

# PRESIDENT'S YEAR-END REPORT 2015 TO THE MEMBERS OF SEIU LOCAL 721

## WE ORGANIZED, WE FOUGHT



## & WE WON FOR WORKERS IN 2015!

### A MESSAGE FROM SEIU 721 PRESIDENT BOB SCHOONOVER

In 2015, we demonstrated that with the right planning and fearless execution we can make big things happen for workers. If you're already a member, take a moment to celebrate our union's accomplishments. If you're a new member, welcome to the most dynamic and fastest-growing public employee union in America.

At our member summit in Nov. 2014, we laid out a plan. We focused on building alliances with other unions, community and clergy. We set out to show how our work protects public safety and health, and how restoring public services builds communities. In turn, we bargained good contracts, elected pro-worker candidates, put more money in the pockets of working families, restored services and added 10,000 new members. We endured tragedy, cheered victory and celebrated our diversity. Together, we're proud to be SEIU 721, and we are ready for 2016!



*Bob Schoonover*



**WE WON GOOD CONTRACTS, RAISED UP FAMILIES & PROTECTED GOOD JOBS**



**WE ELECTED PRO-WORKER CANDIDATES TO HELP SAVE SERVICES**



**WE GREW MEMBER POWER TO PROTECT OUR WORKPLACE RIGHTS**



**WE FOUGHT FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND SAFER COMMUNITIES**



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# OUR WORK, OUR VOICES,

## OUR STRATEGIES AND OUR EXECUTION IN THE FIELD



**WE WON GOOD CONTRACTS, RAISED UP FAMILIES & PROTECTED GOOD JOBS**



### WE BARGAINED GOOD CONTRACTS

- L.A. City: Beat back concessions, won raises of at least 4.75% for all workers, and secured a commitment to restore 5,000 jobs lost during the worldwide recession

The contract also improves pensions, moving all Tier 2 employees to Tier 1, and increases health benefits for part-time workers

- L.A. County: We delivered 10% raises for all workers, protected healthcare & secured a path to permanency for temporary workers

The contract also includes the first vacation improvement in 30 years, the first shift differential improvement in 25 years and a paid Cesar Chavez holiday

### WE IMPROVED INDUSTRY STANDARDS & RAISED MEMBERS' WAGES

- Won a 5% raise and 32 additional hours of paid leave for Santa Barbara County members as part of an economic reopener and inequity review negotiated in their last contract
- Won out-of-contract pay increases of between 9 and 19% for Ventura County workers, whose wages were determined to be below market rate

**WE ELECTED PRO-WORKER CANDIDATES TO HELP SAVE PUBLIC SERVICES**



### WE WON AT THE BALLOT

- Won in 15 of 19 contests in which our union endorsed in March 2015, including federal, state and local races and ballot measures
- Helped L.A. City Council ally José Huizar defeat an anti-worker opponent
- Swore in pro-worker L.A. supervisors Kuehl and Solis, elected with SEIU 721's support
- Elected Herman Santos and Vivian Gray to LACERA boards

### WE WORKED WITH ELECTED ALLIES TO SAVE PUBLIC SERVICES

- Won funding for increased staffing for eligibility workers, including 245 new positions in L.A. County
- Helped win \$6.2 billion over the next five years to save safety net services at county hospitals and continue ACA implementation
- Secured an additional \$17.8 million for Relative and Foster Parent Recruitment, Retention and Support
- Took a leadership role in L.A. County's landmark integration of its Depts. of Public Health, Mental Health, and Health Services

# OUR VICTORIES IN 2015

DELIVERED MAJOR VICTORIES OVER THE PAST YEAR



**WE GREW MEMBER POWER  
TO PROTECT OUR WORKPLACE RIGHTS**



## **WE ORGANIZED & SIGNED UP 10,000 NEW SEIU 721 MEMBERS**

- Signed up 10,000 new members. Activated and engaged members by ensuring they signed cards to take advantage of the benefits provided by full, official membership in SEIU 721
- Organized 400 faculty at Southern California private schools and colleges
- Organized 800 professionals in San Bernardino County
- Launched a new organizing drive at USC, one of California's wealthiest and most prestigious schools, with an election scheduled for February

