Chapter President’s Message by Riley Talford

Hello fellow brothers and sisters!

This newsletter marks the end of summer and less than 70 days before Election Day! The elected officers have been working very hard over the summer on behalf of members, their families, and the community. Healthcare has been at the forefront as we pushed back an estimated 30 percent increase to our health care premiums! We need to continue finding ways to make healthcare affordable and accessible. The Better Valley Health (BVH) coalition, led by SEIU, has been active in providing the County data and alternative ways to provide quality, affordable healthcare. Our efforts have aided in the removal of Gallagher as the Health Broker for Fresno and Tulare counties which is a major first step. Now we need YOUR support to continue the push. Stay tuned and stay informed on the call to action!

Lastly, I want to thank all that planned and or participated in our first Member to Member event which was a huge success. Over 300 families attended and enjoyed food, music, and the distribution of backpacks and school supplies to our kids! We all have the power to make a difference. Our next General Membership Meeting will be held on Tuesday September 13. I hope to see many of you there!

Sincerely,
Riley Talford
Chapter President, SEIU Local 521 Fresno

Regional Vice President, Jennifer Jensen gathers with chapter leaders in Regions 3 and 4 to discuss how to build a powerful union that wins for workers in the Central Valley

UPCOMING EVENTS: GET INVOLVED TODAY!

→ Fresno County General Membership Meeting—Sept. 13
→ Transformation Recommendations Meeting—Sept. 12
→ Lavender Caucus Meeting—Sept. 15
→ Native American Caucus Meeting—Sept. 19
→ APALA Caucus Meeting—Sept. 20
→ COPE Meeting—Sept. 21
→ Women’s Caucus Meeting—Oct. 3
→ Latino Caucus Meeting—Oct. 5
→ One-Day Steward Training—Oct. 8
→ AFRAM Caucus Meeting—Oct. 13

Contract Enforcement Department is HERE FOR YOU!

Contract Questions? Facing Discipline? Need to file a grievance?

Call Rachel Tudor, Contract Enforcement Specialist Assistant at (559) 447-2560 from 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
WINNERS
$24.24 per hour
BLACK UNION WORKERS ON AVERAGE EARN $24.24 PER HOUR, COMPARED TO $17.78 FOR NON-UNION BLACK WORKERS.
CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND POLICY RESEARCH study, "Black Workers, Unions, and Inequality" 

& LOSERS
Sorry, millennials of Silicon Valley. In homeownership, you have it even worse than your counterparts in L.A. or N.Y.
The SF-SJ Metro region has the lowest rate of millennial homeownership in the nation: 6 percent and 7 percent respectively.
SAN FRANCISCO-BASED LENDER Earnest.com report (August 18, 2016).

Develop Leaders
Fighting For Better Valley Health
Our Better Valley Health Coalition is showing that when workers stand together, our voices make a difference. After hearing poignant and painful testimonies from workers of skyrocketing insurances rates, the San Joaquin Valley Insurance Authority (SJVIA) was moved to drop an 11 percent surcharge and redesign the system to rein in costs.
Workers are also demanding more input on the board...a no-brainer given that SEIU members' contributions are the backbone of the agency.

Build Political & Community Power
"THE TRUTH IS THAT LIVING WAGES RAISE PRODUCTIVITY, DECREASE TURNOVER AND BUILD JOBS... WHEN YOU PAY PEOPLE MORE, IT'S GOOD FOR THEM AND IT'S GOOD FOR THE ECONOMY."
REV. DR. WILLIAM BARBER II in Richmond, Virginia at the Fight for $15 Convention on Aug. 13. Barber addressed thousands of people and joined his march to demand living wages for workers across the country.

Know Your Rights
Cecilia Chavez (left) and Zulema Gonzalez
Know your contract, gain power!
That's what SEIU 521 member Zulema Gonzalez recently learned when she won back wages from Monterey County.
As a county Psychiatric Social Worker in Behavioral Health, Zulema often uses Spanish with clients. Management, however, was not compensating her for her bilingual skills, a violation of the contract.
Working with her steward and SEIU's contract enforcement team, Zulema has successfully won back-pay! Now, that's contract power!
The San Joaquin Valley Insurance Authority (SJVIA) voted to set new rates for 2017. Because members stood up and talked about the hardships we have with our current healthcare, the increase for next year has already been substantially reduced.

“It’s been difficult to keep up. I help people get food and shelter and healthcare and we’re having the same issues even though we work for the County,” said Kathleen Wilmes, Self-Sufficiency Support Asst. I for Fresno County.

The numbers are not yet final, but SJVIA voted for an 11.8 percent increase to the Anthem PPO, a 15.65 percent increase to the Anthem HMO, and a Kaiser rate set relative to the Anthem HMO rate.

This is down from a total potential increase of 32.9 percent just two weeks ago.

John Adams, a Planner III with Fresno County, said, “It’s still not enough. We need to go to the Board and tell them to step up. When I was hired, Fresno County contributed 87 percent of the cost of healthcare. Now they contribute less than half.”

These rates apply only to Fresno and Tulare counties and are subject to change based on contract conditions SJVIA has with member agencies. Other SJVIA members will be assigned a different rate that will be determined in the coming weeks.

Our next step is to lobby our Boards and Councils to do more to increase their contributions to healthcare. SJVIA increases shouldn’t be carried on the backs of workers alone.
2016 ONE-DAY STEWARD TRAINING
Combined Modules 1 - 5

Saturday - October 8
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

COMBINED MODULES 1 THRU 5
Module 1
"Role of the Steward in an Organizing Union"
Module 2
"Steward as Voice of the Union"
Module 3
"Investigating Workplace Problems"
Module 4
"The Steward and Discipline"
Module 5
"Meeting with the Boss"

Training is held at the union office:
SEIU Local 521
5228 E. Pine Ave., Fresno

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 (559) 447-2560.

HOW TO SIGN UP