

## SEIU Local 517M E-Former – February 2017 Edition



### **In this Issue:**

New Divisional Vice President Appointed for Region 1  
HSS Welcomes a New Grievance Consultant and Chief Steward  
Walk for Warmth Event to be Held in Saginaw  
SEIU International Discontinues Their Scholarship Program  
Volunteers Still Needed for New Scholarship and Golf Outing Committee  
Bon Voyage Denise Edwards, HSS Grievance Consultant – Retires  
More Active Leaders Retire  
Brenda Moore Honored as an Unsung Hero in Michigan  
State Employee Recognized for Achievements  
Taking It to the Streets  
St. Clair County RESA Students Winning Awards Story  
Calendar of Upcoming Union Events for February, 2017

---

### **New Divisional Vice President Appointed for Region 1**



On January 3, 2017, the School and Local Government Region 1 Board nominated and unanimously voted Leticia Trevino as the new Region 1 Divisional Vice President. With well wishes and support from Region 1's former DVP, Betty Smith, who had to step down from her position a few months ago to take a position out of the bargaining unit, Leticia is ready to represent the membership in the Region 1 area. Leticia serves as Unit President for the 200-member City of Saginaw municipal employee group which includes salaried, hourly and part-time employees. These three units collectively have 99% of the membership signed up for dues. Leticia has served as a long-time member leader on the Region 1 Board, as well as, serving on the SEIU Local 517M Executive Board. Congratulations Leticia, we all look forward to a great 2017 and beyond with your leadership.

### **HSS Welcomes a New Grievance Consultant and Chief Steward**



The Human Services Support Unit is pleased to announce that Janice Cosey from the Unemployment Insurance Agency became the new Grievance Consultant effective January 30, 2017. Janice most recently served as the Chief Steward for Cadillac Place in Detroit. She will now be full-time in the union office handling issues.

Ellina Simmons from the Unemployment Insurance Tax Office in Detroit became the Chief Steward of Cadillac Place effective January 30, 2017 to take over the vacancy left by Janice's new position. Ellina most recently served as a Steward in Cadillac Place.

Both Janice and Ellina believe in the Union and what it stands for. In their new roles, they will continue to fight for their fellow members.



An updated Jurisdictional Chart is posted on the union website at [www.seiu517m.org](http://www.seiu517m.org).

### Walk for Warmth Event to Be Held in Saginaw



On Saturday, February 18, 2017, our Saginaw County Community Action Committee members and leaders will host the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Walk for Warmth event. This event raises money to keep low income Saginaw County residents warm this winter by giving them assistance with paying their utility bill. They are encouraging local businesses and non-profits to sponsor teams to walk a mile and challenging participants to form teams to compete with them in raising Walk for Warmth dollars. The goal this year is to raise \$15,000 for local residents in need of utility assistance.



SEIU Region 1 leaders are challenging our members in the Saginaw area and beyond to join them in the walk. The Walk for Warmth will begin at the Anderson Enrichment Center, 120 Ezra Rust Drive in Saginaw with registration starting at 8:30am on February 18<sup>th</sup>. Pledge sheets are available at the Saginaw SEIU Region 1 office. For more information, you can email Brenda Moore at [brendafaymoore@yahoo.com](mailto:brendafaymoore@yahoo.com).

### SEIU International Discontinues Their Scholarship Program

SEIU International has officially discontinued the SEIU Scholarship program. Here is the statement we received from them concerning this cancellation:

*Since November 8th, our union has undertaken a comprehensive review of all of our priorities, to ensure that we are devoting 100% of our resources and focus on expanding the fight for economic, racial, immigrant and environmental justice and fortifying our union to weather the attacks coming at us in the coming 4 years.*

*One of many difficult decisions we have made is to eliminate the SEIU Scholarship programs starting in 2017. We have mixed emotions about ending something that is as heartwarming as supporting selected members' children in their pursuit of higher education, and do not underestimate the impact that that support has had for those selected members' families. Yet we know that these times require us to be laser-focused on*

*a strategy to win power for working people in our communities, and that our members rely on us to make tough decisions, especially in challenging times.*

With the ending of these scholarships, Local 517M is in the process of creating our own scholarship program for our members and their children. See the next article about how you can participate in the creation of this new program.

