

RWDSU

UFCW

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RECORD

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VICTORY AT HOUSING WORKS!

In Huge Organizing Win, NYC Workers Gain RWDSU Voice

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Alabama Campaign Brings Worldwide Attention to Amazon's Abuses



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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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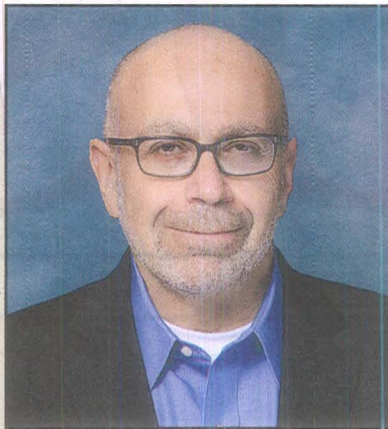
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MESSAGE FROM YOUR OFFICERS

Historic Amazon Campaign Accomplished A Lot

When Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos admitted in a letter to shareholders that Amazon needs to treat its own workers better, it served as a punctuation mark on the statement Amazon workers made with their historic campaign to organize their warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama. While the results were not what the dedicated workers who led the campaign wanted, it's clear that the workers - and the campaign - accomplished a lot for themselves and all working people.

Amazon workers brought the most worldwide attention to unions and worker rights that we've seen in generations.

Taking the Fight to Amazon

The Amazon workers and the union activists who took the fight to the world's largest retailer and world's richest person - Bezos - brought the most worldwide attention to unions and worker rights that we've seen in generations. The media told their story in hundreds of news stories seen across the globe. For countless working people, this was the first time they'd ever heard about unions and union organizing, and the importance a union voice has for workers who deserve dignity and respect on the job.

The Amazon campaign truly changed the world by creating a renewed conversation about worker rights and the difference unions can make in workers' lives.

The campaign exposed Amazon's vicious anti-union, anti-worker tactics; the captive meetings, the intimidation, the endless barrage of text messages and propaganda. Workers couldn't go anywhere to avoid Amazon's mistruths and distortions about unions; even in the bathroom, there were signs designed to scare workers from voting for the union. The stories about Amazon's multimillion dollar anti-worker campaign were told around the world, a world that now knows Amazon defied labor law and the NLRB and spent thousands of dollars a day each on union-busting "consultants" whose only job was to frighten Amazon workers.

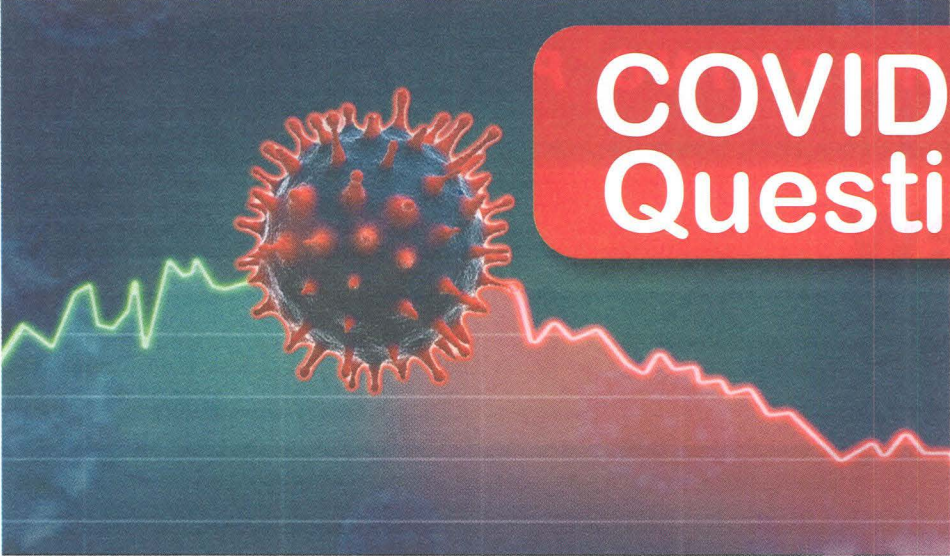
Bringing Worker Issues to the Forefront

The Amazon workers helped bring attention to the issues that are so important to working people. The campaign put on display the dehumanizing treatment large corporations employ in the workplace. Amazon workers are constantly monitored, to the point where many are afraid to go to the bathroom for fear of taking too long. It's about the power companies have over their workers, and the lack of a say most workers have in their own workplace.

Not only did Amazon workers elicit the stunning admission from their boss that they deserve to be treated better, they prompted President Joe Biden to film a statement affirming his support for Amazon workers, and his belief in the rights of workers to join unions free of harassment and intimidation. It's something no American president has done in modern history, and it's a tribute to the accomplishments of Amazon workers.

In this issue, you'll read about the PRO Act, legislation that would protect workers' right to join a union free from employer interference. It's legislation that the Amazon campaign proved - beyond a doubt - that is necessary to level the playing field when workers try to exercise their constitutional right to union representation. It's something everybody understands now, not just union and worker activists.

The Amazon campaign initiated a global discussion about worker rights and the difference unions can create in workers' lives. Their accomplishments can and will inspire more workers to claim their union voice, and create better jobs and better lives for themselves and their families. If they can bring the fight to one of the world's largest companies, so too can workers in any workplace. It's up to all of us to help spread their message and follow up on their achievements. ■



COVID-19 Vaccinations: Questions and Answers

There are currently three COVID-19 vaccines which have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to be distributed and administered in the United States. They are the Pfizer-Biontech, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson Janssen vaccines. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine was paused out of an abundance of caution, but was resumed in April after a study of extremely rare blood clots. The CDC recommends that people get vaccinated with whichever vaccine is available to them.

RWDSU Local 108 member Camille Yelverton was vaccinated along with other workers at Merakey long-term residential hospice in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. "I got my vaccine to protect myself, my family, and residents here at the facility. It's important to get the shot!" she said.



Nancy Acosta, an RWDSU member at Mountain View Care Center in Scranton, Pennsylvania, said "I'm glad I got the vaccine. It's going to help keep myself and the people I care for on the job safe!"

Who should be vaccinated?

Everyone over the age of 16 should be vaccinated unless they have a history of serious allergic reactions to the flu vaccine or if their healthcare provider has advised against it. Pfizer is approved for people 16 and over; Moderna and Janssen for people 18 and over. Currently, vaccines will not be given to children under the age of 16 because clinical trials conducted so far have focused on adults.

How do vaccines work?

The purpose of a vaccine is to introduce elements of a virus that trigger our bodies to produce proteins which build the antibodies to fight the virus if we are exposed to it. None of the COVID-19 vaccines available today contain live virus.

How will the vaccine be given?

Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses of the same vaccine. The time between the two doses varies: three weeks for Pfizer and four weeks for Moderna. The Janssen vaccine is a single-dose vaccine. All three vaccines are administered on the arm.

Are the vaccines safe?

Yes, the results so far are extremely good. Over 100,000 people were vaccinated and followed as part of the clinical trials and there have not been any serious incidents since their release for emergency use. Over 220 million doses of the vaccines have been administered safely to date in the U.S. The J&J vaccine has also shown to be effective against COVID-19 but its use was paused briefly while the CDC and FDA studied the incidence of blood clots among a

small number of individuals (15 out of 8 million who have received the J&J vaccine). While unfortunate, this development and the FDA's quick response demonstrate that the system in place to report, track and investigate adverse reactions to the vaccines is working. The J&J vaccine has been reapproved for use.

