

RWDSU

UFCW

Winter 2020

R E C O R D

Vol. 68, No. 1

Cereal Workers Win in Iowa

*Over 1,200
RWDSU members
at General Mills
(left) and
Quaker Oats
(right) win strong
new contracts*

PAGE 8-9



Victory for NYC Bookstore Workers



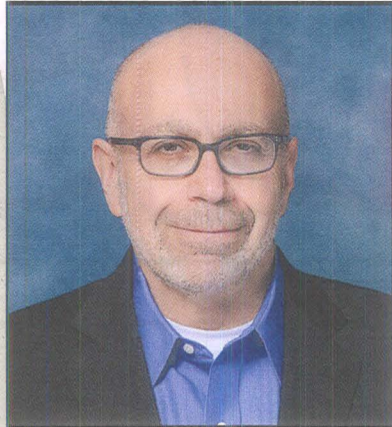
PAGE 3

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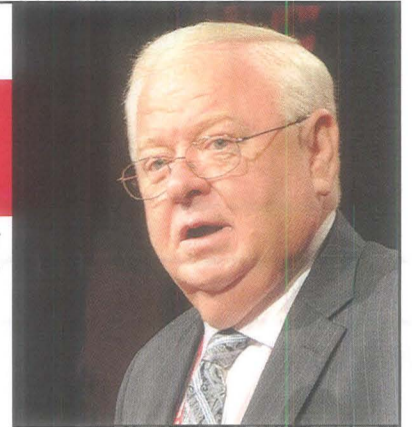
- Book Store, Health Care Workers Join RWDSU3
- Strong Contract at Coca-Cola4
- Housing Works Campaign Launched5
- RWDSU Joins Border Delegation6
- New Duane Reade Contract7
- New Contracts for 1,200 Cereal Workers8-9
- UFCW News10
- Around our Union11
- Contract News12
- RWDSU Scholarships13
- New Nursing Home Contracts14
- Union Plus Benefits15
- Health and Safety16



MESSAGE FROM YOUR OFFICERS

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Stand up and be Counted: Census 2020

The U.S. Census, conducted every 10 years, is already underway for 2020, and its importance cannot be understated. The future of every one of our communities is shaped by the U.S. Census, which is a constitutionally-mandated official and complete count of the U.S. population. It is crucial that we make sure each and every one of us, along with our family members, is counted, giving an accurate representation of the people who live in our communities and our country.

shortfalls, forcing people to travel great distances at the risk of their health in an emergency.

The Census determines other things we don't think often about, like utility assistance programs. In some areas, working families are being crushed under the weight of mounting utility bills. For details large and small, the Census outcome will affect countless things in our daily lives.

And, it's important to note that your responses to the Census – whether by phone, email, written response, or visit by a census taker – are 100 percent confidential, regardless of documentation status or anything else. The Census contains no questions about citizenship status, social security numbers, bank account information, or political party affiliation. The confidentiality of census records is protected by Title 13 of the U.S. Code. No data or tabulation may be produced that could be used to identify an individual.

Accurate responses to the U.S. Census can only help us and our families and cannot and will not be used against us in any way.

Starting in March 2020, you will receive information and reminders about the census, and you will have until the end of April 2020 to provide a response. It's our opportunity to stand up and be counted, for ourselves and our families. ■

Shaping our Future, Confidentially

The Census helps decide where \$1.5 trillion in federal funds – money that goes to pay for schools, hospitals, roads, and public works – are spent. The Census results are also used to determine how many Electoral College votes as well as seats in the U.S. House of Representatives each state gets. Results are also used to redraw boundaries for Congressional districts.

Political power and representation and how many federal dollars make it to our communities and neighborhoods is reliant on a fair and accurate U.S. Census. It is also so very important for working people and their families.

The Census can even be a matter of life or death, especially in more rural communities. Hospitals in our communities can close because of funding

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The objectives of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union are to unite into this organization all workers employed in its jurisdiction in order to advance and safeguard their economic and social welfare...The Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union will strive to preserve democratic processes, protect civil liberties, aid in the adoption of legislation which will promote the economic and social welfare of its members and that of labor in general and to improve the educational, social and cultural standards of society as a whole. *Through unity of purpose and action, through collective bargaining and legislation, the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union is dedicated to the ideal of making the jobs of its members the best jobs that can be devised from the point of view of wages, hours of work, physical conditions and human relations. Preamble RWDSU Constitution.*



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RWDSU AROUND OUR UNION

Union Voice for Workers at New York McNally Jackson Book and Stationery Stores

In December, workers at McNally Jackson Bookstores and Goods for the Study stationery stores in New York ended the year with a new beginning; they voted to join the RWDSU.

Approximately 90 workers at five locations (three bookstores and two stationery stores) have joined the union, with the vote held on December 12, 2019. The workers in the bargaining unit handle sales, events, stocking and information services in the stores

Workers say they joined the RWDSU to address a number of issues at work, and most importantly, for a voice on the job and the respect that comes when workers join together and win the power of union representation.

Workers have said they deserve more respect at work, better wages, and better structure in the workplace, with better defined roles and clearer guidelines about things like access to benefits and transfers between stores. Work-



McNally Jackson workers at five New York City stores are celebrating joining the RWDSU.

Workers say they joined the RWDSU for a voice on the job and the respect that comes when workers join together.

ers are also calling for standard pay scales for certain positions and an end to favoritism.

Negotiations for their first RWDSU contract are upcoming. ■

A.T. Wall Retirees Celebrate Careers and Union Membership

Three valued New England Joint Board members and A.T. Wall employees in Warwick, Rhode Island, celebrated their retirements in the Fall. Pictured from left to right are Alex Ullbin (7 years of service), Hector Monroy (19 years) and Antonio Delgado (31 years). Also pictured Bobby O'Brien, Local 599 President.

RWDSU members at A.T. Wall produce magazines for military weapons. ■



Merakey Housekeeping Join in Pennsylvania

Workers at Merakey Housekeeping in Pennsylvania, who help make lives of nursing home residents better by performing housekeeping and dietary services, have joined Local 108. Workers joined Local 108 because they were unhappy with the degradation of their medical benefits, and were not receiving acceptable wage increases. With the RWDSU workers are looking forward to a contract that improves their jobs. ■

Merakey Housekeeping workers joined Local 108 to improve wages and benefits.



RWDSU AROUND OUR UNION

NEJB Members “Couldn’t Be Prouder” of Strong New Coke Contract

In December, Local 513 members in Needham, Massachusetts, ratified a strong new contract securing five weeks of vacation for senior members, bringing the nearly 400 workers at the Coca-Cola facility there annual wage increases and securing the union health plan. The worker led negotiation committee worked tirelessly to secure the agreement, which contains many improvements and benefits.

“I have worked at Coca-Cola Northeast for 13 years. This contract includes the benefits we need to provide for our families. From time off to take care of a sick parent or child, to making sure we have the health insurance we need, to securing our pension and retirement this contract gives me and my fellow union brothers and sisters the strength we need on the job

every day. We could not be prouder of our President Tina Buonaugurio and our worker-led negotiations team for this strong win. Today, we overwhelmingly voted yes to this incredible union contract and I know it will make the holidays brighter for nearly 400 families in our community,” said Dimitry Charles, Coca-Cola Northeast worker.

The contract, ratified just before Christmas, brings annual general hourly wage increases averaging \$0.65 per hour per year over the term of the contract, financial bonuses for attendance, and daily completion bonuses for drivers, secures the current pension plan, and provides a 401K option to workers. The agreement also secures the RWDSU Health Plan for workers, which is a no-deductible plan, and contains numerous improvements to the con-

The negotiating committee brought home a great contract for Needham members.



tract language which will help workers on the job and with work-life balance.