### **Volunteers Still Needed for New Scholarship and Golf Outing Committee**

SEIU Local 517M is in the process of establishing its own scholarship program. The parameters for the new scholarship haven't been decided. Volunteers are needed to serve on a new committee to set up the structure, criteria and awarding of this new scholarship program. **We are in need of committee members to represent School and Local Government Regions 1 and 3, and also the Scientific and Engineering and Technical bargaining units.**

The Local 517M annual golf outing will become a fundraiser for this new scholarship fund. The committee members would also assist in the planning, fundraising and running of the golf outing which is scheduled for August 11, 2017.

With the loss of the International's scholarship program, here is an opportunity that will focus on 517M members and their children as they prepare for their areas of college education.

If you are interested in serving on this new committee, please contact **Dave Corrie** at [corried@seiu517m.org](mailto:corried@seiu517m.org). The committee will begin meeting sometime in early 2017.

### **Bon Voyage Denise Edwards, HSS Grievance Consultant – Retires**



On January 27, 2017, Denise Edwards, fought her last arbitration, closed her last grievance, and "said see you later" as she retired from the Unemployment Agency. During her tenure, Denise served as HSS Grievance Consultant, SEIU 517M Executive Board member, HSS Vice President, HSS Board Member, and HSS Chief Steward in the Fisher Building in Detroit. In each of these positions, Denise was knowledgeable, dependable, and loyal to the members of the Human Services Support Bargaining Unit. She worked tirelessly on their behalf making herself available whenever needed, even after hours. It takes a lot to step into leadership and Denise has been a point of reference for all the new leaders who have evolved under her leadership. Throughout her career in the Unemployment Agency, Denise has demonstrated dedication to the employer, her co-workers, and the clients she serviced. Many have commented on her witty personality which made the workday much easier. Moving along in her retirement, Denise plans to travel and become a volunteer for K-9 therapy. We will miss Denise and her institutional knowledge on union business - we may need to contact her so we're hoping she'll pick up the phone.

### **More Active Unit Leaders Retire**

In School and Local Government Region 3, Howard Grigsby with the Flint Community Schools retired. Howard was active over the years in various positions within the union at the Unit, Region, and Local level including the Local 517M Executive Board.

In the Human Services Support Unit, Dan Blaha an Employment Service Interviewer retired from the State. Dan was an active member on the Human Services Support Unit Board and also served on the Bargaining Team.

Congratulations Howard and Dan. Enjoy your retirement!

### **Brenda Moore Honored as an Unsung Hero in Michigan**

The African American Leadership Institute celebrated unsung heroes by gathering and saluting black leaders from around the state at their first annual "Heroes and Headlines". The event was held at the Riverside Marina in Detroit on Thursday, December 15, 2016.



This event recognized and saluted public servants, business leaders, and community leaders for their contributions to the African American community locally, regionally and statewide. Among the awardees was our very own Brenda Moore from Saginaw for her work as a community leader and as a public servant. The guest speaker was Angela Rye a political strategist and commentator for CNN and NPR. *(Pictured L-R: HSS Unit President Joey Combs with Brenda Moore)*

The African American Leadership Institute will host their African American Leadership Awards on February 23, 2017 at the Historic Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village Ford Motor Company Conference Center. They will recognize and salute the many accomplishments made by Community Leaders, Business Leaders, Elected Officials and Labor Leaders.

