

SEIU Local 517M E-Former - February 2015 Edition

Lead, Unite, Fight – Win For the 99%!

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John Eck Fills Secretary/Treasurer Vacancy



At the January 23, 2015 SEIU Local 517M Executive Board meeting, **John Eck** was elected to fill the vacant SEIU Local 517M Secretary/Treasurer position that was created with the retirement of **Andy Johnson**. John will serve out the remainder of the term which ends June 30, 2015. John is the Technical Unit Vice President and Executive Board member. According to the SEIU Local 517M bylaws, the vacant position was to be filled with a member of the Executive Board. John has previously served as the SEIU Local 517M Secretary/Treasurer having been elected to that post from 2006-2009.

Lawsuit Activity – Oral Arguments Heard in State Employee Cases

Oral Arguments in the Right To Work case (**#147700 – International Union v Green**) and the 4% Pension case (**#147758 – MI Coalition of State Employee Unions v Michigan**) were heard on January 13, 2015. At issue is the authority of the Civil Service Commission over state employees and whether the Legislature can override the constitutional authority vested with the Commission.



The Coalition's position was presented by attorney **William Wertheimer** (pictured left). The hearings were attended for the Local by SEIU 517M President **Bill Ruhf**, Human Services Support Unit President **Amy Davis-Comstock**, and Scientific and Engineering Unit Coordinator **Howard Gordon**.

Several members were also in the crowd to hear the arguments. There is no timetable for a decision. You can watch the video archive of both cases as:

<http://www.michbar.org/courts/virtualcourt.cfm>

This puts three cases, the school employee 3%, the state employee 4% and the Right to Work case waiting for decisions from the Michigan Supreme Court. We will notify the membership when these decisions are published.

Union Successful in Returning Members to Work

On October 9, 2014, a member who works for Hope Network/New Passages was discharged for attendance issues and SEIU filed a grievance. The grievance went through the grievance process and on January 20, 2015 the employer and union reached a settlement agreement which allowed the grievant to return to work.

On August 4, 2014, a member who works for Hope Network/New Passages was discharged for insubordination and SEIU filed a grievance. The grievance went through the process and on January 23, 2015 the employer and union reached a settlement agreement to allow for a return to work. The details are currently being worked out to allow for the return to work. This will occur within the next week or two.

Please note that this Collective Bargaining Agreement does NOT have binding arbitration and with the history of issues with this employer these are two very important victories for these 275+ members. Union protection under a contract and the representation that goes with union membership proved its value in winning the reinstatement of these two members when they were wrongfully discharged.

ACA Enrollment Event Planned – Come Out and Get Covered!

SEIU leaders and members in Region 1 will be partnering with Enroll America, National Action Network, and A. Philip Randolph Institute to host a community health insurance enrollment event at the Saginaw SEIU hall on February 7th. This all day event will feature a press conference in the morning with SEIU Leaders joining Congressman **Dan Kildee**, State Representative **Vanessa Guerra**, Saginaw City council members, Saginaw County Commissioners and other local elected officials. Professionals will assist families with the enrollment process for health care insurance through the Health Insurance Marketplace or through Healthy Michigan from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm. The deadline for ACA enrollment is February 15th and this event will be the last push to enroll families in Saginaw for affordable health care.

Wayland Bus Drivers Vote on Contract



In January, bus drivers from the Wayland Union Schools ratified a 4 year contract with improvements in paid leave, grievance procedure time line, disciplinary policy, vehicle pre-trip pay, trip and shuttle procedures, wages and longevity. It was a united effort by the unit gaining the improvements to the Collective Bargaining Agreement. A special thanks and JOB WELL DONE goes to the bargaining team which consisted of **Lori Hann, Julie Flores, Brenda**

Kraima, Jane Sotolongo, Teresa Permoda and Denise Sikkema.

Saginaw AFRAM Active in Mentoring of Youth



Saginaw SEIU 517M AFRAM has designated the Dancing Diamonds, a group of 16 young girls ages 6 through 16 for mentoring this year. The group was founded by SEIU member **Kayla West** who works at Hoyt Nursing home and is an active member of the SEIU Healthcare Local. She wants her girls to be the best that they can be not only for dancing, but have a set mind focusing toward a career.

AFRAM has arranged for various professional workers to meet with the girls and teach these youngsters about different careers they can pursue in college and what it takes to accomplish their goals. Besides meeting at the SEIU Saginaw Hall during the week for dance practice, the girls meet with AFRAM member mentors and other business professionals on Saturdays to learn how they can pursue their goals successfully. **Betty Nash**, our Regional DVP, presented a program on early childhood education careers for the girls and in February a nursing professional will give a presentation to the girls.

This program started in January and ends in June. Once the girls complete the program, we will have an awards ceremony for them. One of AFRAM's goals is to help the children in our community to stay focused on positive activities which will help them achieve success and stay out of trouble in the streets.

New Passages Wage Pass Through

If you work for Hope Network/New Passages in one of the following homes (Loretta, Coulson Court, Eureka, Holt, Hogan, Stoll, Rambo, Weiss, Westwood, Village Manor) you will be receiving a wage pass through. Please be aware that this is NOT something the employer is providing. It is an increase from the funding source that is being passed on to you. There is NOT a cap as it relates to an increase from a Funding Source or Pass Through, so please make sure you receive the entire amount.

If you have any questions regarding this issue, please contact Dan Renner at 989-797-4243 or email him at drenner@seiu517m.org and he will assist you.

Retirees Honored for Activism



At the January 23, 2015 SEIU Local 517M Executive Board Meeting, three of six retiree volunteers were on hand to receive Certificates of Appreciation. This was in recognition of their volunteer work during the 2014 general election cycle. The volunteers were **Rosie Carr, Mary Charley, Steve Reck, Robert Straley, Randy Telesz** and **Azola Williams**. Thank you for remaining active in retirement by working with your union to make sure retiree issues remain addressed. (Pictured L-R: SEIU

517M President Bill Ruhf, Bob Straley, Randy Telesz, and Steve Reck)

Members Only Benefit - 2015 SEIU Scholarships Now Available

Through five different scholarship programs, SEIU awards 51 scholarships nationally that enable SEIU members and their children to pursue their educational goals at accredited colleges, universities, and technical schools. Scholarship applications are available starting December 1, 2014 (<http://www.seiu.org/a/members/fulfill-your-college-goals-with-an-seiu-scholarship.php>)

SEIU scholarships are open to SEIU members or their children. To be eligible to apply for any SEIU scholarship, membership must be maintained for three continuous years as of September 1, 2014. All awards must be for the academic year(s) awarded. Scholarships will be awarded without regard to the sex, race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, or disability of any applicant. Scholarship awards are limited to one per household. **Applications must be filed online by midnight March 2, 2015 or postmarked March 2, 2015.**

Last year, SEIU Local 517M had three winners of scholarships through this program.

Calendar of Upcoming Union Events for February, 2015

February 4 – Executive Officers Meeting

February 7 – Affordable Care Act Signup Event in Saginaw

February 9 – Scientific and Engineering Unit Board Meeting

February 22-23 – SEIU Local 517M Leadership Development and Communications Conference

For more information on the above events, consult our on-line calendar at:

<http://www.seiu517m.org/events/month/>

The monthly subscription for the E-Former is included in your membership dues payment and is intended for members in good standing of SEIU Local 517M.



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