“Working at the same place for 30-40 years is unheard of today. Coca-Cola Northeast heard what our members issues were and moved to make sure that working here for your entire career is not just a possibility, but a reality for the nearly 400 workers here. Our members can end the year knowing they have a strong

union contract that will give them the time off they need to spend time with their families, the healthcare they rely on, and the opportunity to retire comfortably when they’re ready to. More than that, our members have the backing of a strong union contract every single day at work,” said Phil D’Arcangelo, Secretary-Treasurer of the New England Joint Board of the RWDSU. ■

Six-State Comes to Nashville



RWDSU members, stewards and representatives convened in Nashville, Tennessee, in the Fall for the union’s annual Six State Conference. They came together to discuss accomplishments from the previous year,

while learning new strategies to grow and make our union stronger.

The conference featured guest speakers from the leadership of the Tennessee AFL-CIO, as well as seminars on Health & Safety, Organizing, New Labor Regulations and Immigration. The Six State conference provides a space for

members, stewards and union reps from throughout the region to connect and build solidarity. And by holding the conference in Nashville, RWDSU demonstrated its commitment to organize and fight for workers everywhere, especially in Right-To-Work states controlled by anti-union politicians. ■

Union activists, including many first-timers, attended the Six-State Conference in Nashville.

RWDSU A VOICE FOR WORKING PEOPLE

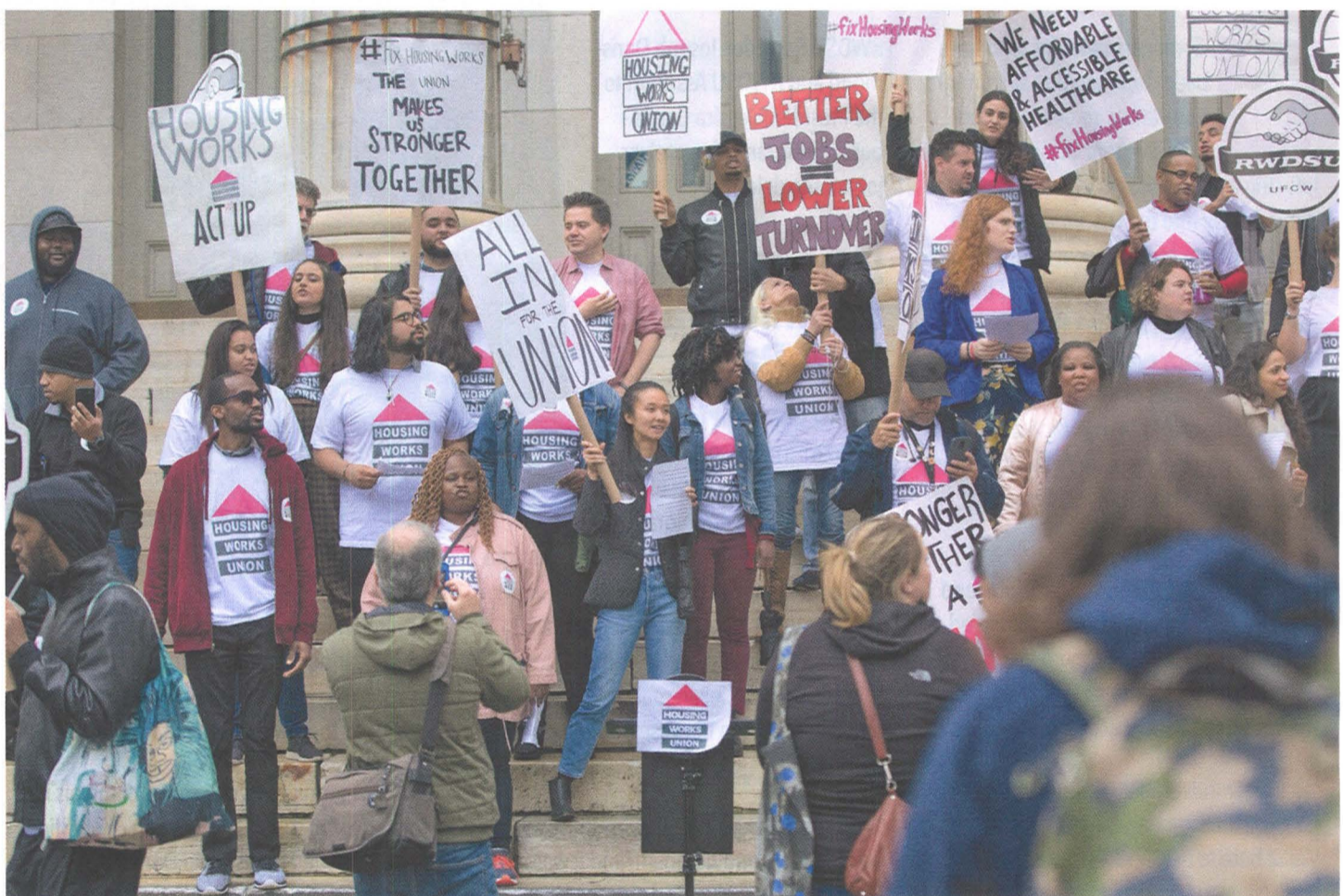
Housing Works Employees in New York Launch Campaign to Unionize

Emloyees at Housing Works in New York City have been helping people living with HIV/AIDS since 1990. The organization was founded by several members of the progressive organization ACT UP in order to provide housing, healthcare, job training, legal assistance, and other supportive services to those affected by the virus. Now, these workers are demanding the dignity and respect that comes with union membership and a union contract, and they have launched an organizing campaign with the RWDSU.

These employees of a progressive organization know the difference a union makes, so their organizing campaign shouldn't be a surprise. What is surprising, however, is that the progressive organization they work for would employ many of the same anti-worker union-busting tactics that we see from the worst of corporate America.

Late last year, workers across Housing Works' New York City locations walked off the job to demand the non-profit hear their workplace concerns. Over 100 workers gathered at Brooklyn Borough Hall to speak out about the working conditions that they face throughout their organization and how they need to see change now. Workers also filed Unfair Labor Practice charges (ULPs) with the National Labor Relations Board.

Workers and the RWDSU have been demanding management sign a neutrality agreement



Workers, activists and Housing Works employees at Brooklyn's Borough Hall.

that ensures a fair unionization process free from pressure or coercion of any kind. After the speak-out workers returned to work later that day to ensure that their clients' care was not disrupted.

