



SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION, CTW-CLC

THE WORKERS' VOICE

SANTA CLARA COUNTY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

VOL. 33, NO. 6

SEPTEMBER 2014

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www.seiu521.org

Eligibility Examiner Victory

Since October 2011, the Eligibility Examiner classification in the Appeals Unit has been experiencing tremendous employee turnover. There have been 30 new hires that began as Eligibility Examiners but left due to promotions to Eligibility Work Supervisor, which is compensated at a higher salary. Examiners in our county have not been equally compensated in comparison to our neighboring counties. This was causing hardship on not only the unit, but to our clients and our community. We were spending hundreds of thousands of dollars interviewing and training new staff who would not stay long enough to finish their probationary time. The Eligibility Examiners in Appeals have been attempting to reclassify for years but were not successful. Finally, along with our Union, SEIU 521, the Appeals Unit was able to achieve what seemed like the impossible. After long hours of bargaining, gathering data, and presenting to management, the County agreed to study our unit. The recommendation to



reclassify us was made, and we couldn't be happier! We would like to thank the support of our Union, SEIU 521, for believing in our unit, and supporting us through this process! Together we were able to end a problem that went back for years. We now can retain our staff, and therefore have a solid, well-rounded unit who are fully skilled to serve our clients and community.

- Written by Verónica López, Social Services Appeals Officer

SEIU Local 521 Contract Enforcement Department: Arbitration Victory! Special Projects Overtime

On Feb. 18, 2014, SEIU Local 521 and the County of Santa Clara arbitrated a grievance regarding the Department of Employment and Benefits Services' excessive use of Special Projects Overtime. On July 23, 2014, Arbitrator Morris E. Davis, Esquire, issued a decision that sustained the grievance in a major victory for SEIU Local 521 members. Morris Davis ruled that the County violated the collective bargaining agreement by improperly assigning regular overtime as special projects overtime in violation of Appendix G,

Sections 9.8(h)1 and 9.8(h)9.

The grievance was initially filed on November 15, 2011, and covers approximately two-and-a-half years of overtime assignments, so the arbitrator has directed the Union and the County to meet and review overtime assignments from October 27, 2011. We will then identify which special projects overtime assignments were improperly assigned and calculate a 4.2 hour overtime payment based on the average pay rate for the Eligibility Worker IIs affected by contractual

violations. This will be an in-depth process which will require diligence and conscientious oversight to complete. We thank SEIU Local 521 members **Ruben Garcia, Alfonso Medina, and Claudia Eck** for participating in the arbitration to achieve this win for our Eligibility Worker IIs. *"This is a victory for all Eligibility Staff. We put management on notice that our contract is not to be violated,"* said Claudia Eck. *"Justice was done," added Alfonso Medina, "The workers prevailed on the SPOT Overtime Grievance."*



We are saddened to report that one of our well known Union activists, **Rene Lewis**, recently passed away. Rene came to the County over 12 years ago and immediately became involved in working on union issues and member's rights in the workplace. Throughout his County career, Rene was a Steward, Assistant Chief Steward, Chief Steward and a contract

negotiator. Rene worked at Valley Medical Center as an

Environmental Services worker, but he was known throughout the County because he went where any member needed help. Rene had a real knack of working well with each employee and management, getting the best deal possible for the worker. He did it respectfully, courteously and with that generous smile he always carried. Rene was a slight man with a great big heart.

Rene had a big Union family, but he was also a family man, married to Mary for over 40 years. Rene leaves behind five children, ten grandchildren and one great grandchild. Rene's family sacrificed a lot in allowing Rene to spend a great deal of his time on Union matters. We are so grateful for the time we had with him on our side. Rene will be sorely missed and our hearts go out to the Lewis family. May he rest in peace.



★ 2014 Election of Chapter Officers and Negotiators ★



NOTICE OF ELECTION — Aug. 8-22

NOMINATION PERIOD — Aug. 29-Sept. 12

Official Nomination forms will be available at a later date.

ACCEPTANCE OF NOMINATION — Sept. 15-19

Official Acceptance of Nomination forms will be available at a later date.

ELECTION — Sept. 29-Oct 10

More details will be sent via email at a later date.

Our service members and veterans are your CAT'S MEOW!

In all the support in our jobs that we expect from our union, it is easy to forget that our union is and must be a member and partner with the community at large. Your Contract Action Team (CATs), while gearing up for the next contract negotiations, has not lost sight of that fact. To that end, in conjunction with our contract duties, your CATs have taken on the added unofficial role of your "Community First Contract Action Team".

While there are many areas of the community where we felt we could make a difference, we thought it best to start with a group that has given and sacrificed for us all, our active duty service men and returned and returning veterans. We have consulted with our county Veterans' Service office and local veterans

group Operation Care and Comfort as, well as accessing the websites of national veteran's organizations such as the USO and VFW to find out how we can best help those who have given so much.

We have decided on a two pronged attack: 521 care and comfort packages and donations to help our homeless and at risk veterans. We have put together, with the help of Operation Care and Comfort and ex-servicemen and veterans on the Community First Contract Action Team and veterans in their families, a list of items that are needed by our active duty service members or will help raise their morale. What we plan to do is to hold events at the different offices throughout the County in the next few months and ask SEIU 521 members to donate the

items to fill our 521 care and comfort packages. If members would rather donate cash, we will be collecting and donate that cash.

We will publish a schedule of when and where these events will take place. After those events, we plan to have a final event on Veterans Day to send the care packages and present the donations to the Veteran Service Officer for the county. Here is your chance to help the union take its place in the community at large and give back to those who have given so much.

See you there!

— Written by Steward Bret Russell, Estate Administrator (Office of the Public Guardian)



Leadership Council / General Membership Meeting

Thursday, September 18, 6-8pm

Social Services Agency—Auditorium

333 West Julian Street, San Jose



This meeting will be dedicated to review of the recommended changes to our Chapter Bylaws. Please stay posted as we will try to get the revisions out to the Leadership Council prior to the meeting for review.

SEIU 521 Steward Trainings

MODULE	TRAINING	DATE/TIME	LOCATION
4	<i>The Steward and Discipline</i>	Saturday, October 11 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.	SEIU Local 521 2302 Zanker Road San Jose
5	<i>Meeting With The Boss</i>	Thursday, November 6 5:30-8:00 p.m.	

Sign up on our website, www.seiu521.org. Click on 'Steward Trainings', then complete and submit the online form. You can also sign up by calling the Local 521 office at (408) 678-3366.



LOCAL 521 Visit Santa Clara County Chapter
page frequently:

seiu521.org/sccgov



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