### **State Employee Recognized for Achievements**



Molly Mott-Oosting, a Scientific and Engineering bargaining unit member and SEIU Steward working in the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) was recently recognized by her department for going above and beyond her assigned duties. Molly has served on the Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division Regional Applied Technology Staff (RATS) team for many years. Molly became the chairperson for the committee charged with updating the division's Planned Use Inspection system program. Under her leadership, the team not only updated the inspection information to be consistent with current regulations, but also switched from a paper narrative inspection system to a computerized system where data can be easily stored and retrieved, catalogued and analyzed for trends. For her efforts, she was presented with MDARD Excellence Coin from Chief Deputy Director Gordon Wenk. Congratulations to Molly on her achievements! Just another example of what a highly trained, professional public employee workforce can do for the citizens of Michigan.

## **Taking It to the Streets**

By Amy Davis-Comstock, COPE Committee Chairperson



On Sunday, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017, there were rallies across Michigan called “Save Our Health Care” to stand against the proposed repeal of the Affordable Care Act without anything to replace it. I, Amy Davis-Comstock and my daughter, Zollie, drove to Macomb Community College in Warren to attend the rally being held there. The speakers were inspiring, from Bernie Sanders, to Michigan Senators Stabenow and Peters, and Congress-people Dingell, Lawrence, and Conyers. Some of the best presentations of the day came when stories were shared by ACA recipients about how the ACA has impacted their lives. There were SEIU Healthcare members sporting their purple jackets and hats, healthcare recipients, and their allies present in the crowd.

The following Friday, January 20<sup>th</sup>, we boarded a bus in Saginaw, Michigan, and rode through the night to be in Washington DC on Saturday for the Women’s March. We arrived just before the presentations were set to begin. There were so many hundreds of thousands of people in such a small area, we were quickly separated from the rest of our fifty-four bus-mates. We managed to find the stage and the presenters, singers, activists, and actors had powerful voices. There were two consistent messages that we heard, we are all allies of each other’s issues and we must remember that in the 100 days to come and beyond. Secondly, this was not just a march – it was a beginning!



Being a part of the crowd was incredible. There were SEIU members and staff from different locals across the nation. But fellow union member or not, we supported and respected each other. The signs that we carried were different and I enjoyed reading other marchers’ signs about saving DACA, women’s reproductive rights, and making sure that all voices are heard. Talking with fellow marchers about the inspiration for our signs and sharing our experiences was natural and easy. We were united by our common goals and a shared vision for the future.

It was great to be a part of both of these experiences, for the solidarity and the resolve that we will continue to be a nation that is led by the people, for the people.

## **St. Clair County RESA Students Winning Awards Story**

Students of St. Clair County, instructed by members of SEIU Local 517M, are now advancing in the FIRST Tech Challenge robotics competition held in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The two teams are from Marysville Middle School and Memphis Middle School. Both teams have advanced beyond the local and state competitions and if they succeed in Iowa they will then advance to the FIRST Tech Challenge World Championship held in Missouri.

The teams worked very closely with the Instructional Technicians employed at St. Clair RESA who are also proud members of SEIU Local 517M. Students work for months developing innovative robotics designs which

they eventually construct. Instructional Tech, Marvin Koob, said that this is the second time the team has qualified for the super-regional competition.

"I think its awesome how hard these young people work. They show a great of dedication and sacrifice their spring break to prepare for their competitions," Koob said. Both teams are currently fundraising in order to pay for the travel costs of the competition. If you are interested in helping the teams contact Jason Schoenberg at [jschoeberg@marysvilleschools.us](mailto:jschoeberg@marysvilleschools.us) for the Marysville team and Dan Keihler at (810) 531-4235 for the Memphis team.

#### **Calendar of Upcoming Union Events for February, 2017**

February 7: Human Services Support Lansing DHHS Member Meeting  
February 8: Human Services Support Kalamazoo DHHS Member Meeting  
February 13: Scientific and Engineering Unit Board Meeting  
February 16: Technical Unit Board Meeting  
February 16: Human Services Support Lansing PRO Member Meeting  
February 21: Human Services Support Unit Board Meeting Conference Call  
February 26-27: SEIU Local 517M Steward Training in Lansing

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.***



[Join Us on Facebook](#)