Housing Works Employees Tell Their Stories

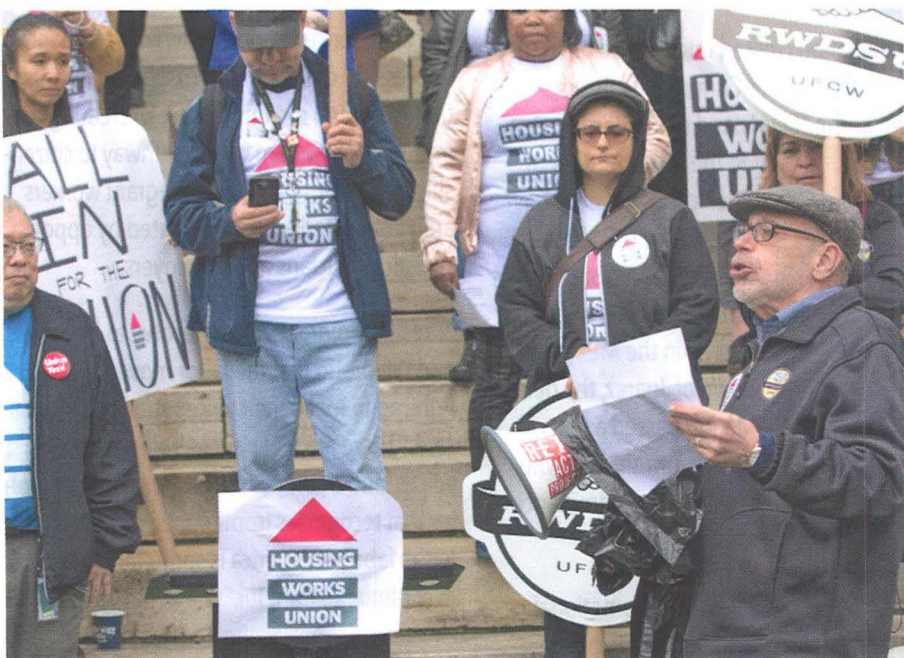
For months, workers at Housing Works have raised serious concerns about their workplace environment to management. With conditions only worsening, workers believe that union representation is the best way for them to address their concerns at work and ensure the best possible care for people who depend upon Housing Works' services. Workers have described unmanageable caseloads, lack of training, discrimination and harassment, and health and safety issues. Workers have raised concerns about pay and benefits, including that their health insurance doesn't provide adequate coverage for workers transitioning genders. These workplace issues are central not just to employee welfare, but to client care as well.

"After working here for a while I've found that there is a high turnover because of many structural issues. Low pay, problems with paid time off, and the lack of a living wage at this job is demoralizing for us. With a union, we can fix Housing Works and make it a good place to work," said employee Brian Grady.

For employee Adrian Downing-Espinal, the regressive anti-union stance of Housing Works is astounding.

"It's demoralizing that an organization with ACT UP roots, which is a model for radical organizing would be so against a grass roots union movement. It's also shocking that it would do business with a 'union avoidance' law firm that is the antithesis of progressive values. I came to Housing Works because of the mission and the values of the organization. There is a solid core of workers who are committed to the Housing Works mission, but a lack of will from management to support us in our fight for a union voice," Downing-Espinal said.

Housing Works employees strive every day to improve the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS, and their work makes a real difference. It's not too much for them to expect that their employer lives up to the same progressive principles toward their workers. The RWDSU will continue to fight for their voice. ■



RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum spoke at the event after Housing Works staff walked off the job.

Exploring Immigration Issues, RWDSU Joins Border Delegation

U.S. military veterans who have been deported due to immigration status; an overcrowded primitive tent city in Mexico housing asylum seekers who have been denied entry into the U.S. while trying to escape poverty and violence; a somber vigil mourning the lives of victims killed by a white supremacist shooter; these were among the many eye-opening scenes showing the many sides of the immigration crisis at the U.S. border seen by union members who took part in Solidarity Without Borders, a labor delegation to El Paso, Texas, and Juarez, Mexico in October.

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler and Executive Vice President Tefere Gebre led a delegation that included more than a dozen national union leaders, as well as union members and worker activists.

"The labor movement is at the border because immigration is a workplace issue. We're here to demand an end to the politics of division and hate that are fueling economic inequality and violence," Shuler said.

RWDSU Recorder Joseph Dorismond and RWDSU Assistant to the President Jessica Garcia – both immigrants themselves – joined the delegation.

Life and Death for Immigrants in El Paso

The first stop of the fact-finding program, in El Paso, Texas, laid bare the extreme result of xenophobic, anti-immigrant rhetoric that has accompanied U.S. immigration policy over the past few years – a vigil marking the 22 lives lost in August 2019, when a shooter attacked a Walmart store. The shooter, a young Texan male, told police he chose the location because he was targeting Mexicans.

"We lit candles for every one of those killed. It was touching and poignant, and it was important for us to be there, fighting back against the racist and nationalist sentiment that resulted in all of this unnecessary anguish," Garcia said.



The vigil remembering shooting victims in El Paso, Texas, was a sad reminder of the potential result of extreme anti-immigrant rhetoric in the U.S.

Several members of the delegation attended a court hearing for detained immigrants, and saw immigrants being held in inhumane conditions as they awaited their fate.

"We saw immigrants dressed as criminals in colored jump suits, and deplorable conditions in overcrowded cages," said Dorismond. "We saw many beg the judge to be voluntarily allowed to return to their countries, but even this was denied. They'll have to go back to their cells and await another appointment with the judge. Others asked for extensions so they can get the help of a lawyer; despite the bad treatment and horrible conditions, they say they are afraid for their families' lives if they return to Mexico."

Crossing into Mexico

The delegation crossed into Mexico on foot, through the town of Chihuahuita, Texas, known as the "Ellis Island of the Border" due to the large number of Mexicans who have traveled to the U.S. through the border crossing. While on the way to a migrant center in the Mexican town of Juarez, the delegation passed a tent city for asylum seekers who are awaiting admittance into the U.S.

"It was very emotional seeing families living in these tiny tents

intended for summer camping, with no access to showers or toilet paper in the rudimentary restrooms. It was a chilly night and I hoped families had adequate blankets," Garcia said. "It seemed inhumane that these people, many of whom are trying to escape danger and poverty, are being denied entry into the U.S."

In Juarez, the delegation met with deported U.S. military veterans who had served their country only to be deported to Mexico later due to their immigration status. The vets discussed how their lives were turned upside down after they were uprooted from their communities following their military service, and the difficulty they've had in receiving their hard-earned social security and military pension benefits.

The experience left delegates with a striking impression of the human cost of the immigration crisis, and the importance of creating an immigration system with a pathway to citizenship and reforms so that immigrant workers aren't exploited and scapegoated by opportunistic politicians and employers.

"These immigrant voices deserve to be heard, and I'm proud that the labor movement is fighting to make their voices stronger," Garcia said. "There are real people behind these voices, and a compassionate immigration policy that recognizes immigrants' contributions to the fabric of America is something we need to continue to fight for." ■

The Solidarity Without Borders delegation included representatives from many unions including the RWDSU.



Dorismond (4th from right) and Garcia (4th from left) joined U.S. veterans to meet with other U.S. veterans who have been deported to Mexico.

RWDSU AROUND OUR UNION

RWDSUers Pitch In to Help Their Communities

RWDSU members have been contributing their efforts to help those less fortunate in their communities, giving back to help make the places they live better for everyone.

Local 1102 participated in the 11th Annual Bethpage Turkey Drive to help countless needy families on Long Island during the holiday season. The drive brings together Bethpage Federal Credit Union, the Island Harvest food bank, and various community organizations to collect frozen turkeys, non-perishable foods, and other donations. Together with these groups, 1102 was determined to provide some of the more than 300,000 food-insecure Long Islanders a holiday meal.

"We are proud to aid in this great cause and make sure all in our community enjoy the holidays," said Local 1102 President Alvin Ramnarain.

RWDSU Local 338 delivered hundreds of turkeys donated by Local 338 members to several food pantries and charitable organizations throughout New York City, Long Island, and Westchester County as part of the union's annual "Turkey Drive." The donated turkeys were then be used to provide Thanksgiving meals or distributed directly to families in need who are served by these charities.

Helping kids from families affected by AIDS is a year-round job for the members of Local 108 in New Jersey. Since 2000, local members have helped raise critically needed funds for the AIDS Resource Foundation for Children. This year, the union raised over \$5,000 on behalf of the organization. The ARFC provides resources for children of families where one or both parents suffer from AIDS.

"It's often kids who suffer the most in a family affected by AIDS, and it is heartbreaking," Local 108 President Charles Hall, Jr., said.

"The ARFC helps by providing these kids with summer camps and activities, computer labs, special holiday events, and more," Hall added. "We are proud to help them out with their mission of making the lives of these kids easier, and we'll continue to stay involved with this worthy cause."