## **WE PROTECTED MEMBERS' RIGHTS**

- Kicked off a new Representational Excellence Program to enhance steward training
- Our Advocacy and Legal departments handled nearly 2,000 grievances, civil service cases and "Skelly" cases last year
- Helped hundreds of 721 members file grievances, challenge unfair discipline, avoid terminations and win back pay (see Protecting Members' Rights)

**WE FOUGHT FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE  
AND SAFER COMMUNITIES**



## **WE FOUGHT FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE**

- SEIU and Fix L.A. — a coalition of Labor, community and faith-based groups formed by SEIU 721 — led the Fight For \$15 and the campaign to help fast food workers win \$15 and a union
- In February, Fix L.A. actions exposed how the financial crisis and costly deals with Wall Street banks hurt city services
- In April, massive SEIU 721-led Fight for \$15 protests shut down Downtown L.A. streets

## **WE PASSED THE \$15 MINIMUM WAGE & PUT MORE MONEY IN WORKERS' POCKETS**

- Our program of lobbying, direct action and public fasts causes the L.A. City Council to vote 14-1 to raise the City's hourly minimum wage in phases to \$15 an hour by 2020
- We used the same tactics to cause L.A. County supervisors to vote 3-2 to raise the hourly minimum wage to \$15
- L.A. victories push the University of California and New York City's wage board to vote to approve \$15 for all university employees and NYC fast food workers

# FIXING THE SAFETY NET

**SEIU NURSES AND PUBLIC HEALTH WORKERS ARE SHAPING L.A. COUNTY'S LANDMARK MERGER OF PUBLIC HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND HEALTH SERVICES**



*SEIU President Bob Schoonover talks with nurses and healthcare workers about a new employee engagement survey our union encouraged L.A. DPH to implement in L.A. County hospitals.*

**"Integration gives SEIU nurses and healthcare workers an opportunity for a greater say at work and the chance to deliver cutting-edge care in safety net hospitals."**

**Fran Todd, NP,  
Harbor UCLA Integration Task Force Leader**



When L.A. County approved a massive overhaul of its healthcare delivery system, SEIU 721 immediately won a seat at the table, advocating to protect public health and working conditions for thousands of county workers. Through seven townhall meetings, one-on-one meetings with all five members of the Board of Supervisors, and numerous strategy sessions with affected workers, 721 has developed a strategy to ensure integration reduces bureaucracy, improves coordination, increases transparency and provides a greater voice for workers. Their goal is to protect L.A.'s healthcare safety net and improve care for L.A. County residents.

## FULL COURT PRESS BY SEIU 721 WINS FUNDING

*SEIU court workers won an early victory in the state budget by securing approximately \$230 million in additional funding for the trial courts. SEIU 721 court workers joined their counterparts from locals all over California in a series of protests, actions and lobbying visits (like the one pictured to the right) aimed at recovering some of the \$1 billion in funding lost to the court system during the worldwide financial crisis. Over the past several years, the strong involvement of SEIU members has helped restore a total of \$530 million in funding.*





## FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHTS

**"If not for the intervention of my union, SEIU 721, I would have lost everything."**

— John Huggins, Riverside County



Over the last year, SEIU 721's Inland Area members and staff took on the good fights and won, whether it was a countywide negotiation or even the termination of a single member. In August, they won raises, economic incentives and union rights for Riverside County per diem workers (above), and in June they won a major settlement for 22-year Riverside County employee John Huggins, who was fired on trumped-up

charges in retaliation for his work as co-negotiator of the county contract. Sadly, tragedy struck the Inland Area on Dec. 2, when shooters attacked San Bernardino County workers at a holiday party, killing 14 and wounding 22, mostly 721 members. SEIU organized grief counseling for county employees and a support fund for victims and their families. Union members from across the U.S. gathered at a countywide vigil on December 7<sup>th</sup>.