What are the side effects of the vaccine?

Some people will experience symptoms like soreness at the injection site, aches, or slight fever. If you experienced severe reactions from previous vaccinations, you should consult with a health care provider before getting a COVID vaccine. It is also recommended that before getting vaccinated you tell the vaccination provider if you have a fever or a bleeding disorder, are on a blood thinner, are immunocompromised, or take medicine that affects your immune system.

Should I report problems or bad reactions after getting a COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. After vaccination, you will be monitored for 15-20 minutes at the vaccination center as a precaution. However, if you experience serious reactions at home, contact a health provider as soon as possible. A national system has been established to collect data on all adverse reactions (Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System: VAERS).

Is the vaccine safe for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding?

The CDC, College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and other health organizations rec-

ommend that pregnant women get vaccinated. The fact that the vaccines do not contain live virus makes them safer than other vaccines. The risk of getting severe COVID disease is a much greater risk to health. If you have questions, speak with your healthcare provider.

Can I still get COVID-19 after I am vaccinated?

It is possible to become sick before or after vaccination, before the vaccine has created enough immunity to the disease. It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after vaccination. Once your body builds immunity from the vaccine, all vaccines have shown to be extremely successful in preventing serious illness and hospitalization.

How long is the vaccine effective in protecting against COVID-19 infection?

We do not know at this time. Viruses usually mutate (change their structure and behavior) and new variations or strains can develop. New strains of the COVID-19 virus have appeared and studies are still determining the effectiveness of the vaccines if these strains become widespread in the United States.

Can we stop wearing face coverings once we have been vaccinated?

No. Stopping the pandemic requires using all the tools available. Vaccines work with

your immune system so that your body is better able to fight the virus if you are exposed. Face coverings help reduce the chance of being exposed to the virus and spreading it to others.

Is getting the COVID-19 vaccine mandatory?

No, no governmental agency is making vaccination mandatory. The federal Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC) has stated that employers may require their employees get vaccinated in order to maintain employment. If you are faced with this issue, contact your union representative for assistance.

How do I get access to the vaccine?

Each state is setting up their own vaccine programs and guidelines. Vaccinations are likely to be available at medical centers, health clinics, drugstores and some workplaces. You may want to contact your union rep for more information to learn when you are eligible for vaccination.

More information:

The Centers for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov) is a good source to get updated information on COVID-19 and the COVID vaccines.

For more information from the RWDSU Health and Safety Department, contact Jessica Garcia at: jgarcia@rwdsu.org or (212) 684-5300. ■

RWDSU A VOICE FOR WORKING PEOPLE

First Contract for new Bloomsburg Members

After a long, difficult battle with management for their first union contract, RWDSU Local 262 members at Bloomsburg Care & Rehabilitation Center in Pennsylvania have won numerous improvements.

The new contract includes improved starting minimum rates, annual raises, inclusion in the union medical plan, and secured paid time off and improved job security. The contract addressed many of the issues the workers had when they won their campaign to join the RWDSU in May, 2020. The 90 workers at the facility now have a strong first contract to go along with the security and voice on the job they won with their union membership.

"I am extremely proud of these members. Through patience and perseverance we achieved a really strong first contract that provides a solid foundation for contracts to come," said Local 262 RWDSU President, Daniel Righetti.

The BCRC employees fought hard for a settlement that shows respect for the important work they do to care for their residents, and a strong, outspoken negotiating committee made the difference. "The BCRC employees united as a cohesive team, remained stronger together and were victorious. I'm very proud to have worked and be a part of this team." said Local 262 RWDSU Business Agent Danielle Albano. ■



Bloomsburg members won numerous improvements with their first RWDSU contract.

New Members at NYC Bookstores Ratify Strong First Contract

In January, RWDSU members at six McNally Jackson Bookstores in New York City ratified their first union contract after joining the RWDSU in late 2019. The RWDSU members at the stores secured strong wage increases, benefit improvements, and won the dignity, respect, and a voice on the job that comes with a union contract.

"By ratifying their first contract that addresses the many issues that motivated them to organize, McNally Jackson workers showed that the best way for working people to protect themselves and their families is to join together in a union and secure a strong contract," said RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum.

"We are so proud of this contract! I think our landslide ratification vote really speaks to how excited the unit is about it and how happy we are with the improvements we achieved. It feels a bit surreal that we made it happen, even while mostly over Zoom. I think we can all agree 2020 was a challenging year, but working on this contract and the solidarity with my coworkers brought me some sanity and comfort. Together we got a really stellar contract," said McNally Jackson employee Kathryn Harper.



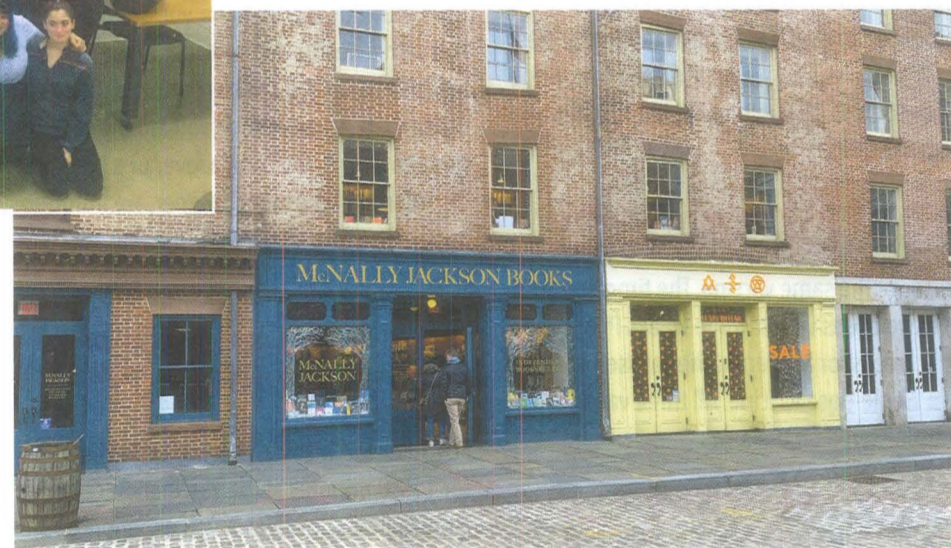
McNally Jackson workers celebrate joining the RWDSU in late 2019. Now, members have won a strong first contract that addressed their concerns.

The vote to ratify the contract was conducted virtually on January 29. The workers in the bargaining unit handle sales, events, stocking and information services in the stores.

Contract improvements include:

- Creation of three tiers for employees that recognizes skill levels and responsibilities. This provision ensures workers will be paid according to the work they do, and also creates greater creative autonomy for members to curate their particular sections of the store,

"I think our landslide ratification vote really speaks to how happy we are with the improvements we achieved."
 — McNally Jackson employee Kathryn Harper



The historic South Street Seaport location is one of six McNally Jackson stores in NYC.