Local 108 assists the AIDS Resource Foundation for Children in New Jersey year-round.



Local 1102 members contributed turkeys during the holiday season.



Local 338 members helped provide turkeys for needy families.

Local 108 members also pitched in for less fortunate families in the community, assembling food bags to help brighten the holidays. ■

Benefits Protected, PTO Improved for 2,300 at Duane Reade

Over 2,300 RWDSU Local 338 workers at Duane Reade drug stores in New York have ratified a new three-year contract with their employer. The new contract was ratified in September, and was negotiated by Local 338 alongside Workers United Local 340A, which also has members at Duane Reade.

"Everybody stuck together and showed that they were determined to keep the rights and benefits that they have earned over the years," said Local 338 President John Durso. "The solidarity and determination to win a fair contract paid off."

Members at Duane Reade had been fighting to maintain their medical coverage and protect their pensions, and both of these goals were met. In addition, the company's "Paid Time Off" policy has also been improved in order to make it easier for employees to use their earned time off. For the next three years, our Duane Reade members will also have steady wage increases and newly hired mem-



The Duane Reade negotiating committee ensured thousands of union members at Duane Reade drug stores won the best possible contract.

bers will have increased minimum starting rates of pay. In addition, negotiators were able to include a severance pay package in the contract.

"We want to thank and congratulate the negotiating committee for their preparation and dedication and making sure their voices were heard at the table," Durso added. ■

1,200 Cereal Workers Win Strong New RWDSU Contracts in

Quaker Oats Agreement Brings Big Gains for 700 Members

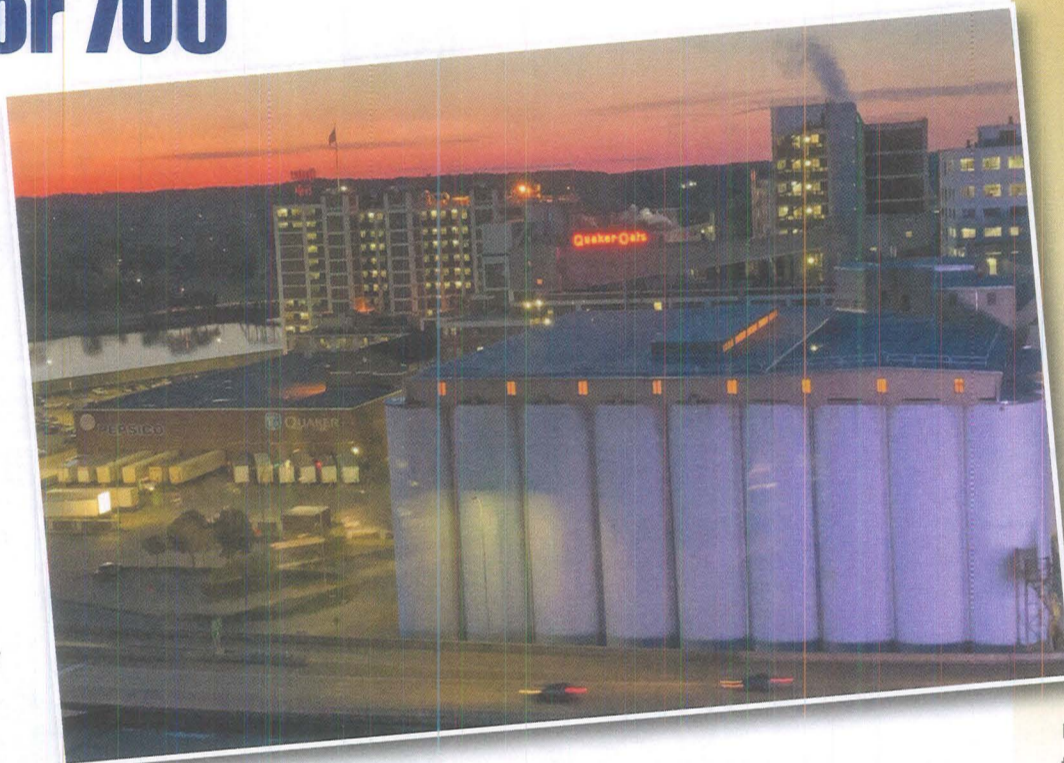
A great new contract for Local 110 members at Quaker Oats in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is bringing numerous improvements for the proud 700 union members at the cereal production plant. The 100 percent union solidarity at the facility, with every single worker an RWDSU member in this right-to-work state, helped the negotiations committee secure a strong contract for their co-workers that guarantees annual wage increases among other provisions that will improve workers' jobs and their work-life balance. Workers at the plant supply most of America's Quaker Oats products, including the brand's signature oatmeal, as well as grits, cold cereals and snacks.

The contract provides the security that workers need to help Quaker Oats continue to thrive.

"Working at Quaker Oats knowing we have a strong union contract makes my family feel secure. In this contract our union has ensured workers here remain strong. We are proud to be the economic engine of our community especially at a facility that has been operating here for over a hundred years. Today we ratified a contract that I know will ensure I can support my family - that matters. Our negotiations team led by my coworkers did an incredible job swiftly ensuring our wages and benefits would grow for years to come," said Maurice Anderson, who has worked at Quaker Oats for 18 years.

"We are incredibly proud of what they have done here. Workers at Quaker Oats have made the brand what it is today. In this contract the company has shown that they know that our union members have fueled their growth. Quaker Oats has shown that it's possible to be a responsible employer in Cedar Rapids, other companies should learn from them," said Shane Forbes, Local 110 President, who like all Local 110 officers works in the plant.

The Quaker Oats contract was ratified after three voting sessions that took place on Thursday, November 7, 2019.



The Quaker Oats production facility is home to 700 jobs, all of them staffed by RWDSU members.

Wage Increases, Scheduling Enhancements Highlight Contract

The Quaker Oats contract will be in effect for four years and includes critical provisions such as:

There are annual general hourly wage increases equaling 10 percent over the proposed new four-year term, and workers will receive a signing bonus as well.

The contract also includes significant wage increases for new workers on wage progression, vacation enhancements, including day-at-a-time use, and protections against being forced to work during holiday weekends. (i.e. Labor Day weekend etc.)

There were also numerous improvements to the contract language, which will help workers on the job and with work-life balance.

The strong new contract shows the power of Local 110 in the Hawkeye State. Local 110 also represents cereal workers across town at the Cedar Rapids General Mills facility, and at Coles Quality Foods in North Liberty, Iowa. The contract was ratified a week before General Mills workers won their first RWDSU contract. ■

Union Contract of a Balance at

When over 500 workers at the General Mills plant in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, campaigned to join RWDSU Local 110 early last year, they wanted a voice and fair treatment in the workplace, as well as needed paid time off and fair wages through a collective bargaining agreement. Most importantly, they wanted fair representation, a seat at the table determining their working conditions, and a real chance to stop an ongoing bleed out of their long-held benefits.



The Quaker Oats Negotiating Committee secured a strong contract thanks to the union solidarity at the facility.

Strong Iowa

IOWA

— The Hawkeye State —

Contract Now Part of Breakfast at General Mills

On November 14, 2019, General Mills workers realized the promise of their organizing campaign by ratifying their first union contract. The worker-led negotiation committee worked tirelessly to secure a strong contract that brought numerous improvements and put a stop to the degradation of their benefits.

"I am thrilled to know we will all be going to work tomorrow with the peace of mind of a strong union contract. Over 500 families can sleep well tonight knowing their needed benefits are secure for the next three years. The strength of our union during these first contract negotiations was extraordinary. I am proud to say that a union contract is now part of every balanced breakfast that comes from our General Mills plant," said Tim Sarver, who has worked at General Mills for over 37 years.

