

SEIU 721

April 2015

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



VICTORY IN S.B.

800 San Bernardino Professionals Vote to Join SEIU 721



San Bernardino County professional employees celebrate joining SEIU 721 earlier this month.

A few weeks ago, SEIU 721 awarded its first-ever Labor Legacy Awards to four heroes who have changed the lives of working families around the world, across the country, and right here in Southern California.

The awardees: Former UFW organizer and SEIU Vice President Eliseo Medina, who is leading the national immigration reform movement; SEIU Executive Vice President Valarie Long, who helped build Justice for Janitors into a national powerhouse; former USWW President Mike Garcia, who led efforts to organize Los Angeles' janitors and security guards; and Rev. William J. Smart, President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Southern California, who is a leading voice in Fix LA. The legacy award winners share something in common: They all are brilliant organizers.

We held a reception to honor the winners because organizing is part of SEIU 721's DNA, and their skills and accomplishments are a powerful example of how

we all can build power for working people. But while parties and plaques are nice, the best way I know to honor the Legacy Award winners is to follow their lead.

After a months-long organizing drive, San Bernardino County professionals voted in March to join SEIU 721. SEIU 721's external organizers helped 800 S.B. professionals call for fair elections, in which workers voted 3 to 1 to leave an ineffectual association that saddled them with a series of bad contracts. Now this same 721 team is fighting to win fair elections for thousands more S.B. County workers fed up with bad contracts and dishonest leadership.

I think this is the beginning of something big in San Bernardino. And as we organize more workers in the Inland Area, we can set standards that will help all SoCal workers. It all begins with organizing.

Bob Schoonover, President

Bob Schoonover



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SEIU 721 HONORS SOCIAL WORKERS



SEIU 721 held its annual Social Worker Appreciation event on March 28th. Social workers presented the Champion of Children Award to Congresswoman Janice Hahn and Bishop Juan Carlos Mendez for their support for the Children's Social Workers who protect LA's Children. (From Top Left) SEIU 721 President Bob Schoonover and 721 Treasurer David Green present award to Janice Hahn; Jerry Clyde presents award to Bishop Mendez; Shiquita Wesson and family; and Alaynnase Yi.

SEIU 721 SALUTES LABOR LEGACY WINNERS



On Friday, March 27, SEIU 721 honored the legacy of four extraordinary individuals who have left their indelible mark on the lives of working families, the communities we live in and our labor movement at the First Annual Labor Legacy Awards.

(From left to right) SEIU Executive Vice President Valarie Long, who heads the Property Services Division of the SEIU International; Former UFW organizer and former SEIU Vice President Eliseo Medina, who now heads the national immigration reform effort; former USWW President Mike Garcia, a pivotal figure in efforts to organize LA's janitors and security guards; and Rev. William J. Smart, President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Southern California, who is a leading voice in Fix LA.

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LA CITY WORKERS MARCH ON THE BOSS THEY TELL MAYOR GARCETTI "LA IS HURTING"



Last month, more than 3,000 City of LA SEIU 721 members and their community partners from Fix LA signed a letter to Mayor Garcetti and Council President Herb Wesson asking them to restore city staffing and service cuts touched off by the 2008 financial crisis. Workers delivered the letter to city managers at more than 80 "March on the Boss" events at workplaces around the City of LA.

"We're fed up with being asked to do so much with so little, so we're asking you to bargain in good faith with workers and the community partners and faith leaders who are signing this letter with us to show you how much they need vital city services restored in their communities," said the letter, which was widely publicized in area media.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH



"Do the Math"

"If you're wondering why you need a union, let me do the math for you.

Women today make 77 cents on the dollar compared to men. Nearly a third of

black families in America live in poverty. Here at home, LA is now the least-affordable rental market in the country. People today can't afford to be without a union." — SEIU 721 Vice President Linda Dent

STRIKE VOTE ALERT:

LA CITY 721 MEMBERS VOTE TO
AUTHORIZE STRIKE BY 86 PERCENT

At press time, LA City 721 members announced they had voted to authorize a strike by an 86 percent margin. Next month's issue will include full coverage of the vote and Fix LA actions.

For regular updates, visit www.seiu721.org.

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A WOMAN'S PLACE IS IN HER UNION

Why the Labor Movement is the Women's Movement



Patsy Howard, co-chair of the SEIU 721 Women's Caucus, and Barbara Bowden celebrate Women's History Month. Nearly 65 percent of SEIU 721 members are women. SEIU 721 honored Congresswoman Judy Chu; Maria Elena Durazo, Vice President of Unite HERE; Congresswoman Janic Hahn; Glendale Unified School District Board Member Nayiri Nahabedian; and Black Worker Center Director Lola Smallwood-Cuevas.

I was talking with some friends recently, and one asked if I'd ever thought of working for another social cause other than Labor — for women, for example. My answer was simple. "I already do," I said.

The Labor movement, for all intents and purposes, is the Women's movement. That's because the Labor movement is about equalizing power in society by helping workers win the opportunities, protection, respect and compensation they deserve, regardless of who they are and where they come from.

I believe all inequality in our society is related to economics, and no movement has done more to level the playing field for women (and minorities and immigrants, for that matter) than Labor. Consider these facts:

- Women in unions earn an average of 11 percent more than their non-union counterparts;
- Women in unions are 19 percent more likely to have employer-paid health insurance;

- Women in unions are 24 percent more likely to have pensions;
- Joining a union increases a woman's chances of winning health insurance more than does earning a college degree; and
- Unionized women of color earn 35 percent more than non-union women of color.

SEIU International is now the fastest-growing union in the U.S. in part because of the large number of women joining. About 65 percent of SEIU 721 members are women. These wins didn't come easy. That's why 721 celebrates Women's History month to honor the efforts of the activists and organizers of yesterday and today working to close the equity gap for all women.

Gilda Valdez, Chief of Staff

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gilda Valdez".

