

**SEIU LOCAL 521**  
**WOMEN'S CAUCUS**  
**DECEMBER, 2014**

The Women's Caucus has had a very eventful 2014 with a variety of activities that served not only to educate and empower the members, grow membership but also give back to the community.

In honoring the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. several members from not only the Women's Caucus but APALA and AFRAM attended the annual Community Breakfast on Saturday, January 18, 2014 as well as participating in the Commemorative March and Program on January 20, 2014 in downtown Fresno. Several community leaders shared not only the teachings but stories and memories of Dr. King.

January was also Human Trafficking Awareness Month. At the beginning of 2014 Molly's House, a safe house for survivors of human trafficking, opened in Fresno. It is only the third safe house opened in California for survivors of human trafficking and the only one in the Central Valley. At the January, 2014 meeting a representative from the local Coalition on Human Trafficking provided valuable information on the prevalence of human trafficking in not only the Fresno area but nationwide. Caucus members are exploring in how they can get involved in helping survivors.

Throughout the year the Caucus has continued to hold Queen For a Day at Holy Cross Women's Day Shelter. Several new members as well as ongoing members were able to add a little sparkle to the lives of the ladies that avail themselves of the services of Holy Cross Women's Day Shelters. The members do a basic manicure with a little nail art --- if requested. Once their manicure is completed the ladies are able to choose a piece of "bling" from a variety of new items: head bands, hair bows/decorations, necklaces, earrings, bracelets and rings. These items are either donated or purchased by the Women's Caucus. Several members have expressed it is very fulfilling to not only bring a little sunshine into the ladies' lives but to hear their stories.

Women's Caucus gives to Holy Cross throughout the year in other ways. On a continuous basis donates toiletry items (hotel/sample size and regular size). The ladies who avail themselves of the services at Holy Cross come to the shelter many times without the everyday items needed for personal hygiene --- shampoo, soap, toothpaste, tooth brush, deodorant. Through the donations made to Holy Cross the ladies receive these items as needed. Also, during the month of April there is an annual diaper drive where the Caucus collects and contributes diapers to help the ladies when their children need diapers. Every December the Holy Cross Women's Day Shelter holds a Holiday Celebration for the families of the community. For the last 6 years the Women's Caucus adopts ten ladies for whom a holiday cheer is provided by the means of a gift of a jacket, knit hat, scarf, gloves and sox.

March 15, 2014 was the annual Women's History Month Tea themed Celebrating Women of Character, Courage and Commitment. Amanda Renteria, a native of Lindsay, CA shared her story – how she grew up in a small community, graduated from Stanford and Harvard, and then went on to various positions in Washington, D.C. Chicago, Illinois and California. The Raging Grannies provided singing entertainment – the group of ladies puts a humorous spin on Union songs.

Other events the Women's Caucus participated in were: selling newspapers for the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Kid's Day to benefit Children's Hospital Central California; preparing and serving lunch in conjunction with SEIU 1000 for the families staying at Ronald McDonald House at Children's Hospital Central California; phone banking and precinct walking for the primary and general campaigns of local candidate including Blong Xiong for Fresno County Board of Supervisor's District 1; sending two members to attend the Summer Institute of Union Women ( local training is currently being developed from the training/educational materials); this year for the first time taking the Women's Equality Day Observance to four different locations at various lunch times; participating in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure and the World's Aid Day Walk as well as being a part of the Marjoree Mason Women's Shelter Top Ten Professional Women and Businesses luncheon.

**The Women's Caucus would appreciate any donations of toiletries and "bling" for the ladies of Holy Cross Women's Day Shelter.**