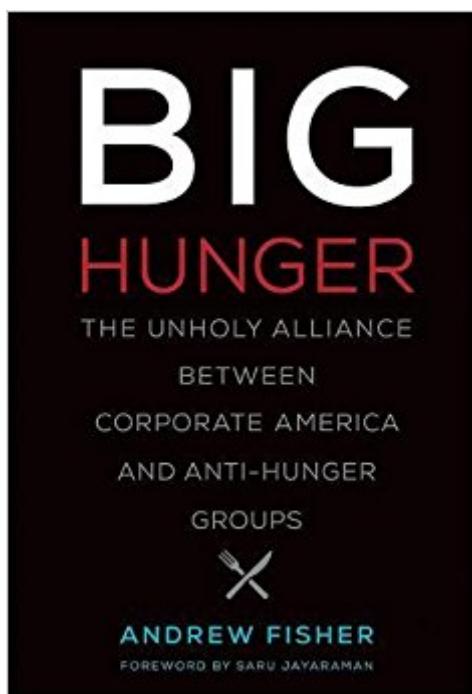


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Big Hunger: The Unholy Alliance Between Corporate America And Anti-Hunger Groups (Food, Health, And The Environment)



Synopsis

Food banks and food pantries have proliferated in response to an economic emergency. The loss of manufacturing jobs combined with the recession of the early 1980s and Reagan administration cutbacks in federal programs led to an explosion in the growth of food charity. This was meant to be a stopgap measure, but the jobs never came back, and the "emergency food system" became an industry. In *Big Hunger*, Andrew Fisher takes a critical look at the business of hunger and offers a new vision for the anti-hunger movement. From one perspective, anti-hunger leaders have been extraordinarily effective. Food charity is embedded in American civil society, and federal food programs have remained intact while other anti-poverty programs have been eliminated or slashed. But anti-hunger advocates are missing an essential element of the problem: economic inequality driven by low wages. Reliant on corporate donations of food and money, anti-hunger organizations have failed to hold business accountable for offshoring jobs, cutting benefits, exploiting workers and rural communities, and resisting wage increases. They have become part of a "hunger industrial complex" that seems as self-perpetuating as the more famous military-industrial complex. Fisher lays out a vision that encompasses a broader definition of hunger characterized by a focus on public health, economic justice, and economic democracy. He points to the work of numerous grassroots organizations that are leading the way in these fields as models for the rest of the anti-hunger sector. It is only through approaches like these that we can hope to end hunger, not just manage it.

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Customer Reviews

If you don't understand why anti-hunger groups hardly ever advocate for higher wages or public health nutrition measures for low-income Americans, see Andy Fisher's analysis: they owe too much to their food-company donors. *Big Hunger* is a call to action, one well worth heeding. (Marion Nestle, Professor of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health, New York University; author of *Soda Politics: Taking on Big Soda (and Winning)*) In this groundbreaking work, Andy Fisher details America's approach to rising hunger, and lays bare a modern Orwellian irony: The big food companies whose labor practices have spurred hunger now receive credit -- tax, media, and otherwise -- for supporting charities to address it. It's an invaluable read. (Tracie McMillan, author of the New York Times Best Seller *The American Way of Eating*) *Big Hunger* is arguably the most important book on the American food scene in a decade. A decade ago, the food scene was rocked by *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. Now we must face a Charitable Dilemma. (Wayne Roberts, author of *The No-Nonsense Guide to World Food*) Andy Fisher charts how the good intention to end poverty has metastasized into an industry that keeps 50 million Americans hungry. No one is spared in this searing analysis, from corporations to foundations to food banks. If hunger is to be ended in America, the unholy coalitions that currently frustrate, ignore, and try to contain attempts for radical change will need to be blown apart. *Big Hunger* is a book to burst that bubble. (Raj Patel, Research Professor, Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, University of Texas at Austin; author of *Stuffed and Starved: The Hidden Battle for the World Food System*) If you are an anti-hunger activist, you should read *Big Hunger*. It may make you mad, and it will definitely make you think. Â Hopefully, it will catalyze some long overdue and much needed conversations among various wings of the food movement. (Jan Poppendieck, Senior Fellow, CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute; Professor Emerita of Sociology, Hunter College)

Andrew Fisher has worked in the anti-hunger field for twenty-five years, as the executive director of national and local food groups, and as a researcher, organizer, policy advocate, and coalition builder. He has led successful efforts to gain passage of multiple pieces of federal food and nutrition legislation.