- Significant wage increases for most members ranging from between 7 and 17 percent depending upon tier.
- Members, who previously had no retirement plan, can now participate in the union

- retirement program.
- Paid holidays will increase from 5 to 9 for all workers.
- Members with four years or more service will receive an extra week of paid vacation time. ■

RWDSU A VOICE FOR WORKING PEOPLE

New Contract for Ohio Fresh Mark Members

Members in Salem, Ohio, have ratified a new four-year contract that brings numerous improvements and protects their health coverage. The progression has been greatly decreased from five years to only 18 months, meaning members can reach the full pay rate three and a half years earlier. There are annual wage raises in the contract, and a shift differential that will bring an extra \$.25 an hour for the second shift and an extra \$1.50 per hour for the third. Newly added benefits include a longevity raise for senior employees, and an extra week of paid vacation for all members. Maintenance workers will earn more money after completing train-

ing classes, and there are increases in the company 401K match and an extra \$150 shoe allowance for warehouse workers.

The Negotiating Committee consisted of Bruce Fatherly, Amy Ray, Melody Alflen, Mike Scorich, Chris Graffius, Janice Cusick and Marland Billiter, with assistance from RWDSU Rep. Fred Jimenez.

"This was the first time any of these members served on a Negotiating Committee, and they all did a tremendous job bringing home a fantastic new contract at Fresh Mark," Jimenez said. ■

"The Negotiating Committee did a tremendous job bringing home a fantastic new contract."



The Fresh Mark Negotiating Committee reached a contract with numerous improvements and new benefits.

Bloomsburg Maintenance Workers Win Campaign

The RWDSU membership at Bloomsburg Care & Rehabilitation Center in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania keeps growing, thanks to word of mouth and the hard work of RWDSU organizers. The maintenance unit at the facility joined RWDSU Local 262 in January, after seeing the difference union membership has made in the lives of the Certified Nursing Assistants there after they joined in 2019. Workers saw the difference the union made during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the RWDSU ensuring workers received hazard pay and proper PPE and bringing them a voice on the job. The maintenance workers saw the difference and wanted to become a part of the union.

The new members are already seeing the benefits of RWDSU membership, as they are now working under their first union contract. Maintenance workers will see raises of 4.5 percent, and are covered under the Local 262 medical plan. ■

School Workers Win with Local 1102

Workers at Mt. Vernon School District in New York have joined Local 1102 after their employer – seeing the overwhelming support workers had for joining the RWDSU – recognized the union. Local 1102 now represents over 60 workers who handle food service operations for the district. Mt. Vernon members have been essential workers throughout the pandemic, making

sure that the district's students and staff are well-fed during these difficult times.

In upcoming contract negotiations, Local 1102 will seek to address workers' concerns by improving wages and working conditions. Workers have already won the most important benefits of joining a union – winning a voice on the job and the support that comes with joining the RWDSU. ■

Local 513 Officers Elected

RWDSU Local 513, which represents members throughout New England, has elected officers to new terms of service. Local 513 officers elected were: President Dennis Beaulieu, Sec/Treasurer Christopher Baker, Recorder Michael Savard, 1st VP Victor Vieira, 2nd VP Paul Cronin, 3rd VP Michael Higgins, and Sgt At Arms Bob Wright.

The following Shop Stewards were also elected: Coke Needham – Christopher Baker, Dallas Hudgins, Kenny Kasle, Wayel Salameh,

Joe Strum, Dave Tamulynas, Mark Ayers, and Michael Higgins. Coke Lowell – Michael Savard, and Steve Cenik. Canteen Refreshments- Victor Vieira and Christopher Lavin. Pepsi Canton – Erick Wanzo, Paul Cronin and Nuno Silva. Pepsi Cranston – Dave Anania, Dennis Beaulieu, Greg Laurence, Bob Wright and Sam Arlia. Pepsi Haverhill – Derek Santolucito and Greg Marcoux. ■

Local 513 officers were sworn in by New England Joint Board President Tina Buonaugurio earlier this year.



RWDSU POLITICAL & LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Workers Need the PRO Act for Fair Union Campaigns

In this issue of the Record, you'll read about hundreds of union members who have won their organizing campaigns, winning a voice and the dignity and respect that comes with union membership. Soon, they'll negotiate their first contracts that will make a real difference in improving their jobs and their lives.

The fact that these workers stood together and won is inspiring, and stands as a testament to what working people can accomplish when they are united. But these wins for workers are never easy.

You'll also read about the Amazon organizing campaign in Bessemer, Alabama, in which workers faced a vicious and often illegal anti-worker, anti-union offensive. In the Amazon campaign, and the majority of other union organizing drives, workers – who simply want to exercise their legal right to join a union – face intimidation from their employers who are trying to sidetrack their campaign. Captive meetings, firings, misinformation campaigns, threats; workers who try to organize have seen it all. Often, their employers – with the help of

well-paid union busting law firms or “consultants” – are successful in derailing these organizing campaigns. And when workers win, it almost always takes longer than it should have, and at a greater emotional cost for workers who just want to improve their jobs.

The PRO Act Would Bring Change

Workers shouldn't have to endure intimidation and countless obstacles just to organize. Employers shouldn't be allowed to continually game the system to try to squeeze the life out of organizing drives by their workers.

Legislation passed in the House last year, the Protecting the Right to Organize Act, known as the PRO Act, would help ensure that workers aren't denied their rights and that employers aren't allowed to abuse the system to run out the clock on organizing drives. The PRO Act would amend labor laws to add strong penalties for companies that retaliate against workers who organize. It would also weaken anti-worker “right-to-work” laws.

With a Republican Senate and Trump in the White House, the PRO Act was considered dead on arrival. With the arrival of President Biden and a Democratic Congress in 2021, passage of the PRO Act is possible. After decades of the playing field leaning further and further to

employers' favor, now is an opportunity to restore some balance in the fight for workers' rights and give more workers a chance at winning a union voice.

Workers continue to win their organizing campaigns because they stick together and fight, but the obstacles they face also show the need to level the playing field between workers and their employers when it comes to union and

worker rights. When workers want to join a union, it shouldn't take years. Workers should be free to exercise their rights without employer interference, intimidation, and delay. The PRO Act needs to be a top legislative priority moving forward, so that more workers can win union representation and better lives for themselves and their families. ■



NY Cannabis Legalization Could Bring Union Jobs

In March, a bill legalizing adult-use cannabis in New York was signed into law, expanding legal cannabis use beyond the state's medical marijuana program. The RWDSU has been at the forefront of creating well-paying, quality careers for cannabis workers in New York, working with elected officials from the very beginning to ensure that cannabis jobs are good jobs, and that the new law puts fairness at its center. Communities of color, workers and entrepreneurs are prioritized in this program, and the final law reflects the long-standing efforts of worker and community activists to create legislation that will lift up all of our communities.

Several hundred workers across the industry are now represented by Local 338 RWDSU. Thanks to their strong union contracts, they are guaranteed wage increases, paid time off, and quality benefits, amongst other



Workers at Vireo in New York have won two strong RWDSU contracts. Local 338 has the experience and knowledge of the industry to bring strong representation to tens of thousands of potential new cannabis jobs that will be created with legal adult-use in New York.

invaluable workplace protections. Now, adult-use cannabis in the Empire State could create thousands more good jobs in the state, and the RWDSU is committed to bringing new cannabis workers the representation and voice on the job that comes with union membership. It has been estimated that New York has the potential to see 30,000 new jobs just from this industry.

