



# E-Former

The Official Electronic Newsletter of SEIU Local 517M

## August 2018 Edition

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### **SEIU State Council Endorses Gretchen Whitmer for Governor**

On Monday, July 23, 2018, the SEIU Michigan State Council officially endorsed Gretchen Whitmer for Michigan Governor.

As part of the SEIU endorsement process, all candidates running for Governor, both Republican and Democrat, were asked to complete a survey and to “work-a-day” in a member’s shoes to better experience the working conditions of Union members in Michigan. The only candidates that participated in our process were Abdul El-Sayed, Shri Thanedar and Gretchen Whitmer.



Gretchen Whitmer on her "Work-a-Day" in March

Gretchen’s “work-a-days” were as diverse as SEIU’s membership. She worked with a member from SEIU Local 1 to perform custodial services at the Detroit Metro Airport, she filled potholes with members of the Allegan County Road Commission and took care of patients alongside a homecare worker in the city of Detroit.

SEIU Local 517M Executive Director Liza Estlund Olson praised Gretchen’s participation in our “work-a-day” experience. “We represent a wide array of public employees including bus drivers and County Road Commission workers. Gretchen understands roads and the maintenance of them

is what keeps Michigan's economy moving. That is why she spent an afternoon with one of our road commission crews filling potholes and seeing up close the condition of our roads. She says, "fix the damn roads" and we do too."

The August 7th primary is next Tuesday. To view a listing of other endorsed candidates for this election, please click here: <http://www.seiu517m.org/political-action/>

### **Final Call to Register for the August 10th Scholarship Golf Outing**



The deadline to register for the Annual SEIU Local 517M Scholarship Golf Outing is Friday, August 3rd. The event will be held on Friday, August 10, 2018 at Wheatfield Valley Golf Course in Williamston. Registration will begin at 8:00 a.m. with a shotgun start at 9:00 a.m.

This event has been well attended over the years and is always a great day for a great cause! Last year, the event raised enough money to fund 8 scholarships for SEIU Local 517M members and children.

The cost this year is \$80 per player and includes golf with a cart, coffee and donuts, lunch at the turn, chicken and pasta dinner, prizes and much more!!!

You can download the registration form at: <http://www.seiu517m.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/40/files/2018/05/golf-flyer-2018-registration.pdf>

Get your foursome ready and join us for a great day of golf, fellowship and supporting a great cause!

Contact Dave Corrie at (517) 267-2090, or e-mail at [corried@seiu517m.org](mailto:corried@seiu517m.org) for any questions.

### **Notice of Election for Technical Unit Positions**

The Technical Unit of SEIU Local 517M (UTEA) is holding an election for Chapter Presidents, Chapter Vice-Presidents, and Unit Secretary/Treasurer for a 3- year term of office. If you are interested in running for one of these offices, you will need to complete the Candidate Petition Form which is available on the website and can be accessed by clicking here: <http://www.seiu517m.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/40/files/2018/07/2018-tech-candidate-petition.pdf>

Candidate Petition Forms will be accepted starting August 1, 2018 and ending at 4:30 p.m. on September 5, 2018. The election calendar is shown below:

- August 1, 2018 - Notice of Election in August E-Former and website
- September 5, 2018 at 4:30 p.m. Deadline for Return of Candidate Petition Forms & Photos
- September 10-26, 2018 Electronic Voting Available. Ballot links will be sent via email to members and are due back by 5:00 p.m. on September 26, 2018.
- September 17, 2018 Deadline for requesting a paper ballot.
- October 1, 2018 Ballots Counted and Election Certified by Election/Tally Committee.
- November 1, 2018 Newly Elected Leadership takes office.

### **State Employee Volunteer Opportunity at the Lansing Food Bank**

State Employees – have you used your 8 hours of negotiated school/community participation leave time yet?

On August 21, 2018 SEIU is planning a volunteer event at the Greater Lansing Food Bank from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. There is a constant need for food sorters in the Warehouse at 2116 Mint Road, Lansing. Volunteers will evaluate, clean, sanitize, repack, and label all donated products into designated categories. Ability to read labels and dates required. The warehouse temperature varies with the weather, so dress appropriately; closed-toe shoes are mandatory. Lifting and bending is required.

There is room for approximately 25 people on this date, so please RSVP to Cindy Mason at: [cmason@seiu517m.org](mailto:cmason@seiu517m.org) to receive an SEIU purple shirt to wear while you are helping your community.

Who does the Greater Lansing Food Bank serve? "Everyone at risk, because hunger does not discriminate. We provide emergency food to families and children and retirees and veterans who have served our country. We serve people who look just like you and me. We help people to perform better at work and school and at home, because food is a basic need. Remember, that no one ever plans to be hungry."

