Kansas City metro area through July 13 at Congregation Beth Shalom, 14200 Lamar Ave, Overland Park, KS 66223. Tickets are free, but must be reserved at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/this-is-hunger-ks-congregation-beth-shalom-tickets-35156549185>. Please contact Farrah Udell at (913) 647-7282 or [fudell@bethshalomkc.org](mailto:fudell@bethshalomkc.org) for help with registration or questions about the KC metro schedule.

Among the exhibit's highlights are examples of the positive impact the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, commonly known as food stamps) has on hungry people. In Missouri 750,000 receive food stamps each month, while 250,000 Kansans also receive SNAP benefits. Federal budget proposals currently call for deep cuts to the SNAP program, a dangerous situation given the level of hunger in Missouri. MAZON and Empower Missouri have been conveying the successes of the SNAP program to elected officials and its importance in reducing the hunger rate in Missouri.

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**Note:** Photos from the St. Louis stop are available on the Empower Missouri Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/empowermissouri/>

*Inspired by Jewish values and ideals, **MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger** ([www.mazon.org](http://www.mazon.org)) is a national advocacy organization working to end hunger among people of all faiths and backgrounds in the United States and Israel.*

*Founded in 1837, **United Hebrew Congregation** (<http://www.unitedhebrew.org>) is one of the largest Jewish congregations in the St. Louis area, providing innovative opportunities to participate in Jewish life through worship, music, education, social events, community service and youth programs.*

***Empower Missouri** ([www.empowermissouri.org](http://www.empowermissouri.org)), founded in 1901, advocates for public policies that support the well-being of all Missourians through civic leadership, education, and research.*