“Legalizing adult use-cannabis creates incredible opportunities for New York's communities at every level of the industry, from ownership to management to the workforce. A key component of the work that unions do in advocating for working men and women is related to fighting for economic and social justice. Legalizing cannabis is a natural bridge for this work, and creates the potential for thousands of new good, union jobs,” said Local 338 President John Durso. ■

Under a Global Spotlight, Workers Prove Amazon and Labor Law Need Change

Throughout the past year, the eyes of the world were focused on Bessemer, Alabama, where thousands of Amazon warehouse workers took part in an historic campaign to join the RWDSU. During one of the highest-profile union organizing campaigns in decades, a large group of workers and dedicated RWDSU organizers gave everything they had to bring a voice to the employees at the Amazon warehouse. Ultimately, the election results were not what the union nor this group of dedicated Amazon workers wanted, but through their courageous actions, these workers accomplished a lot.

Campaign Exposes Amazon's Mistreatment of Workers, Need for Unions

The workers' historic campaign brought unprecedented attention to the way Amazon treats its workers; about the unregulated technologies Amazon uses to monitor every movement of its workers, including the amount of time they spend in the restroom; about the failure of too many employers to prioritize the health and safety of their own employees; about skyrocketing wealth inequality; and, most importantly, about the lack of dignity, respect and just treatment too many Americans experience at work.

It was an eye-opening, generational accomplishment. Thousands of news articles spread across the globe, bringing the story to the world and opening a global discussion over



A Congressional delegation of U.S. lawmakers were among many supporters Amazon workers won during their campaign. Left to right: Mid-South Council Pres. Randy Hadley, Nikema Williams (Georgia 5th District), RWDSU Pres. Stuart Appelbaum, Terri Sewell (Alabama 7th District), Cori Bush (Missouri 1st District), Andy Levin (Michigan 9th District), and Jamaal Bowman (New York 16th District).

The RWDSU won't allow Amazon's lies, deception and illegal activities go unchallenged.

the way Amazon operates. For many, this was the first time they'd ever heard about unions, why workers form them, and the fear giant corporations have of worker power.

The workers stated their case clearly and they won the argument. A poll showed 77 percent of Americans supported Amazon workers. President Joe Biden voiced his support for Amazon workers and the right to join a union, in the most pro-labor Presidential address in generations. And in the days following the union election at Amazon, Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos himself stunningly admitted that Amazon needs to treat its workers better.

Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos himself stunningly admitted that Amazon needs to treat its workers better.

The campaign also drew mainstream attention to the lengths companies like Amazon will go to in order to prevent workers from exercising their rights to join a union. Amazon employed an army of expensive anti-union "consultants" at a cost of thousands of dollars a day each to roam the warehouse floor to



In defiance of a NLRB order, Amazon placed an election mailbox on its property to intimidate workers. The RWDSU has filed almost two dozen unfair labor practice charges.

intimidate them from voting for the union. The company also required workers to attend mandatory meetings where Amazon attacked the union. Amazon flooded the internet, airwaves, and social media with ads spreading misinformation about unions. No lie or untruth was out of bounds in Amazon's misinformation campaign.

They defied labor law without a care, even placing a specifically disallowed election drop box on warehouse property despite NLRB orders not to do so. By the end of the campaign, workers knew exactly how their employer wanted them to vote, and were reasonably worried that their employer - with its massive resources, constant surveillance, lack of respect for the law, and clear intentions to keep their workplace union-free - would know exactly how they voted.

The RWDSU won't allow Amazon's lies, deception and illegal activities to go unchallenged, which is why the union has formally filed almost two dozen charges against Amazon for their blatantly illegal actions during the union vote. But we need to ensure that companies can't continue to act this way.

Workers' Voice Needs Future Protection

This campaign, and Amazon's despicable behavior during it, are proof we need to pass the PRO Act, legislation that would protect workers' rights and provide real teeth to labor law (see story on Page 6).

The PRO Act would amend labor laws to add meaningful penalties for companies that violate the law including retaliating against workers who organize. It would also weaken anti-worker "right-to-work" laws.

Working men and women deserve better. They deserve better than the poor treatment they receive from employers like Amazon, and they deserve to have their rights protected. The Bessemer campaign was just the beginning, and now, as we continue to expose the laws routinely broken by employers like Amazon, we have an opportunity to prevent these abuses from happening again. It is time for a new era, where workers' voices are heard and employers have no choice but to listen. ■



Amazon workers in Bessemer, Alabama, showed the world how Amazon treats its workforce.

In December, in one of the biggest organizing wins by workers during the entire year of 2020, 605 employees at Housing Works throughout New York City voted overwhelmingly to join the RWDSU. The new RWDSU members – employed at Housing Works housing units, thrift stores, healthcare, and other locations – triumphed after a long, two-year campaign where they faced pushback at every turn from their supposedly progressive employer.

The workers' win is a story of tenacity and dedication. They never wavered, and stayed strong as their employer continued to do everything possible to delay the union election, hoping to squash the workers' momentum and eventually smother the organizing drive.

It was a long road, but for these new union members, it was worth the journey.

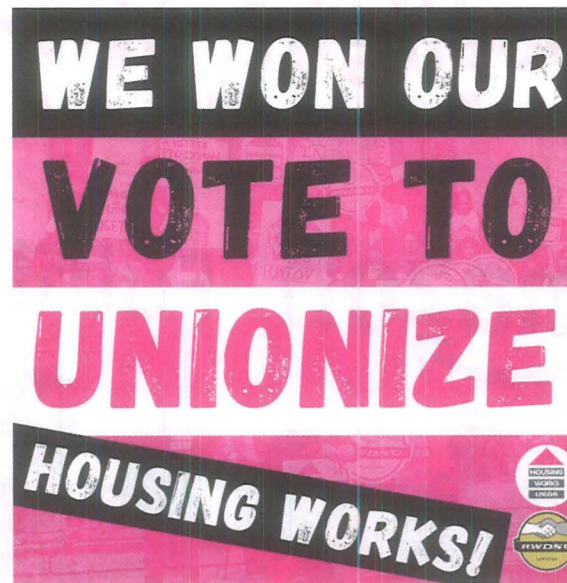
Progressive Roots, Regressive Worker Treatment

Housing Works was founded in 1990 by several members of AIDS activist organization ACT UP in order to provide housing, healthcare, job training, legal assistance, and other supportive services for people living with HIV/AIDS. It was a time when AIDS patients faced discrimination, harassment, and often had trouble finding adequate housing, medical care, and support. Housing Works was founded with a progressive vision based upon the values of helping those who needed support in the face of a deadly disease which at that time had no effective treatment. Housing Works stepped in and provided many valuable services for these patients, helping countless New Yorkers face an uncertain and frightening future.

That's why it was so disconcerting that over 20 years later, many of the 605 employees at Housing Works said they were being treated poorly at work. And, it was even more troubling that when they sought to join a union, management did not display the same progressive values that the organization was founded upon. In fact, the company employed many of the same union-busting tactics as the worst corporate employers.

Workers wanted to join the RWDSU to protect themselves and the people they care for at work. Housing Works employees reported that they faced poor pay and benefits, unmanageable caseloads, lack of training, discrimination and harassment and health and safety problems – all of which threatened clients' care as well as the workers' wellbeing.

"I strive to connect and build relationships with each of my clients, but carrying a high caseload makes it difficult for me to provide



Victory at 605 New RWDSU Win Campaign

On the steps of NYC's City Hall, RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum addresses workers, activists, and supporters during the successful Housing Works campaign.