RWDSU Vice President Roger Grobstich applauded the work of the negotiations committee.

"The committee was able to get the company to move on four key areas of the contract that were incredibly important for members; preventing the outsourcing of their jobs, maintaining their benefits, ending unfair scheduling practices, and winning better wage increases. That is outstanding for a first contract and I am incredibly proud of their tireless work. This contract proves that it is possible for General Mills to be a responsible employer in our community, and we're proud to say they now are. The impacts of this contract will reach far beyond the over 500 work-

ers at General Mills; it impacts their 500 families, and a large part of our local Cedar Rapids economy. Our union is proud of the committee and we look forward to a productive working relationship with the company for years to come," Grobstich said.

Under the three-year contract, workers will receive an additional six days paid time off, each year of the term of the contract, and they will receive annual general hourly wage increases over the term of the contract along with a ratification bonus.

The company will be required to 'meet and confer' with the union prior to any sub-contracting or plant closure. The union also secured language in the contract that ensures the maintenance of long-held needed benefits for workers in conjunction with the Gen-



The negotiating committee brought home the first ever union contract for the new Local 110 members at General Mills.

eral Mills network of production facilities, and scheduling was preserved in the contract to keep the current three-shift system.

The contract also turns a number of temporary jobs into full-time entry-level positions, which will also be covered by the terms of the new contract.

The workers at General Mills handle production and maintenance at the facility and produce and supply iconic brands such as; the

original Cheerios and other flavor varieties including Honey Nut, Frosted and Multi-Grain, and Lucky Charms cereal, as well as fruit snacks including Gushers, Fruit Roll Ups, and Fruit by the Foot, and Betty Crocker ready to spread frosting. ■



General Mills workers in Cedar Rapids joined the RWDSU to stop the erosion of their benefits and win a fair contract.



UFCW

a **VOICE** for working America



Dierbergs workers vote to ratify their new contract in December.

St. Louis Supermarket Workers Improve Wages and Benefits

In St. Louis, 2,400 members of UFCW Local 655 who work at Dierbergs Markets ratified a new contract on Dec. 3 that raises wages and maintains health care benefits and pensions.

The three-year contract provides higher wages – including a new premium for part-time workers with at least five years of service – as well as some expansion to current health care benefits. The contract also features a brand new pension program for Dierbergs employees that preserves all benefits already earned and creates a new benefit package for employees moving forward.

“This is the best contract our union family has seen in 20 years,” said UFCW Local 655 President David Cook. “Our members are getting real wage increases. They are maintaining their health care benefits, which are critical to our members, and their pension is strong. This is the difference a good union makes.”

Maryland Cannabis Workers Make State History, Join UFCW

On Jan. 7, workers at Vireo Health International, Inc.’s wholly-owned subsidiary MaryMed, LLC in Hurlock, Md., became the first in the Free State’s cannabis industry to reach an agreement on a union contract by voting to join UFCW Local 27.

Workers joined the union to fight for better pay and affordable health care, and the new three-year agreement addresses these issues. The agreement will cover employees working in Vireo’s state-of-the-art 20,000 square-foot manufacturing facility in Hurlock, which supplies precisely formulated medical cannabis products to third-party dispensaries throughout the state, and includes several provisions that will benefit MaryMed’s employees.

The contract provides employees with competitive starting wages, access to affordable and high-quality health care, guaranteed annual wage increases, and a generous paid time off program. It also includes comprehensive safety provisions and anti-discrimination language and establishes sound procedures for grievance and arbitration matters.

“We are excited to welcome MaryMed employees to UFCW Local 27,” said UFCW Local 27 President Jason Chorpenning. “This contract is an important win for the future of all workers in the cannabis industry and I am very proud of the role that the UFCW has played in helping to bring collective negotiating to the cannabis industry.”



MaryMed cannabis workers in Maryland joined Local 27 and won a new three-year contract.

Minnesota Food Workers Stand Together for a Better Contract

Members of UFCW Local 663 who work at Tony Downs Foods in Madelia, Minnesota, recently ratified a new contract that provides higher wages, better health benefits, a more secure retirement plan, and worker protections for more than 300 food processing employees. Tony Downs Foods is the largest employer in the area.

“I’m happy for the raises we were able to get as a union. I’ve worked nonunion jobs before and have come back to Tony Downs because it’s a union company that supports the community with good jobs,” said William Castro, a forklift operator who has worked at Tony Downs Foods for 15 years.

The four-year contract represents a big economic win for families in Madelia and the surrounding area. Over the life of the contract, workers will receive a total of a 12 percent increase in base pay and 401k contributions combined. The contract will be active from October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2023, and union members will receive retroactive pay from October 1, as well as a ratification bonus. Other highlights of the contract include increases to the life insurance benefit; better company matching contributions to the 401k plan based on eligibility and three-year vesting; and improvements in vacation scheduling that make it easier for members to achieve the work-life balance their families need.



A strong new contract for Tony Downs members brings wage, retirement, and benefits improvements.