## TRI-COUNTIES WINS PAY EQUITY FIGHT

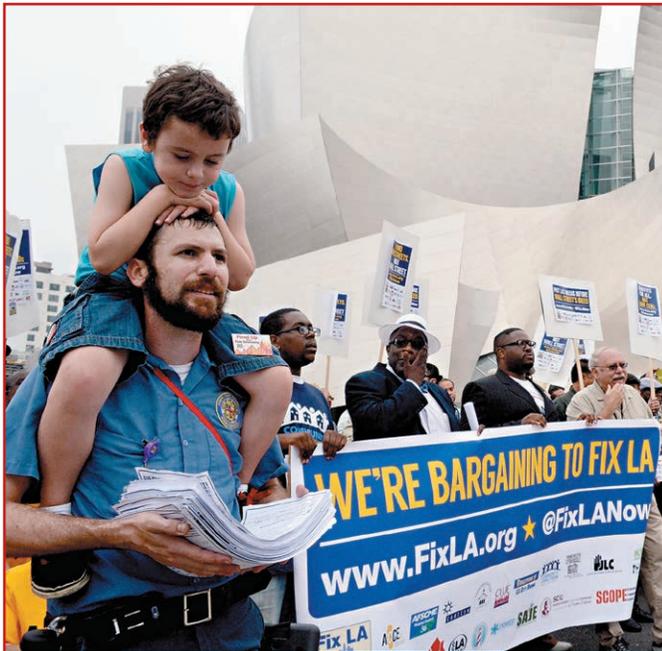
New Contract for Tri-Counties Regional Center, Reopeners and Raises for Ventura County and Santa Barbara County



In February, the Tri-Counties region cut the ribbon on a new SEIU 721 Santa Maria office. The same month, they won a new contract at the Tri-Counties Regional Center with raises, improvements in bilingual pay and cell phone reimbursements. Starting in April, Ventura County workers won out-of-contract pay increases of between 9 and 19 percent after a compensation study backed by the union found workers in many classes lagged behind their peers in other jurisdictions. In August, Santa Barbara County Eligibility Workers and other SEIU 721 members (above left) won a five percent raise and 32 additional hours of paid leave as part of an economic reopener and inequity review negotiated in their last contract. Santa Barbara County members approved the tentative agreement by a 95 percent margin.

# NEW CONTRACTS RAISE UP L.A.

**L.A. CITY AND L.A. COUNTY AGREEMENTS BEAT BACK CONCESSIONS, RESTORE SERVICES, PROTECT PART-TIME WORKERS AND PROVIDE RAISES**



In August, SEIU 721 and other city unions negotiated strong agreements accomplishing key goals of SEIU 721 and our Fix L.A. coalition: protecting good-paying jobs for L.A. City workers and committing the city to hire 5,000 new workers to restore vital services. In October, we obtained an excellent three-year contract that puts L.A. County on the road to becoming the employer of choice and delivering more services to the communities we serve. In the end, our strategic coalition-building helped win great contracts for L.A. City and County employees while improving public safety and health in the communities we serve.

## **L.A. CITY CONTRACT WINS**

- Beat Back Concessions and Protected Compensation
- Protected Healthcare and Workers' Comp
- Won a Commitment for 5,000 New Hires
- Improved Pensions, Moving All Tier 2 Employees to Tier 1
- Won Key Unit Table Improvements
- Secured a Raise of at Least 4.75 Percent for Every Worker
- Raised Wages for All City Workers to \$15 an Hour by 2017
- Increased Healthcare Benefits for Part-timers



## **L.A. COUNTY CONTRACT WINS**

- Won 10 Percent Raises for All SEIU 721 Bargaining Unit Members
- Raised Wage Floor for SEIU Workers to \$15 an Hour by 2018
- Secured "Path to Permanency" for Temporary Workers
- Won Additional Salary Increases for 13,000 Members
- Won First Vacation Improvement in 30 Years
- Won First Shift Differential Improvement in 25 Years
- Won Paid Cesar Chavez Day Holiday



# PROTECTING MEMBERS' RIGHTS



**"Our worksite organizers and advocates are unsung heroes – our secret weapon for protecting the rights of SEIU 721 members."**

**Linda Dent, Vice President SEIU 721**

**HANSEL  
HARRIS-DIENG**

Advocate successfully recovered \$9,000 pay for additional responsibilities an L.A. County member performed at a supervisory level.