Workers wanted to join the RWDSU to protect themselves and the people they care for at work.

the quality care they deserve," said Rebecca Mitnik, a care manager at the organization's Downtown Brooklyn site, during a worker-action in October, 2019, to draw attention to the problems at Housing Works. "My commitment to Housing Works' mission should not come at the expense of my well-being and the well-being of my coworkers."

Workers Persevere Despite Aggressive Pushback

Workers and RWDSU organizers were surprised when it quickly became apparent that not only was Housing Works management opposed to the unionization effort, they were

going to do whatever they could to silence their workers and try to crush their organizing drive. That meant hiring a high-powered union-busting law firm, and employing the same anti-worker tactics we've seen time and time again from employers who don't have Housing Works' progressive pedigree.

In September, 2020, the RWDSU filed Unfair Labor Practice complaints with the federal National Labor Relations Board, alleging company management fired four workers who were outspoken union activists, a violation of labor law. It was outrageous that Housing Works would fire employees in the middle of a pandemic and economic crisis for simply exercising their rights to free speech and to make their jobs better by joining a union. Those who were fired were good workers,

with strong relationships with the people they helped care for. Housing Works' actions didn't stop the organizing drive, but they hurt the people who they are supposed to serve. Housing Works employees had in many cases cared for clients long-term, and that bond was instantly severed, without even an opportunity for closure in their relationships with their patients.

Housing Works also continually employed union-busting stall tactics on the previously agreed-to union election, in a failed effort to "run out the clock" on the organizing drive and by appealing to the Trump NLRB in hopes that it would allow them to delay the union election indefinitely.

Housing Works: RWDSU Members Sign for Change



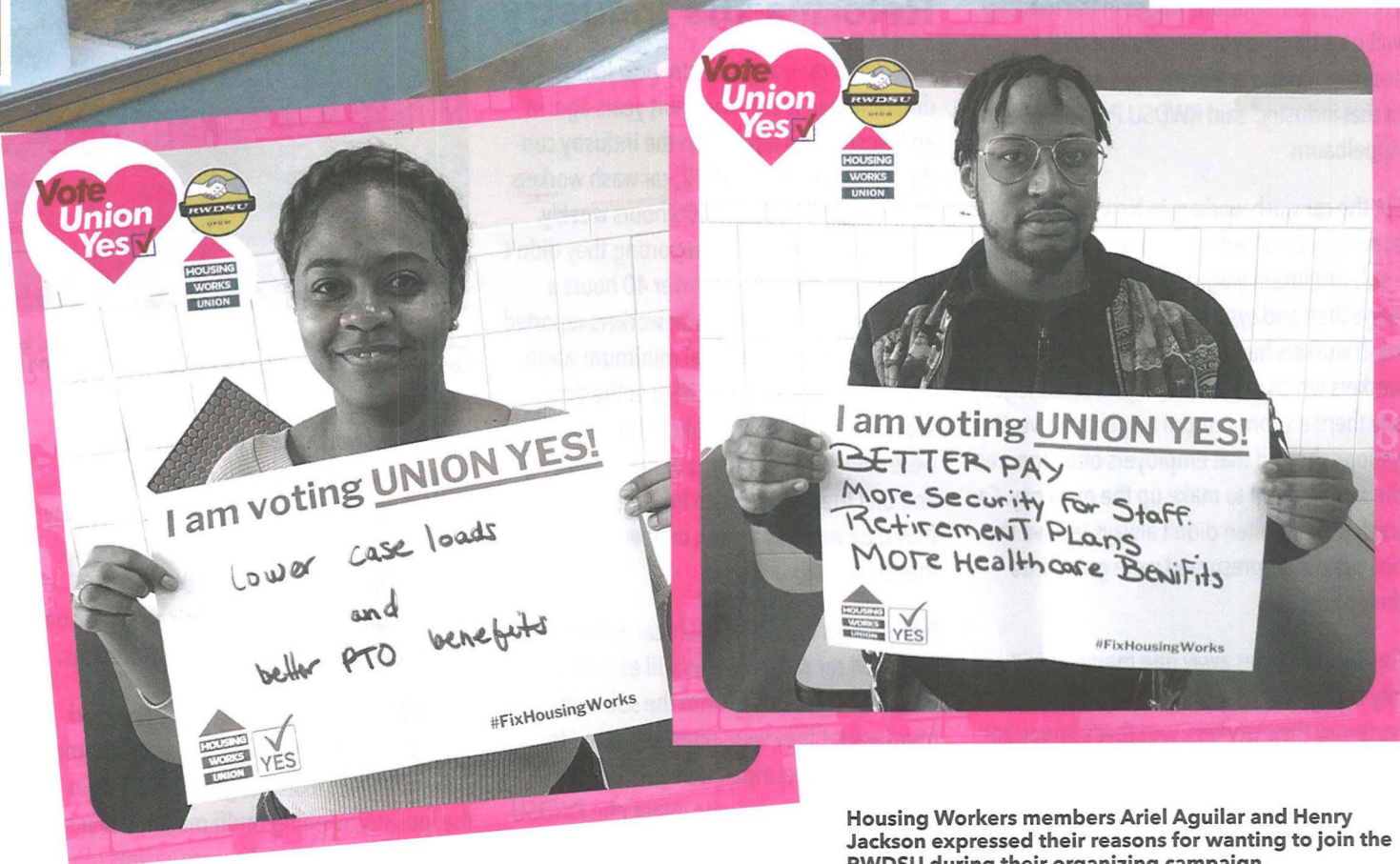
This Housing Works thrift shop in the Chelsea neighborhood in Manhattan - one of many throughout the city - is known for its upscale vintage finds that help fund the important work of new Housing Works members.

“My commitment to Housing Works mission should not come at the expense of my well-being and the well-being of my coworkers.”

At one location in Brooklyn, the COVID pandemic was used as an excuse to lay off the entire workforce and replace them with “volunteer labor” in another sign of disrespect and intimidation.

While these efforts delayed the union vote significantly and increased the stress on their workforce, Housing Works employees only became more intent on realizing their goal: to change their jobs and lives for the better and improve the care of their clients by joining the RWDSU.

As 2020 came to a close, so did their long organizing drive. And it ended with a resounding victory, and the promise of a better tomorrow and their first union contract. ■



Housing Workers members Ariel Aguilar and Henry Jackson expressed their reasons for wanting to join the RWDSU during their organizing campaign.

Sub-minimum Wages Banned for New York Carwashers

After years of fighting to reform the car wash industry in New York, the RWDSU's efforts have finally ended the so-called tip credit, a law that gave car wash owners license to pay workers well below the minimum wage. Carwashers – as they are known among the workers and in their communities – were subjected to a confusing and unjust system which has often led to wage theft in the industry. As of the end of last year, the so-called “tip credit” that the industry once used to pay workers has been completely eliminated. Workers in New York’s car wash industry will now be earning at least the regular minimum wage.

This is a huge win for New York’s car wash workers, and another success for the RWDSU campaign to improve the jobs and lives of car wash workers. This campaign began in 2012 to address an industry rife with worker exploitation, dangerous workplaces, and stolen wages. The campaign has now won a union voice for hundreds of car wash workers, played a key role in establishing a licensing system for car washes to increase accountability to their workers and their communities, and helped guarantee that all of the workers in New York’s car wash industry earn a fair day’s pay for an honest day’s work.

“Car wash workers for years have struggled in New York to survive on sub-minimum wages. Ending sub-minimum wages in the industry will go a long way to remove one of the sources of wage theft that have been endemic in that industry,” said RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum.