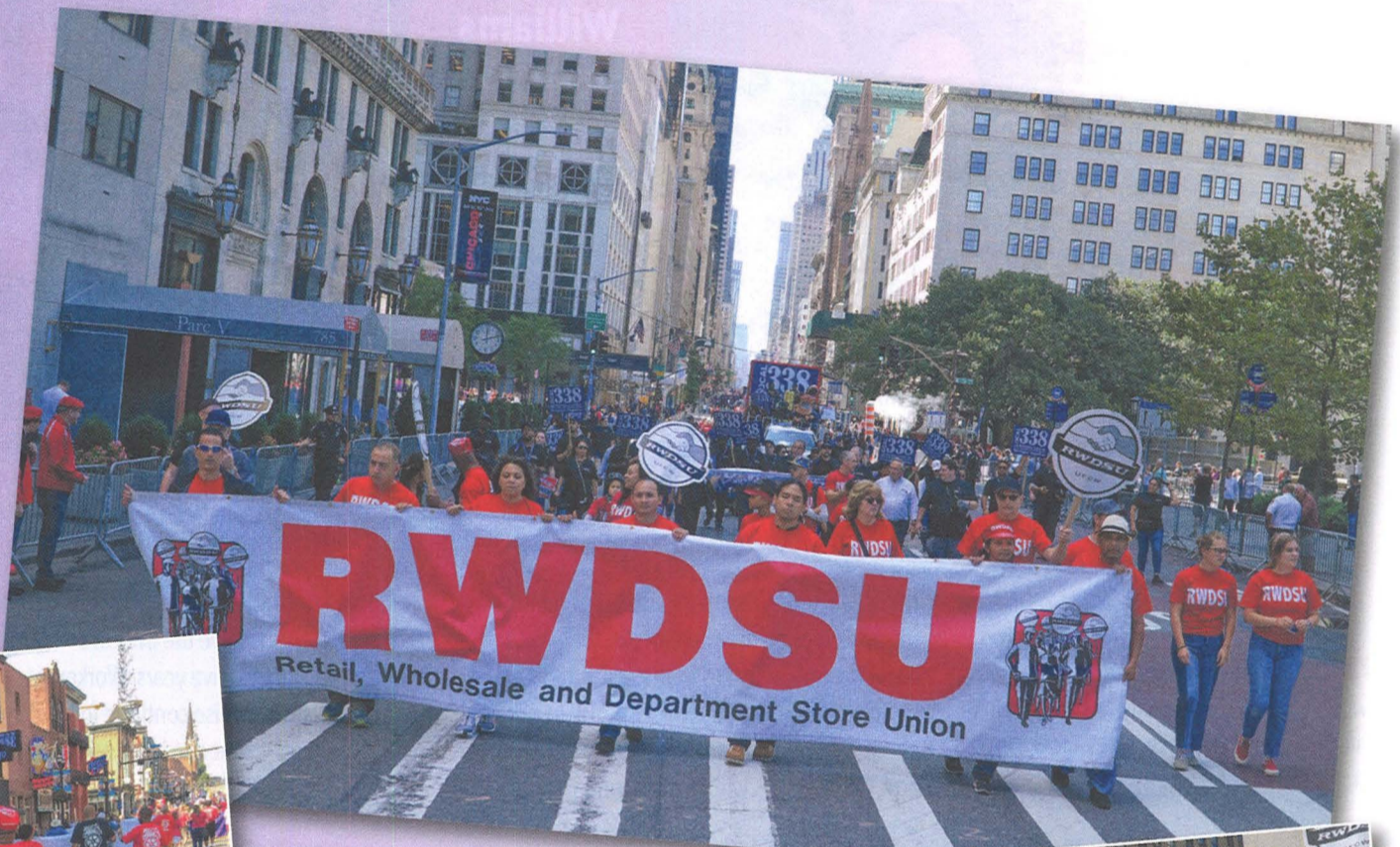
RWDSU AROUND OUR UNION

Union Pride on Parade

At union parades in Tennessee and New York in the Fall, RWDSU members showed their union solidarity.

In New York City, members from locals 1-S, 3, 338, 670, and 1102 marched up 5th avenue with dozens of other unions.

In Nashville, Tennessee, RWDSU members from the Tennessee District Council marched in the famous country music mecca downtown area with their brothers and sisters from other area unions. ■



In New York City, RWDSU members from area locals marched up 5th Avenue.



RWDSU Tennessee District Council members show their solidarity in downtown Nashville.



Gray Line tour buses, which employs RWDSU Local 670 members, provided a tour bus and driver for the parade, which was soon festooned with RWDSU logos.

Southeast Council Honors Vets in South Carolina

In an annual tradition, the Southeast Council honored U.S. military veterans at the Autoneum auto parts plant in South Carolina in November. There are about 50 veterans who work at the Autoneum plant. There were gifts, gift cards, and cupcakes distributed at the event.

"This is the third year we've honored the vets at Autoneum, it's a great tradition and Steward Snow Mills does a fantastic job organizing it," said Southeast Council President Edgar Fields. "Almost a third of the workforce at Autoneum are vets and it's important to recognize their service."

There are over 150 workers represented by the RWDSU at the plant, which is located in Aiken, South Carolina. Workers joined the RWDSU in 2016. ■



Veterans of U.S. military service are honored annually at Autoneum in Aiken, South Carolina.

RWDSU CONTRACT NEWS



**Morton Williams
Local 338**
New York



Morton Williams employees won an extra week of vacation with their new Local 338 contract.

In December, over 700 Local 338 members at Morton Williams in New York ratified a new 5-year contract. The workers in the bargaining unit work across New York City at 15 locations handling maintenance, sales, stocking and check-out at the grocery chain.

The new contracts brings significant improvements, including an extra week of paid time off, and ensures maintenance of long-held benefits and increases in the Local 338 Annuity Fund. The company will continue to pay a significant portion of workers' medical coverage, and workers will receive annual hourly wage increases.

"Our new contract provides an extra week of vacation for over 700 workers, that's an incredible win that will improve the lives of so many families over the next five years. Workers at Morton Williams will also continue to have their medical benefits covered in large part by the

company, ensuring their care is maintained. When workers come together, they can secure strong contracts that ensure fair treatment and respect on the job – the workers at Morton Williams have done just that," said Local 338 President John Durso. ■

**Sodexo
Local 875**
Massachusetts



The Sodexo negotiating committee brought home a solid new contract for members.

RWDSU members in Attleboro, Massachusetts, help keep the school system clean so kids can have the best learning environment possible. Local 875 members there perform maintenance in the school system, and now they'll do it with a new four-year contract with increased wages, 100 percent union insurance, plus longevity bonuses. In addition, members will see an increase in their 401K benefits. ■

**Silver Lake &
Town Manor
Rehabilitation
Local 108**
Pennsylvania

A new contract for Local 108 members at two health care facilities with the same owner in Pennsylvania – Silver Lake and Town Manor Rehab – have ratified a new contract. The new contract maintains and protects health care benefits, and brings wage increases.

RWDSU Local 108 represents Nurses, Certified Nursing Assistants, housekeeping and dietary workers. ■



The Negotiating Committee hammered out a strong contract for workers at Silver Lake and Town Manor.

RWDSU Scholarship Winners Know Union Difference

RWDSU SCHOLARSHIPS

Six young men and women - all children of RWDSU members - have won the annual RWDSU Alvin E. Heaps Scholarship. The scholarship, named after former RWDSU President Al Heaps (1919-1986), promotes higher education for RWDSU families and recognizes scholastic performance and an understanding of the difference union membership has made in their lives, and how unions can help all working families.

■ **EMILY GRAHAM** is the daughter of Roland Graham, Jr., a Local 220 member employed at Mott's in Williamson, New York. Emily is a freshman attending Nazareth College in Pittsford, New York, and is studying Spanish and Adolescent Education.



Emily Graham with Local 220 President Jerome Camp (left) and her father Roland.

Since a young age, I have been able to see the many benefits of union membership. I remember when my father was part of the RWDSU strike at Mott's applesauce plant, and I remember walking the picket line with my dad and his friends, and helping make signs for the picket line. I have so much respect for what they did; they knew Dr. Pepper Snapple was being unfair and they took a stand, a stand which was supported by people across the nation. In the future, I plan to become a high school Spanish teacher, and I plan to become a part of a union like the teachers in Los Angeles who recently went on strike and won better treatment and better learning conditions for children in the schools. I'm proud that in my future, I'll be a part of a union.



Kandrel Peeples and RWDSU Regional Director Rick Marshall.

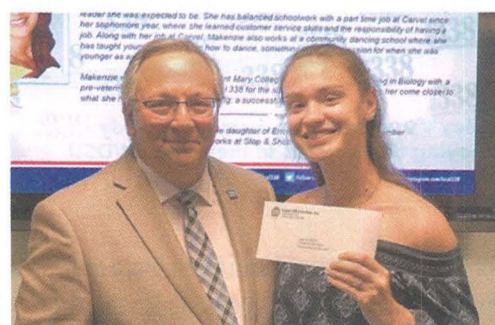
■ **KANDREL PEEPLES** is the daughter of Cassandra King, who works at U.S. Tobacco and is a member of Local 150. She is a Senior at University of Akron in Ohio, and is majoring in Business Administration. She has also been a union member herself, working at a nursing home in Ohio.

Being a union member taught me that my employer cannot fire me without "just cause." The bargaining power of workers in a union means workers earn more than non-union workers, and health care coverage is better too. My co-pay and medical bills are less expensive, and I was able to get my braces and oral surgery without having to pay more than a quarter of the bill out of my own pocket. I think workers should continue to see union representation as a way to better their lives; with union representation, a worker

receives more appreciation and respect and better benefits at the same time.

■ **MAKENZIE RIVERA'S** mother Erica Rodriguez is a Local 338 member at a Stop & Shop store in New York. She is a freshman studying Biology at Mount Saint Mary College in Newburgh, New York.