**PAM  
BRISCOE**

Advocate in the Tri-County region successfully argued to have a member's discipline rescinded, averting a 5 percent reduction in pay over 13 pay periods.

**SERGIO  
RAMIREZ**

Advocate in L.A. County prevented the firing of a worker for off-duty misconduct after the end of her probationary period. Ramirez secured a 30-day suspension instead.

**JOSE  
MARTINEZ**

Advocate in L.A. Cities division helped block the termination of a custodian and negotiate it down to a 20-day suspension.

**ARA  
VARDANYAN**

Advocate helped highly motivated member contest a "Competent" performance evaluation, ultimately winning a "Very Good" evaluation for the employee.

*In 2015, SEIU 721's advocates and staff attorneys played a major role in protecting members' rights, handling more than 2,000 cases. In all, they won or settled 75 civil service cases, 170 contract grievance cases and more than 100 "Skelly" discipline cases. This year, SEIU 721 also launched a new Representational Excellence program, providing enhanced training for stewards and worksite*

*organizers. Pilot programs at LA DPSS and other departments focused on training stewards in new techniques and promoting coordination between the Member Connection, Advocacy Department and worksite organizers, and best practices. The enhanced focus on representation is paying off with numerous victories for workers on grievances and other worksite issues.*



Los Angeles Times

## SEIU 721 LEADS WIN IN HISTORIC FIGHT FOR \$15

**L.A. CITY AND COUNTY \$15 MINIMUM WAGE VICTORIES SPARK NATIONAL WAVE**

*SEIU 721's victory in the fight to raise L.A. City's minimum wage to \$15 ignited a movement in 2015. In the wake of the historic 14-1 vote by the L.A. City Council, the L.A. County Board of Supervisors, the University of California and the New York City Wage Board all approved minimum wage increases in the span of one week in July. What a show of fast food worker and union power!*

*Three years ago we made the conscious decision to support the Fight for \$15 because raising the wage floor for all working families provides our union with leverage to negotiate standards for all workers in the region. There's no mistake about it, our local has been the driving force for Fight for \$15 on the West Coast.*



SEIU LOCAL 721  
1545 WILSHIRE BLVD.  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90017



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# SEIU 721 IN 2015

PRESIDENT'S YEAR-END REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SEIU 721



## DIVERSITY & UNITY OVERCOME TRAGEDY

*This Past Year, SEIU 721 Members Channelled Courage, Diversity and Unity to Make Positive Change in Our Communities*



Photos of the victims of the San Bernardino attack at a memorial organized by SEIU 721

**S**EIU 721 members should be proud of what we've accomplished in 2015.

Together, we created a winning strategy that secured good new contracts, restored public services cut during the financial meltdown, put more money in the pockets of working families, and made history by raising the minimum wage in Los Angeles to \$15 an hour.

We also faced tragedy. In December, senseless violence in San Bernardino killed 14 and wounded another 22 — a majority, members of our union. But SEIU 721 takes care of its members and the communities we serve. We pulled together, gathered resources, raised a fund for victims and

celebrated their lives and work.

I won't sugar-coat it: workers will face even more challenges next year on the heels of a Supreme Court decision aimed at silencing them. More than ever, we need to empower members, put a pro-worker president in the White House, and face down these attacks.

What we have going for us is the diversity and the unity of our cause — to empower working people to improve their communities and help their families live better lives. Sí, se puede!

**Gilda Valdez, Chief of Staff, SEIU Local 721**




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