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HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT: *Portraits of Hunger in NYC*

**A Riveting New Exhibition Presented by Food Bank For New York City &
Brooklyn Historical Society**

by Photojournalist Joey O'Loughlin

November 5, 2015— New York, NY — Food Bank For New York City and Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS) are pleased to co-present a joint exhibition **Hidden In Plain Sight: *Portraits of Hunger in NYC***. The exhibition, which will open to the public on November 6, 2015 and be presented at Brooklyn Historical Society's 1881 landmark building, will feature the photographs of Brooklyn-based photojournalist Joey O'Loughlin. The exhibit reflects the extraordinary diversity of location, population, and experience in food pantries throughout New York City, where hundreds line up to receive free groceries. The exhibit will raise awareness of the causes and impact of food poverty as a devastating reality of contemporary urban life.

For nearly three years, Ms. O'Loughlin documented the people behind the statistics by photographing and interviewing clients at Food Bank For New York City's citywide network of food pantries— the last line of defense against hunger for New Yorkers in need — to reveal the people who run them, and the people who wait on their lines. Through these images, Ms. O'Loughlin asks the question, "What would you be willing to do if you couldn't afford to feed your children?"

"People are always shocked to learn that one in five people on our pantry lines has a job," said Margarett Purvis, President and CEO of Food Bank For New York City. "No one wants to believe that you can work your entire life and still not be able to afford food. The myth is, they did something wrong. The fact is, they didn't. Children, the working poor and the elderly on fixed income are the most severely affected by hunger. These are the faces highlighted in this exhibit in order to combat the myths about hunger. We hope that this exhibit and related programming will foster empathy and awareness among New Yorkers, and inspire them to advocate for hunger-relief resources and opportunities that so many of us now need to survive in this challenging economy."

The exhibit takes viewers from food pantry line to the home pantry. While most food pantries work hard to ease the experience, lining up for food can be dehumanizing. On the line, you're both on display and socially invisible, but at home, you're like everyone else. By juxtaposing images of food lines with those taken inside people's homes, this exhibit puts a face on the everyday New Yorkers—often strong mothers and grandmothers—who must participate in the complicated economic balancing act that allows them to stay in their homes, and retain their family dignity. As family dinner is a universal point of connection, the exhibit will also feature images of home-cooked meals made from pantry groceries. Family history and personality are revealed in images of meals and around the table.

"We are proud to exhibit the thought-provoking images in "Hidden in Plain Sight," said Deborah Schwartz, President of Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS). "O'Loughlin's photo essay continues the mission of BHS to tell stories which have been overlooked, yet are part of our collective experience and living history. Our hope is that this exhibition sparks a conversation about the inequalities in food access that affect us all, and the solutions we can work on together to overcome them."

"The photos in this exhibit are meant to foster connections between the people standing on the lines and the people who walk by them, unaware," said Joey O'Loughlin. "The intimate details of family life that were shared with me by generous pantry users, are an invitation to consider what we all have in common, and what as a society, we should be invested in preserving. Our hope is that this exhibit, and the powerful public programming that will be offered over the next year, will encourage conversation and civil action that will move us towards a brighter future for those in need."

Through interpretive materials in the exhibition, and a focus on people and places throughout New York City, the exhibition will provoke thoughtful discussion on both cross-cultural and cross-generational experiences. Public programming around the exhibition will include panel discussions featuring historians and food justice advocates, among others. Programs will engage visitors in questions about hunger and poverty, raising awareness about this increasingly pervasive issue. The exhibition will be on view at BHS from November 6, 2015 – November 13, 2016.

Nearly one in five New Yorkers relies on Food Bank For New York City's programs and services. During the past year, the organization has seen the need for emergency food in our city increase while the resources required to combat hunger and poverty have decreased. The number of meals that vulnerable New Yorkers are missing due to lack of sufficient resources tops a staggering 241 million, representing an enormous Meal Gap. The Meal Gap, adapted as the City's official measure of food insecurity, has now been geographically mapped to reveal where hunger lives - enabling Food Bank to allocate resources to areas with the highest need across New York City.

On November 5, 2015, Food Bank For New York City and Brooklyn Historical Society will hold an opening reception of **Hidden In Plain Sight: Portraits of Hunger in NYC**. For information, please contact events@foodbanknyc.org or call 212-566-7855, ext. 8351.

About Brooklyn Historical Society

The mission of Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS) is to connect the past to the present and make the vibrant history of Brooklyn tangible, relevant, and meaningful for today's diverse communities and for generations to come.

BHS was founded as the Long Island Historical Society (LIHS) in 1863. In 1985, LIHS was renamed the Brooklyn Historical Society. Embracing modern social history methods and concerns, BHS undertook the exploration, study, and documentation of the diversity of Brooklyn's history and its people. Building on that foundation, today's BHS is a nationally-recognized urban history center dedicated to preserving and encouraging the study of Brooklyn's extraordinary and complex 400-year history. BHS is a vibrant museum, a world-renowned research library, a cutting-edge education center, and a hub for community dialogue.

About Food Bank For New York City

Food Bank For New York City has been the city's major hunger-relief organization working to end hunger throughout the five boroughs for more than 30 years. Nearly one in five New Yorkers relies on Food Bank for food and other resources. Food Bank takes a strategic, multifaceted approach that provides meals and builds capacity in the neediest communities, while raising awareness and engagement among all New Yorkers. Through its network of more than 1,000 charities and schools citywide, Food Bank provides food for more than 64 million free meals for New Yorkers in need. Food Bank For New York City's income support services, including SNAP (food stamp) screening and free tax assistance for the working poor, put more than \$150 million each year into the pockets of New Yorkers, helping them to afford food and live with greater dignity and independence. In addition, Food Bank's nutrition education programs and services empower more than 275,000 children, teens and adults to sustain healthy diets on very limited budgets. Working toward long-term solutions to food poverty, Food Bank develops policy and conducts research to inform community and government efforts. Learn how you can help at www.foodbanknyc.org.

About Joey O'Loughlin

Joey O'Loughlin is a photojournalist, producer and writer with more than two decades of experience in news, informational and cultural programming. Her photographic work supports humanitarian efforts in the United States and around the world. In 2012, Joey worked with the Brooklyn Public Library to show how library experiences are woven into the fabric of people's daily lives, and why libraries are valuable in challenging economic times. The resulting photographic multimedia project "Where Do the Books Go?" was installed at the Brooklyn Public Library, and was featured in the New York *Daily News*, as well as other publications

Her work for Family Care International, global advocates for women's sexual and reproductive rights, explored issues surrounding teen pregnancy in Latin America. Her photographs can be found in print and online publications for the World Health Organization, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA,) and the MacArthur Foundation, among others. It

was featured as a stand-alone exhibit at the Women Deliver International Conference in Washington DC in 2011, and at local ministries of health throughout the Andean Region.

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