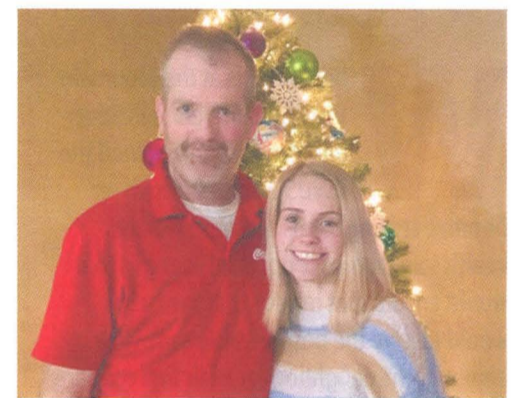
From the beginning of my life Local 338 has kept my mother's job secure and helped keep my family financially stable. I've always had good health coverage and benefits that



Makenzie Rivera with Local 338 President John Durso.

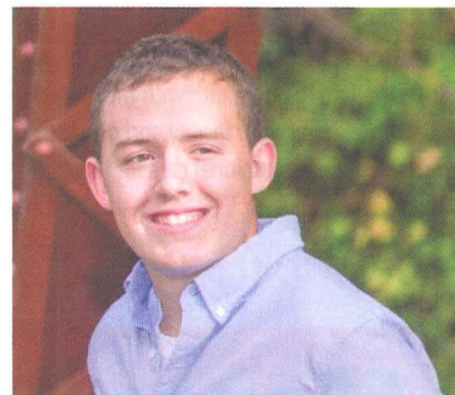
helped me to live my life with no worries. The union contract contributed to so many great memories thanks to my mother's paid vacation, and through paid time off my mother has always been there for me when I needed her. In bad times, like 2015 when A&P went bankrupt, the union was there to secure a job at Stop & Shop for my mother. My family has always been able to depend on the union to be there to stand up for us.

■ **HALEY SHARP** is the daughter of Michael Sharp, a Local 513 member employed at Coca-Cola in Massachusetts. Haley is a freshman majoring in Biology/Biochemistry.



Haley Sharp with her father Michael.

My father has worked for the Needham Heights plant as a driver for 22 years, and my grandfather worked there for 34 years. During the time my family has worked there, numerous different management and ownership changes have occurred. Just last year, the plant was sold from Coca-Cola enterprises to Coca-Cola of Northern New England, a company that is owned by a large Japanese beverage corporation. Throughout all of these changes, the union has worked to protect the best interests of workers and my family. Without unions, the individual workers would have had no say and no protection. Without unions, my father could have been greatly hurt by these transitions, but instead, his paycheck simply came from a new company.



Scholarship winner Archie Smith IV.

■ **ARCHIE SMITH IV** is the son of Archie Smith III, a Local 374 member at Post Foods in Battle Creek, Michigan. Archie is a sophomore studying Political Science at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan.

Unions work hard to ensure that employees are not seen as disposable by their employers, which provides job security that builds stronger families. I see unions as a form of democratic representation in a workplace. Union members vote for representation, just like civilians vote for politicians. American democracy is something that we as a society

can be proud of, and I believe that having a form of democracy in the workplace is extremely beneficial for workers. My father and grandfather both saw the benefits of having union jobs, and I cannot help but think that unions have had a huge impact on the quality of life my family has enjoyed.

■ **EMILY SEGOVIA** is the daughter of Zoila Segovia, a Local 1-S member employed at Macy's Herald Square in New York City. She is a freshman at City College in New York, majoring in Biotechnology.

Unions were created to help better the lives of workers and to make beneficial reforms and improvements at workers' jobs. Without unions, workers would be stripped of their benefits and have nobody to stand up for their rights. There have been countless instances where workers and unions have stood up, fought, and won better conditions, wages, and benefits. This is still true today, as we saw during the recent Stop & Shop strike in New England. After weeks on strike, workers won a new contract that satisfied the workers. The need for unions will never fade because there are always companies and bosses who will try to take advantage of workers. ■



Emily Segovia receives RWDSU Scholarship award from 1-S Recorder Felix Ocasio. Emily is a daughter of member Zoila Segovia of Macy's Fine Jewelry.

RWDSU A VOICE FOR WORKING PEOPLE

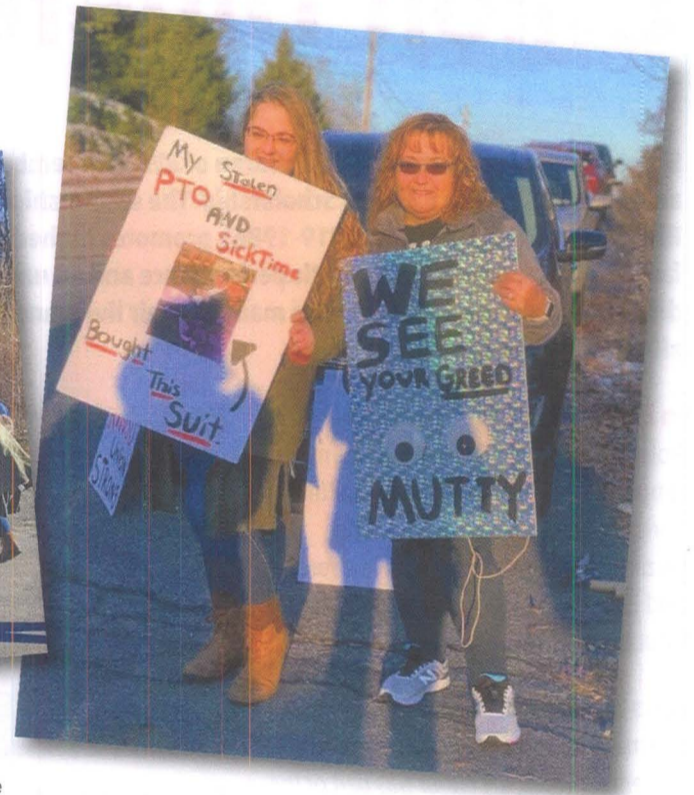
First Contract for Mountain View Workers in PA

When workers at the Mountain View nursing home in Scranton, Pennsylvania, joined the RWDSU, they did so to improve staffing levels and ease workers' health care worries; important changes that would ensure that residents at the facility would receive the best possible care. Now, after months of fighting for a fair first contract, the RWDSU members at Mountain View have won a three-year agreement with annual wage increases and numerous improvements for their jobs.

Their new contract represents a hard-fought victory. In November, with negotiations stalled, workers were forced to walk off the job for several days, striking to call attention to the issues they face on the job that endanger the care patients at the facility receive. Workers on the picket line said they were fighting for key contract provisions so they could provide the best possible care for patients and support themselves and their families. They sent a clear message that patient care was their num-



Mountain View workers on the picket line demanded a fair contract, and finally won a new agreement that helps workers as well as patients at the facility.



ber one priority and demanded that management negotiate in good faith with the workers who are the face of their facility and provide compassionate, professional care for the community's seniors.

In addition to wage increases, the new contract implements a starting wage scale that will increase employees' pay up to \$3 an hour depending on years of experience. Workers will also have access to affordable health care

benefits, additional paid holidays, and a \$2 additional differential for some shifts.