For the car wash workers in New York City – especially those without union representation – sub-minimum wages had been a vehicle for wage theft and systemic underpayment. Car wash workers had been considered tipped workers which meant employers could legally pay them a subminimum wage, but investigations showed that employers often ignored the requirement to make up the extra pay. Car wash workers often didn’t always receive the tips customers presumed were going into their pockets.

The new law takes away one major opportunity for unscrupulous car wash owners to underpay their workers, and that’s important in an industry where operators have been fined and directed to make restitution for wage theft to the tune of millions of dollars.



Car wash activists rallied in 2017 to end the so-called “tip-credit” and stop sub-minimum wages in the industry.



RWDSU Campaign Reforms the Industry

New York’s car wash industry now looks much different than it did nine short years ago. In an investigative report into the industry conducted by RWDSU in 2012, car wash workers reported working up to 105 hours weekly, with 75 percent of them reporting they didn’t receive any overtime pay over 40 hours a week. Two-thirds of car wash workers reported earning less than the legal minimum wage, which was only \$7.25 an hour at the time. Workers said their scheduling, hours, and pay were subject to the whims of management, and that they had no idea how many hours they’d be working a week or how many hours they’d be paid.

Now, thanks to the RWDSU’s car wash campaign, all car wash workers will earn at least \$15 per hour, a far cry from the sub-minimum wages they were often subjected to back when the campaign began. The hundreds of carwashers who joined the RWDSU now have the dignity, respect, and most importantly, a voice on the job. The largely



Carwashers at Hi-Tek in Queens, New York, became the first car wash workers east of Los Angeles to win union membership in 2013.

immigrant workforce is protected from the threats and intimidation their bosses once used to exploit them. It’s no longer a mystery how much they’ll earn, and they now have fair scheduling practices and the ability to directly communicate with their employer on improving safety and workplace conditions.

The RWDSU also worked with the New York State Department of Labor and State Attorney General’s office to investigate bad actors in the industry, winning multi-million dollar settlements for workers who were victims of wage theft. It sent a message to the industry

that lawlessness and exploitation would not be tolerated, and that immigrant workers had the full protection of the law in New York.

New York City’s car wash workers – and the RWDSU – can be proud about the progress our campaign has won. And, the success of the campaign serves as an example for workers in all industries that no matter where they come from, what kind of work they do, or even their immigration status, when they stand together and win a union voice, they can reform their industries and their jobs to benefit their families and their communities. ■

RWDSU CONTRACT NEWS

Aramark Local 379

Ohio

Commissioned salary and hourly route sales reps at Aramark in Columbus, Ohio, unanimously ratified their new three-year contract. The Local 379 members won annual raises and protected their hard-won benefits including their health care and pension plans. Members at Aramark have traditionally sold workplace products such as uniforms and mats, and have expanded into masks and PPE during the COVID pandemic. ■

City of Connersville Local 512

Indiana



(l to r) Larry Swhier, Misha Gibson and Scott Brown served on the Negotiating Committee.

City employees in Connersville, Indiana, have ratified new four-year contracts.

Street, park, and sanitation department workers won a new paid holiday, June-teenth, commemorating June 19, 1865, when the last slaves in the U.S. were freed. Members will see a 3 percent wage increase in the first year of the contract, and there will be wage re-openers in each of the remaining years of the agreement. The new agreement also includes a 25 cent per hour increase for employees with a CDL, and improvements in senior-

ity, holidays, and vacation language, and it protects the employees' union health insurance coverage for the life of the pact. The Local 512 members maintain the city's streets and parks, and pick up trash in Connersville. The Union's Bargaining Committee was Christopher Geise, Melody Steele and Peter Shonfeld. They were assisted by Indiana Joint Board President Eric Schwartz.

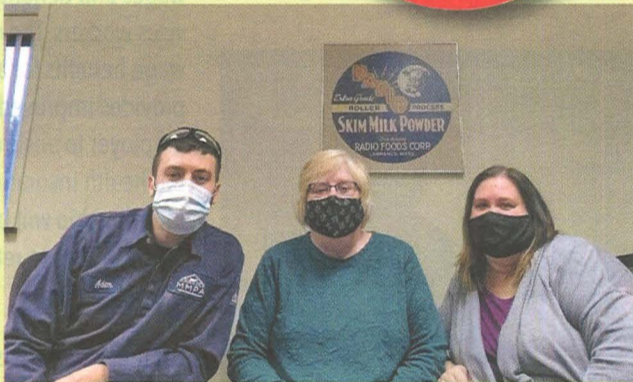
The Connersville paramedics and EMTs unit's new agreement includes language improvements in the areas of seniority, staffing, funeral leave, holidays, and sick days, and it maintains the employees' union health insurance coverage for the life of the pact. There is a first-year annual salary increase of almost \$1,000 for EMTs and a \$2,400 increase for paramedics, with a wage reopener in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year. The new contract also includes more money for certain certifications. Serving on the negotiating committee were Larry Swhier, Scott Brown and Misha Gibson. They were assisted by Indiana Joint Board President Eric Schwartz. (EMS Photo from left to right is Larry Swhier, Misha Gibson and Scott Brown) ■

Negotiating Committee members Melody Steele and Christopher Geise helped bring home a solid contract for the Street Department.

MMPA Clerical Employees Local 86

Michigan

Clerical Employees at the Michigan Milk Producers Association in Ovid, Michigan, ratified a new four-year contract. They successfully negotiated wage increases for each year of the agreement and language improvements for vacation eligibility, jury duty, bereavement and sick/personal leave. Members were also able to maintain their current pension and insurance plans as well as secure an opt out payment option. This is a new benefit that gives a significant monthly bonus for members whose spouses have their own health insurance. ■



(l to r) Local 86 President Adam Coleman and clerical employees Jean Pinkham and Becca Becker.

Tri-State Transportation Local 108

New Jersey

RWDSU Local 108 members in New Jersey who work as bus drivers for Tri-State Transportation have ratified a new three-year contract. "This contract recognizes that private sector bus drivers are professionals, with significant wage increases and other improvements," said Local 108 President Charles N. Hall, Jr.

The contract brings \$1 per hour pay raises each year of the agreement, and will reduce employees' health care premium costs. In addition, Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday will be added as a paid holiday. ■



RWDSU CONTRACT NEWS



Local 513 members at Pepsi have a strong new contract.

Pepsi Haverhill Local 513 Massachusetts

RWDSU members employed at the Pepsi bottling plant in Haverhill, Massachusetts, ratified a new three-year contract that brings them annual wages totaling \$1.70 an hour over the life of the agreement. Members will also see an increase in the pension multiplier, and increases in the unused holiday, sick day and personal day payouts. The vacation policy will also be improved. ■

Kent Condominiums Local 1102 New York

Local 1102 members at 970 Kent Condominium in Brooklyn, New York, recently secured a new contract that improves wages and benefits for the building services workers. The contract brings annual wage benefits for all members, and it also provides improved contributions from the employer to ensure affordability for member health insurance plans. In addition, the membership will benefit from increased contributions to retirement plans thanks to the new contract.

For these members, their strong new agreement recognizes their contributions as essential workers during the pandemic. They've been there to serve residents at the building throughout the entire COVID-19 crisis, and will continue their important work with an improved contract. ■

Workers at the Kent Condominium housing complex won wage increases and improved pension and health care contributions from their employer.