Big Hunger explores the fascinating intersections between America's agricultural system of hyper-consolidation & an anti-hunger movement of hyper-specialization. The combination has resulted in an inability to diagnose the deeper, poverty-based root of food insecurity. And yet there is hope; amazing examples of innovations both within the anti-hunger movement (e.g. Second

Harvest Food Bank, etc.) and outside the anti-hunger movement (e.g. Community Food Projects, etc.) Through innovation, corporate social responsibility, increased dialogue & communication in the anti-hunger field, and expansion of federal food programs, we can build a healthier, more equitable food system. Bravo on a very critical, thought-provoking book that, as the great Robert Egger voiced, "compels every advocate to evaluate our tactics". Zac Chapman

I had to quit reading this book half way through. It is that good. It is that well written. Fisher is a great scribe. My problem with the book? No problem with the book or the author. Both top notch. Problem was me. I get too carried away when I read about government/business that is out of control and not fulfilling promises to the American people. He states his case so eloquently and it mirrors mine. My wife correctly reminds me that bald, bespectacled retirees like me can only do so much. My frustration is so large that it makes me crabby. Fisher knows his subject matter and conveys it in excellent form. One more case of a program designed to do good that now does basically the opposite of what its original intentions were. Does that make sense? If you are part of the system now and think it works fine, do NOT read this book. If you have serious misgivings about this redistribution system and its effect on maintaining a very unequal status quo? You will find another, Fisher, who can eloquently back up your views. Great book, Andrew. Sorry I was unable to finish it. Thanks for a great effort and may your light shine through.

There's an old saying attributed to Brazilian Archbishop CAFÉÂCMARA..."When I fed the poor, they called me a saint...when I asked why they are poor, they called me a communist". Big Hunger wants more people to ask "why they are poor". It challenges the anti-hunger movement to look at its history of dumping junk food on the poor in the name of fighting hunger, and of aligning itself too closely with large companies that don't pay their employees enough to avoid the "pantry line". But it also pleads with them to chart a new course, now, before another 30 years of charity go by. Andy Fischer has certainly done his homework. As an interviewee for the book, I must admit, I wondered how'd he'd approach the difficult task of both challenging the anti-hunger system to look at itself in the mirror, while also providing more than just complaints (however justified they might be). I think he did this nobly, by providing numerous, detailed examples of pursuits and partnerships that should have been avoided (then and now), and working examples of new programs and policies that might finally turn the tide. For too long we'd tried to feed our way out of hunger. Andy points out that hunger isn't really about food, but social issues like wage, housing, race and incarceration. I highly recommend Big Hunger, and think that EVERY hunger fighter and food waste warrior, young

or old, should read this book, so that they avoid making the same mistakes a previous generation made, with love in their hearts and all good intentions. Truly fighting hunger will take courage, commitment and most importantly, policy changes that give every American / world citizen the tools they need to care for themselves. Big Hunger provides a great blueprint for change.

Big Hunger is a fascinating look at how addressing only one piece of the puzzle (hunger) is preventing us from looking at the big picture (ending poverty). It also tackles the role corporations and large food banks play in perpetuating the cycle of food insecurity in America. Andy Fisher makes a compelling case against our current methods of handling hunger that are just a band-aid on a gaping wound of inequality. If you are looking for fresh perspective on an issue so dear to our hearts, I highly recommend this book.

Andy Fisher's book, "Big Hunger: The Unholy Alliance between Corporate America and Anti-Hunger Groups" exemplifies activism. Telling the "truth" isn't stylish or popular in a society that worships the golden calf of greed and profit. It's FOOD ya'll. This book is so smart. Andy Fisher's deconstruction of the corporate alliance that infiltrates food pantries nationwide is the story of a purposefully executed hijacking of yet another avenue for profit, all in the name of, "charity". People who are passionate about food justice/access/sovereignty must read this book so they can pass it along to anyone and everyone who will listen. All activists (in my experience) are unsettled in their souls with injustice. It's how we are wired. We are born this way. I will use this book in my work by citing it, presenting it and singing its praises. Well, well done.

I've been a professional in food security efforts and alternative food systems for years. Recently I worked as researcher for a national study on food waste recovery and re-distribution to dozens of urban pantries. After experiencing the inner-functionalities of hunger relief nonprofits and the big business of food..this is the book I would write! For those of us supporting hunger relief in America, Fisher's findings and suggestions for change might make you squirm, but understanding how our large institutions and systems are working (or not working) to end hunger is a must. This book is brave, truthful, and essential for learning how to better serve our neighbors and planet. Amy Moore-Shipley

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