

LA County: It's Time for a Raise



Photo: Johnny Knox

2013 is going to be a big year for our members who work in LA County. For the last several years those members have sacrificed in order to keep LA County running.

Now those members deserve a raise.

We laid the groundwork for a raise last year, when members worked hard to pass Prop 30, which provides the state and County with much-needed revenues.

But there's plenty of hard work ahead of us: we have to stay united, our bargaining teams have to be trained, CAT team members have to communicate with members at their worksites, and we must demonstrate our unity and strength publicly.

I'm happy to say that I'm very optimistic that we can achieve our goals. On February 2, nearly 700 LA County members attended a bargaining kickoff in downtown LA. They agreed to work together, set goals and broke out into bargaining units to



begin talking about the issues that matter to them. With that strong beginning to this campaign, I'm confident we can win and win big.

Do you want to get involved? Here's what you can do: text LACOUNTY to 787-753

to get text alerts about bargaining. Go to our website and click "Update your contact info" to make sure we can get you the information you need. And most of all, come on out. There will be lots of opportunities for all LA County members to get involved in the drive for raises. The more people who participate, the better the outcome will be.

I'd like to hear what you think. Send me an email at presidentschoonover@seiu721.org

Sincerely,

Bob Schoonover
SEIU 721 President and LA City
Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanic

Representing Our Membership

News From Around the Local

Immigration Reform

Earlier this month, I attended International Executive Board meetings in Washington. At the top of the agenda was immigration reform. The International and this Local are committed to practical, comprehensive immigration reform that fits with our national values; provides a clear roadmap to citizenship for hardworking, tax-paying immigrants; builds the strength and unity of working people; keeps families together; and guarantees the same rights, obligations and basic fairness for all workers, no matter where they come from.

Already, our members are taking the lead on this important issue. In Ventura, member Rosa Castro told a group assembled at an immigra-

Continued on page 2

tion reform press conference, "We strongly believe that a comprehensive path to citizenship for millions of undocumented workers will pave a way to additional economic prosperity to the Tri-Counties region."



Eligibility Workers submitted over 1,000 Additional Responsibility Bonus requests and a grievance to DPSS Director Sheryl Spiller's office.

Social Work Victories

In Los Angeles County, we've had a string of victories for our members who work for Social Services. First, after SEIU 721 members proved that their caseloads were too heavy, the Department of Child and Family Services agreed to hire 100 new social workers.

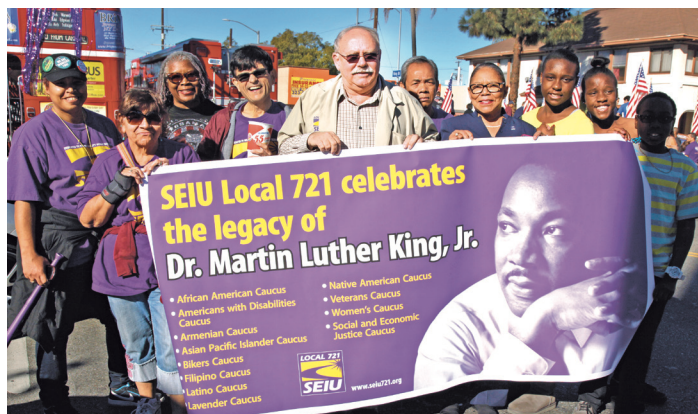
Then, in January, hundreds of eligibility workers from across the County filed over 1,000 Additional Responsibility Bonus requests. For years now, EW II's have been performing work outside their class and not receiving the 5% pay increases they're contractually entitled to.

Last, our members have long said that they can't do their jobs with old, broken-down fax machines and copiers. After all, how are social workers supposed to enroll parents in new programs if they can't fax over the paperwork? The County heard our members' voices and already, dozens of offices around the region are receiving brand-new fax machines and copiers. These are small steps, but they mean the world to our members—and the residents they serve.

Back Pay for Ventura Respiratory Therapists

For more than five years, our members who work as respiratory therapists at Ventura County Medical Center and Santa Paula hospital have not received the lunch breaks they were contractually obligated to get.

The therapists filed group grievances and, I'm pleased to report, they will all be receiving back-pay. As Mark Richmond, a VCMC therapist, put it, "We were able to win this because we stuck together and didn't give up on the process."



Marching in the Kingdom Day Parade.

Honoring Dr. King's Legacy

On January 19, I was honored to walk alongside Vice President Linda Dent, SEIU Local 721 members, elected officials, local residents, community leaders and high school marching bands at the 28th annual Kingdom Day Parade in Los Angeles. The many caucus members of SEIU 721 organized our participation in the event, which seems to grow bigger every year.

Not to be outdone by their brothers and sisters to the south, Tri-Counties members also marched in their own MLK Day parade on January 21—the same day President Obama was inaugurated. At that event, which took place in

Continued on page 3

LA City Election Endorsements

This spring, Los Angeles City residents will elect a new mayor, eight councilmen/women and several other city officials.

As usual, our members are taking the endorsement process seriously. They have met with all of the candidates—some of them several times—and, after a great deal of debate, we are proud to endorse the following candidates and ballot measures:

LAUSD seat 2 **Monica Garcia**
LAUSD seat 4 **Steve Zimmer**
LAUSD seat 6 **Antonio Sanchez**

LACCD seat 2 **Mike Eng**
LACCD seat 6 **David Vela**

LA City Attorney..... **Mike Feuer**
LA City Controller **Ron Galperin**

LA City Council:
District 1 **Gil Cedillo**
District 3 **Bob Blumenfield**
District 5 **Paul Koretz**

District 7 **Felipe Fuentes**
District 9 **Curran Price**
District 11 **Mike Bonin**
District 13..... **John Choi**

Inglewood City Council **Mike Stevens**
Inglewood City Council **Judy Dunlap**

San Fernando
City Council **Robert Gonzales**
(SEIU 721 Member)

LA City Measure A..... **YES**

Oxnard, 600 community members sang “We Shall Overcome.” At times, the line of marchers was so long that the beginning of the march was on one verse while another segment of the marching line was on another.

Each year, when we celebrate Dr. King’s legacy, I’m reminded that he thought of the struggle for civil rights and workers’ rights as two sides of the same struggle. Let’s remember this quote from a 1965 speech to the Illinois AFL-CIO: “The labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress.”

A New Executive Director for the California State Council

Jon Youngdahl has been named the new State Council executive director. I’ve known Jon for a long time and couldn’t be happier about his new role. He’s a native Californian and a consensus builder with a passion for politics. I don’t think we could have asked for a better replacement for David Kieffer, who’s stepping down.

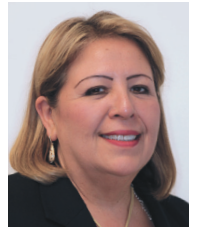
Jon will have his hands full. I know one of his biggest priorities is to work with locals like 721 on issues related to implementing health care reform. I wish him luck and look forward to working with him.

From the Chief of Staff

Providing excellent representation to our members continues to be one of my most important goals. I have a lot of ideas about how we can improve our field representation programs, but I’d like to hear what you think. So please take five minutes of your time to fill out our Representational Excellence survey on our website. As an added bonus, all SEIU 721 members who complete the survey will be entered into a drawing to win two tickets to Disneyland. Surveys must be completed by March 8, 2013.

And if you have other ideas, send me an email at chiefstaff@seiu721.org

In Unity,



About this report: The President’s Report covers the President’s activities in major areas spelled out in the SEIU 721 bylaws. It is presented each month to the Executive Board.



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