Hasbrouck Heights DPW Local 108 New Jersey

A new contract at the Hasbrouck Heights Department of Public Works brings annual two percent raises for the 40 Local 108 members employed there. The contract also brings annual \$50 clothing allowance increases, and in every Presidential election cycle, Election Day is now a paid holiday. The bereavement and on-call language is also improved for members at Hasbrouck DPW. This is the second contract for these members, who joined the RWDSU in 2016 and are seeing the difference that their organizing victory has made in their jobs and their lives. ■



Local 108 members at the Hasbrouck DPW keep the city moving.

Dining Management/ Compass Local 87

Michigan

The first contract for Local 87 members employed at Dining Management/Compass is a three-year agreement for the vending services workers, who service and stock the 24/7 market stores at the Detroit Assembly Complex. The stores feed workers who build and road test Jeeps for Chrysler.

The first contract starts employees at \$20.80 per hour, and provides for 10 paid holidays and five paid sick days, along with health care benefits.

The contract was negotiated by RWDSU Representative Joe Silva. ■

RWDSU CONTRACT NEWS

**Merakey
Local 108**
Pennsylvania



Local 108 members at Merakey have a new contract that improves pay and benefits.

RWDSU Local 108 members at the Merakey long-term hospice care facility in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, have been proud to care for residents throughout the COVID-19 crisis. Now, they'll serve them under a new contract with significant annual wage increases. The agreement also brings the starting rate at the facility to \$14 an hour, well beyond the state minimum wage, and contains an extra pay bump for senior employees. The contract also maintains workers' pension plans and reduces medical premiums for members. ■

**Columbus
Window
Local 379**
Ohio

A new three-year pact at Columbus Window in Columbus, Ohio, brings annual wage increases, a ratification bonus, and provides two additional paid sick days – a new benefit for the Local 379 members. Members at Columbus Window clean windows outside all types of buildings in Columbus, and operate cherry pickers, lifts, and all the tools of the trade. If you are in Columbus and see workers on the side of tall buildings cleaning windows, they well could be Local 379 members, working under their new RWDSU contract. ■

**American
International
College
Local 566**
Massachusetts



Local 566 members at AIC won a strong new three-year agreement.

Local 566 members at American International College in Springfield, Massachusetts, ratified a new three-year contract that brings wage gains, protects their unchanged health insurance plan, and ensures four-hour minimum scheduling for coming in to work on a Saturday. RWDSU members at AIC are employed as custodians at the college. ■

**Coca-Cola
Local 93**
Michigan



Members of Local 93 at Great Lakes Coca-Cola in Lansing, Michigan ratified a four-year agreement and were able to negotiate guaranteed yearly wage increases, a company matched 401k plan with company contributed money in the first two years of the program, and language improvements around vacations, holiday pay, and supplemental retirement and bereavement leave. This strong new contract also maintains members' current insurance plans and makes Martin Luther King, Jr., Day a new paid holiday.

Serving on the negotiating committee (left to right in photo on the left) were Doug Clark, Lou Gamelin, Ben Greenburg, Dan Liskowycz and Steve Thatcher. ■

RWDSU SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS KNOW UNION DIFFERENCE

Five young men and women – four children of RWDSU members, and two RWDSU members – have won the annual RWDSU Alvin E. Heaps Scholarship. The scholarship, named after the late 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.



(l to r) Rose McCaffery, Local 224 President Scott Trudell, and Erin Blake

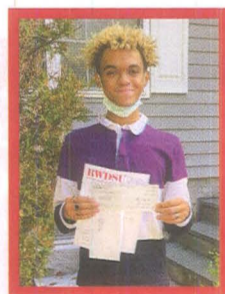
ERIN BLAKE is the daughter of Robert Blake, a Local 224 member employed at Cartamundi in Massachusetts. She is a Freshman attending Holyoke Community College in Massachusetts, majoring in human services. She plans on becoming a hospital worker when she graduates.

While attending college, I'm working part-time at a grocery store, and compared with my father's union experiences I see the difference. Our hours and shifts are cut without warning, and as an employee I feel that I have no voice. Both of my parents are union members and have received many benefits in the past. Once, when I required care after back surgery, the union fought her employer and won when they wouldn't give her the time off she needed to look after me. Growing up in a union household, I've seen the difference a union makes in workers' lives.

ROSE McCAFFERY (in photo above with fellow Local 224 member Erin Blake) is the daughter of John McCaffery, also a Local 224 member at Cartamundi. Rose is a Freshman at American International College in Massachusetts, and she is majoring in communications and political science. She plans on attending graduate school and working in political journalism.

As a union member, I've seen my father and his co-workers fight stand up for work-

ing people and win. During the Stop & Shop strike, Local 224 members stood on the picket lines to fight for better pay and benefits; that's what unions are all about, solidarity and standing strong with other workers. Unions represent workers to make sure they are adequately taken care of, and can mediate conflicts between management and even other employees. Unions also ensure workplaces are safe. Unions are important in keeping workers from being hurt or killed on the job.



BRANDON CLACK is a supermarket worker at Acme Markets in New York, and he is a Local 338 member. Brandon is a Freshman at SUNY in New York, and he is majoring in fashion merchandising. His goals are to work in the fashion industry, eventually starting his own fashion magazine and fashion company.

The COVID-19 pandemic has really shown how important unions are for frontline workers, like myself at ACME supermarkets. Union grocery stores are a cleaner and safer work environment. Our store was quick to have barriers between us cashiers and customers, and gloves and masks for employees. The union was quick to jump in and change the stores to make them

safer and adapt to this crisis. Even in normal times, workers should always continue to seek out union representation, not only to keep workplaces safe, but to improve their lives with better pay, benefits, and a voice on the job.

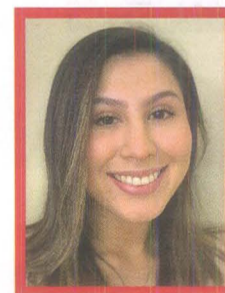
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MEGAN FOX is a Local 338 member and a supermarket worker at a Shop Rite store in New York. She is now attending Simmons University in Massachusetts, and is a freshman majoring in Nursing. Megan is studying for a career as a registered nurse.

When I began my job at Shop Rite in 2017, and became a union member I didn't realize the job would become more than just a part-time job; my co-workers and my union would become something like a second family. They taught me the value of teamwork, and sticking together, and that we are all stronger when we stand with each other. In addition, my mother is a nurse, and I've seen the difference the union made during the COVID-19 pandemic. The union supports her and her co-workers, and helps keep them safe and protected. When we work together and have a union, we are stronger and it is a great feeling.

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JOCelyn ROBLES is the daughter of Jose Javier Robles, a Local 578 member at Del Monte foods in Illinois. Jocelyn is an undergraduate at Northern Illinois University and she is majoring in health sciences with a focus on nursing. Her goal is to continue her schooling to earn her Master's degree, with the aim of becoming a pediatric nurse practitioner.

My father's RWDSU membership has helped our lower-middle class family have

a secure and financially stable life. His union job has helped us pay the bills for food and shelter and other necessities of life, and we don't have to scrimp and save just to get by. Unions make it possible for our family and others like us to have secure and dependable futures, with my parents able to look forward to their retirements. Unions continue to bring better pay, benefits, and jobs for all types of workers, and all workers should continue to seek out union membership.

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TROY SICA is the son of Pamela Sica, a Local 1102 member employed by Whitson Resource Management in the South County School District in New York.