It wasn't easy, but Mountain View members proved with their first contract that when workers stand together, they win together. ■

Valley View Manor Workers Win First Contract

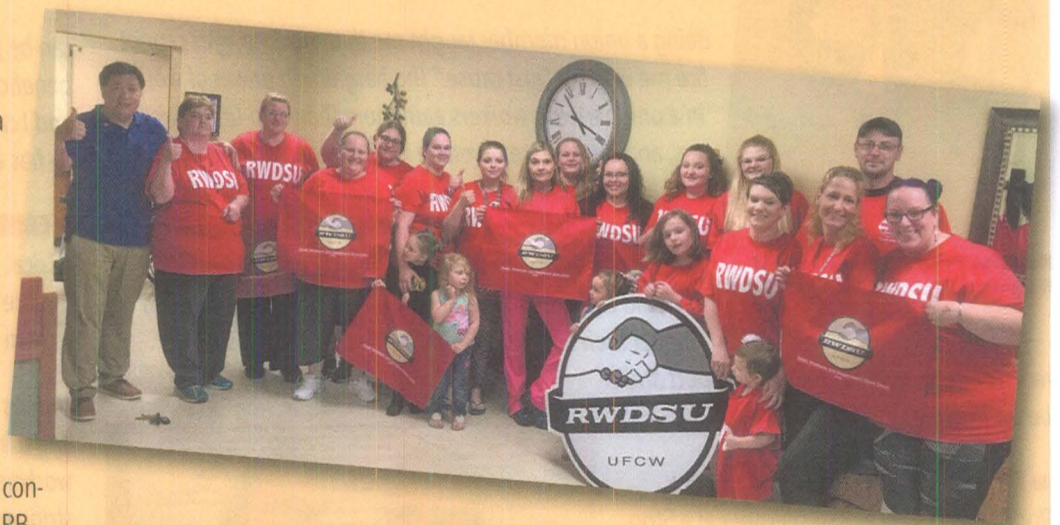
Workers at Valley View Manor, a nursing home in Norwich, New York, have unanimously ratified their first RWDSU contract after joining the union over the summer. The contract will greatly improve the lives of workers at the facility, and RWDSU members there are excited about the changes the contract is already bringing to Valley View Manor.

The contract includes annual wage increases, increased holidays, vacation time, and paid time off, and guaranteed scheduling protections.

"Our first RWDSU contract will greatly improve scheduling practices, which will help patients receive the care they deserve. I'm proud to have been a part of both our

organizing campaign, and our fight for a strong first contract. I know everyone who works alongside me knows that representation from the union has changed our jobs and our lives for the better," said Christine Taranto, Valley View Manor Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) and Chief Steward.

The nearly unanimous vote to unionize by workers at Valley View Manor was conducted on June 19, 2019 during two NLRB election sessions. The RWDSU represents approximately 60 workers at the nursing home facility. Workers in the bargaining unit handle all operations at the facility and include LPNs, Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), laundry, maintenance as well as the dietary and activity programming of patients.



Valley View Manor workers are already enjoying the benefits of their first RWDSU contract.

For RWDSU Organizer Jason Chesebro, a resident of Norwich, it's been particularly satisfying to see the Valley View Manor workers win union recognition and a strong first contract.

"It's inspiring to see workers from within my community standing up in their workplace for what they believe in. It took great strength and courage, and they were steadfast in their commitment for a strong first contract," Chesebro said. ■



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RWDSU HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDE



A Guide to Workplace Hazards and How to Reduce Them

When we think about safety and health at our workplaces we often think first about the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the federal agency which can pass hazard regulations, inspect worksites and fine employers if standards are violated. Unfortunately, since its creation in 1970 OSHA has been seriously underfunded. Today there are only 850 OSHA inspectors to cover the seven million workplaces it is responsible for. OSHA remains a valuable resource, but we need to become much more active and committed.

This is challenge but also an opportunity to expand and improve safety and health in our workplaces. As union members we have powers that OSHA and unorganized workers don't have. Employer policies, procedures and standards which affect workplace conditions are a mandatory subject of bargaining under the National Labor Relations Act. We can negotiate health and safety language in our contracts and fight for stronger protections and standards that go beyond the baseline OSHA standards. And our commitment to worker health and safety can send a powerful positive message to our coworkers who haven't joined the union yet.

We know that there are many more injuries than ever get reported because employers often set up a variety of barriers to discourage reporting. This is why the employers' statistics about the number of OSHA Recordable Injuries and Days Away Restricted or Transfer (DART) are very unreliable measures. Members are often afraid that there will be reprisals against them for directly reporting problems or injuries to management. We need to identify what areas and job processes and other circumstances are leading to reported symptoms of pain and injuries. We can do this through surveying members anonymously and encouraging them to share any concerns on a regular basis and making health and safety an important part of union meetings. No one knows



REPETITIVE WORK is another big hazard. Workers need regular breaks so that the parts of their body which they are using repeatedly can rest and recover. Job rotation during the workday can be helpful if the second job does not involve using the same body part. The speed at which repetitive work is done is also an important factor. The less time in between performing the repetitive job task, the greater the risk of serious muscular strain. This is why we must continue to fight against proposed line speed ups at our workplaces.

the ins and outs of our jobs better than we do. Our knowledge and experience are crucial to the most important goal: how to effectively reduce the hazards we identify in our workplaces.

Identifying Common Hazards

Physical Demands of Work which lead to a wide variety of Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) injuries including strains and sprains, low back injury, carpal tunnel syndrome (wrist), rotator cuff (shoulder), tendinitis (arms), epicondylitis (elbow) and trigger finger (hands). The risk factors for these injuries include: Working in awkward or static (not changing) postures, repetitive work, excessive lifting, forceful exertion, compression/contact stress, and vibration.

Workplace temperatures are also a contributing factor. Working in an overly hot or cold environment put stress on the body and increases the risk of muscular injury.

Here are some ways to reduce the awkward/static posture hazard: Look and adjust the job process and/or the job station set up as much as possible to limit the amount of reaching the worker has to do especially below the knees and above the shoulders. Avoid having to twist the body especially when lifting. Standing or sitting for long periods of time puts stress on the lower back and legs. Workers need periodic breaks to get out of these static postures. Workers who are on their feet all day should have anti fatigue mats to stand on to soften the compression on their body.

Lifting is a significant hazard and is responsible for a lot of back injuries. Mechanical lifting devices should be used as much as possible. Nursing homes and other health care facilities should have functioning patient lift and repositioning equipment. Heavy weight job tasks should be clearly identified as needing two workers to perform them. Employers should be encouraged to avoid having a worker lift more than 50 pounds at one time. In many cases needed product can be bought in smaller weight packages.

The tools we work with are also an important factor. They should be comfortable to use and not create contact stress discomfort. In repetitive food processing work, it is very important for workers to always have sharp knives to avoid having to use forceful exertion to do their job.

Several RWDSU workplaces had created Ergonomic Committees which met to focus on surveying the workplace and actively identifying, evaluating and working to reduce musculoskeletal disorder risk factors. Unfortunately, many of the committees are not currently active. They need to be, because these hazards create the majority of the injuries our members experience.

Slips, trips and falls continue to be a source of many injuries. Many of our worksites have dangerous walking surfaces because of water, grease, animal fat or other slippery substances. Basic housekeeping is essential to reduce the hazard as much as possible. This means regularly programmed clean up and adequate staffing to get the job done. But obviously in many workplaces the hazard (ex. wet floors) can't be eliminated. Workers should be provided with adequate slip resistant shoes to reduce their risk of being injured by this hazard.

WORKING AROUND MACHINERY is another common hazard we need to address. Too many workers have suffered amputations as a result of their contact with powered machinery. All workers working around these machines should receive Lock Out/Tag Out (LOTO) awareness training about the hazards and all involved in servicing equipment must have full LOTO procedure training. No one should ever be expected or encouraged to put their hand into an operating machine to free an obstruction. Safety audits should always look for any machinery which is not properly guarded at all points which could inflict any injury.

We have a right to a safe and healthy workplace. None of us goes to work expecting to be injured but we know it happens far too often. Making change is not easy and that is why we need to work together. That is our strength because no one knows more about our work and how it can be done safely than we do. ■

Resources

Your RWDSU Health and Safety Department can provide additional information and training about specific workplace hazards as well advice on how to develop and strengthen health and safety programs at your workplace. Please contact them at (212) 684-5300 or www.rwdsu.org ■