



PRESENTATION OF THE 2026 ROGER E. JOSEPH PRIZE BY THE JOSEPH FAMILY

Hebrew Union College, Ordination, May 3, 2026

It is our great honor to bestow the Roger E. Joseph Prize on Chef José Andrés and World Central Kitchen. For nearly half a century, the Joseph Prize has honored those who strive to transform suffering— individuals and institutions who, like the biblical Joseph, respond to crisis not with despair but with an outstretched hand and an unwavering belief in human dignity. This year, that spirit finds its fullest expression in World Central Kitchen and its founder, Chef José Andrés, whose work has redefined what it means to show up for humanity in its darkest hours. From the rubble of earthquakes to the chaos of war zones, WCK has delivered not just meals, but the radical message that no one in crisis should be forgotten.

Chef Andrés and the teams of World Central Kitchen embody the Jewish ethical imperatives of *tikkun olam* — repairing the world — and *pikuach nefesh* — the sanctity of human life above all else. Where others see logistical impossibility, they see moral obligation. In Haiti, Ukraine, Gaza, Israel, Turkey, and dozens of other places ravaged by disaster, WCK has fed millions, often arriving before any government or institution could mobilize. Their work is not charity in the conventional sense; it is a profound act of bearing witness and taking responsibility. And these are the very qualities that define the Joseph Prize's highest ideals of ethical leadership and humanitarian courage.

We would like to read the citation, which accompanies the \$15,000 honorarium:

The 2026 Roger E. Joseph Prize is presented to
CHEF JOSÉ ANDRÉS AND WORLD CENTRAL KITCHEN

Whose commitment to prepare nourishing, comforting food to feed people amidst man-made crises, humanitarian emergencies, and catastrophic natural disasters provides much-needed sustenance along with hope and dignity in challenging times. And whose teams work with urgency, leverage local resources, and cook side-by-side with the people most deeply affected by crisis, all while serving meals daily to people in need and thoughtfully expanding their knowledge of food relief;

Whose resilience-focused programming addresses chronic hunger and acute food system challenges by empowering cooks to pursue hospitality sector careers, supporting the transition from dangerous wood-and coal-fueled fires to clean burning propane to improve human and environmental health, and supporting local farmers, fishers, and food producers to enhance food security and sustainability;

And whose endeavors embody the Rabbinic imperative to provide food for the vulnerable, which our sages explain as among our most crucial responsibilities in this life: “When you are asked in the world to come, ‘What was your work?’ and you answer: ‘I fed the hungry,’ you will be told: ‘This is the gate of Adonai enter into it, you who have fed the hungry.’ ”

May 3, 2026 16 Iyar 5786

New York, New York