Troy is a freshman at Hofstra University in New York. He is studying political science and music education and plans on attending graduate school for his Master's degree, and then working on political campaigns.

Both of my parents are union members, so I know the difference belonging to a union makes. My father is an air traffic controller, and when I was born, his union brothers and sisters stepped up. I endured numerous medical complications as a newborn, and there was always someone who would step up and take his shift if he needed to be with me because union members look out for each other. My mother is a Local 1102 member who works as a food server at a school, and she is always praising the union for helping her get better pay and benefits, plus Union Plus benefits that often help us get discounts on big purchases and services we need. When we were hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, the unions helped make my parents' workplaces safer. Unions are relevant today because they still help protect workers, give them a voice, and earn better pay and benefits.

Congratulations to all of our 2020 Alvin E. Heaps RWDSU Scholarship winners! The application for the 2021 scholarships can be found under Member Resources at www.rwdsu.org.



Secure in Your Home

If you are in the market to purchase a home or to refinance an existing mortgage, Union Plus offers two mortgage providers designed to help union families. **Every mortgage provides hardship assistance** in case of strike, lockout, layoff, or disability.

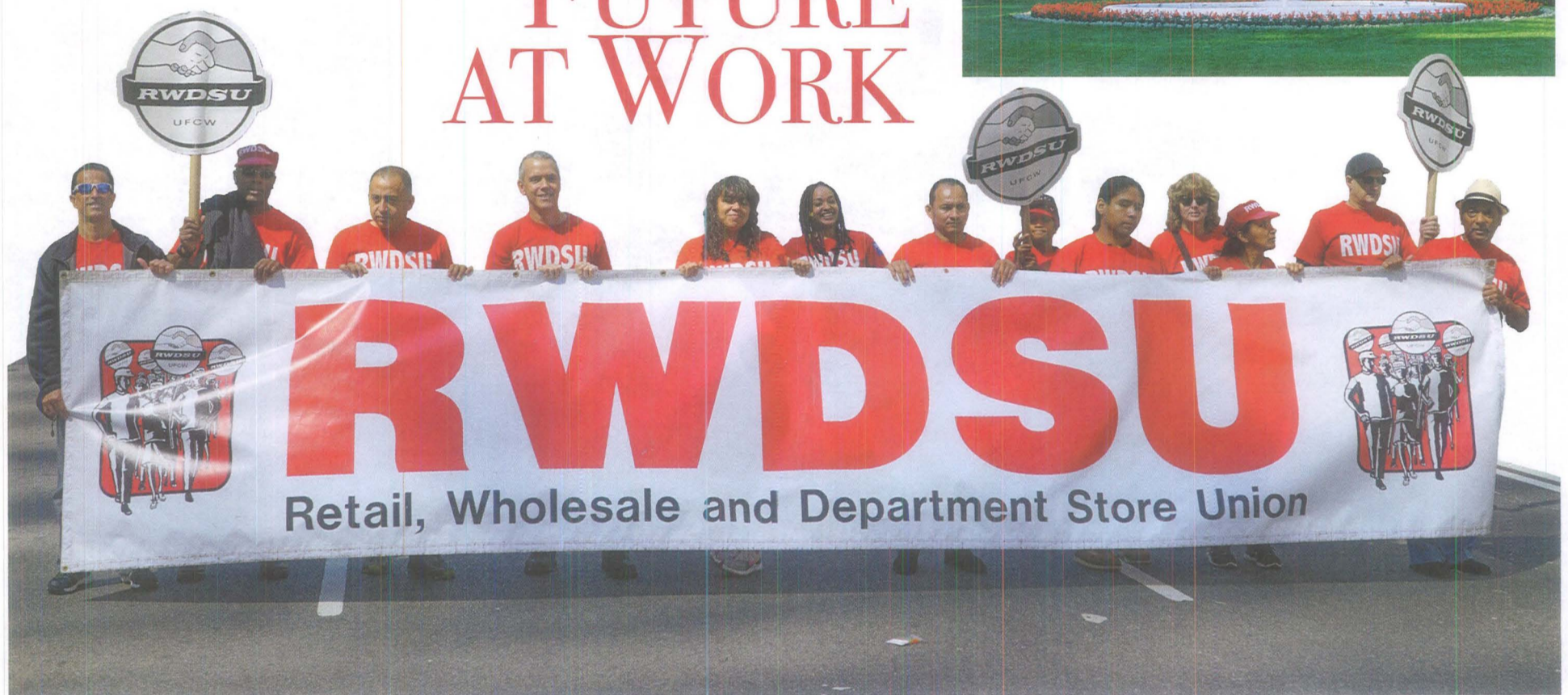
Learn more about the benefits of a Union Plus mortgage at unionplus.org/ucfw.



Learn more at
unionplus.org



TOWARD A BETTER, SAFER, AND HEALTHIER FUTURE AT WORK



We have learned a lot about health and safety during this very challenging past year. The direct connection between the health of our workplaces and the health of our communities is clear. More than before many of us were recognized as essential workers who provide invaluable services every day, and we need and deserve to be protected at work.

As the pandemic deepened we realized that too many of our employers were ignoring the dangers. And the governmental workplace enforcement agency (OSHA) was nowhere to be seen, refusing to intervene as thousands of workers became sick and died.

We stood together, union strong, and forced needed changes.

We knew we had to act. We went to the press to tell our stories and demand better measures to protect our wellbeing and the health of our families. We stood together, union strong, and forced needed changes. Workers who didn't have a union behind them took notice.

We are still in the midst of this awful pandemic but there are encouraging signs for improving our health and safety at work. Knowledge is power and the dangers of workplace exposures have become a national concern. It became clear that the response from governmental leaders and agencies was very inadequate to cope with this crisis.

New Administration, New Approach Creates Opportunities

There is a new President, and new leadership in the U.S. President Biden has selected new leadership at OSHA, individuals who come from the labor movement and are determined to reactivate OSHA enforcement and commitment to hazard reduction. Working

people will again be at the table, bringing their real world workplace knowledge and experience to policy makers. Efforts to increase worker participation and provide better protection from employer intimidation will be pursued. Worker training programs will be expanded.

There is much that needs to be done. It will still be a long time until we obtain a high enough level of virus immunity throughout the country. Vaccinations will certainly help. But we also need OSHA to issue an Emergency Temporary Standard for Infectious Disease to establish enforceable protective measures and motivate employers to meet their legal responsibility to maintain workplaces free of hazards which can cause death or serious injury. And we need to build a much stronger national health structure with the resources available to respond to future potential health crises.

Questions and Information

If you have any questions or want any information about COVID-19 or any other workplace hazard contact RWDSU Health and Safety at 212-684-5300. ■

With the new administration, working people will again be at the table, bringing their real world workplace knowledge and experience to policy makers.

Although COVID-19 was a new hazard we learned it acted like many other workplace hazards we are familiar with. It is transmitted primarily through the air and the greater the exposure for a longer time, the greater the risk. It has highlighted the importance of adequate ventilation in our workplaces. We need to prioritize improving our indoor air quality, making sure ventilation systems are regularly cleaned and maintained, and that we maximize intake of outside air and filtration.

We have a right to healthy and safe workplaces. We go to work to support ourselves and our families, not to die. And we now have more opportunities to protect ourselves by recognizing, evaluating and reducing the hazards we face. ■