### **Annual Meeting Recap**



On July 20, 2018, around 80 leaders attended the 2018 SEIU Local 517M Annual Membership Conference in Lansing. The conference was a mix of reports and training and even a graduation ceremony!

The COPE Committee did a presentation on what COPE is and how you can be involved in this important program. They also highlighted the various raffles they were holding that day.



Leadership skills were developed through a discussion on membership mapping and exercises in identifying leaders and influential workers. The discussion groups focused on identification of members into one of three key components (Leader, Connector, Expert).

The Leadership Academy held their first-ever graduation for the Class of 2018. These members had successfully completed the course. A discussion of what the course was and the work product they each made is discussed in the following article. [See Leadership Academy Graduation Story Below for more coverage]

There was the annual SEIU Local 517M Member of the Year presentation. School and Local Government Regions and State Employee Units each nominated a member to be honored at the annual meeting. The 2018 winners are:



Scientific and Engineering Unit: **Dave Berridge**, Unit President and Engineer from the Department of Transportation. He was nominated for his past work in bargaining and postponing his retirement in order to lead the unit through this year's bargaining cycle. (L-R: Scientific and Engineering Unit Board Member Jesse Harlow, Scientific and Engineering Unit President Dave Berridge, Scientific and Engineering Unit Secretary Michelle Kusnier)



Human Services Support: **Cherese Wilkerson**, a Unemployment Examiner in the Lansing Call Center. Cherese serves as a Chief Steward and was instrumental in getting 52 people recalled/transferred back into the agency and their choice of work location. (L-R: HSS Unit President Janice Cosey, Cherese Wilkerson, SEIU517M President Joey Combs)



Technical Unit: **Jamie Cummins** is an X-Ray Technician who works for the Department of Corrections in Jackson. Jamie serves as a Union Steward and has served there helping members in both the Technical and Scientific & Engineering bargaining units. She also recently volunteered to participate on the SEIU Local 517M Member Engagement & Community Service Committees. (L-R: Technical Unit President Arnie Beller, Jamie Cummins, SEIU 517M

Senior Labor Relations Specialist Kevin Karpinski)



School and Local Government Region 1: **Ernie Ahmad** is a Supported Employment Specialist from Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority. He has been an active leader chairing the last 3 contract negotiations for his unit, attended Union leadership trainings, and has participated in community activities such as Light Up the City, and walks for Breast Cancer and Alzheimer's. (L-R: SEIU 517M Labor Relations Specialist Andy Johnson, Region 1 Divisional Vice

President Leticia Trevino, Ernie Ahmad)



Campbell)

School and Local Government Region 2: **Peter Anderson**, a Road Worker with the Allegan County Road Commission. He is President of the Allegan County Road Commission Unit and School and Local Government Region 2 Vice President. He stood his ground and fought off a major attack on Road Commission pensions. (L-R: SEIU 517M Labor Relations Specialist Andy Johnson, Region 1 Vice President Peter Anderson, SEIU 517M Secretary/Treasurer Eric



School and Local Government Region 3: **Katie Dover-Taylor**, is a Reference Librarian and was the primary organizer for the newly formed SEIU unit at the William P. Faust Public Library in Westland. She now serves as the Union Chair and serves on the Bargaining Team for the SEIU 517M local unit. Negotiations are underway for their first contract. (L-R: SEIU 517M Senior Labor Relations Specialist Kevin Karpinski, Katie Dover-Taylor)

Congratulations to all the 2018 Members of the Year, it is well deserved recognition.

There was a video presentation on our new database system Pledge Up. Leaders learned the capabilities of the system and how it can help them in performing the activities they learned in the leadership development exercises earlier in the day.



The Member Orientation Committee gave a report on the current effort to gather photos and videos of members performing their work. These will be used to produce a New Member Orientation video that can be shown to new members. The current submissions were flashed on the screen ranging from fisheries employees, health and safety occupations, and crime labs. If you would like to send in pictures or videos of you or your co-workers performing your daily work, you may email them to [seiu517m@hotmail.com](mailto:seiu517m@hotmail.com). (Pictured: Scientific and Engineering DNR member Jennifer Johnson works at a "fish elevator" located in the Menominee Dam)

This led into a presentation from the Goodman Acker law firm on a new Member-Only Legal Services benefit being offered to SEIU Local 517M dues paying members. [See the New Legal Benefit Story later in this newsletter for more information]



SEIU AFRAM Caucus President Yolanda Johnson presented a report to the attendees on activities and announced that Jeanette Barnett, AFRAM President-Saginaw, and Vice President of the SEIU 517M AFRAM Caucus was the AFRAM Member of the Year.

Special guests gave updates on the upcoming elections with information on candidates, ballot proposals and a legislative update on current bills in the legislature as well as the current state of the Civil Service Commission. Michigan Attorney General candidate Dana Nessel and Michigan Supreme Court candidates Sam Bagenstos and Megan Cavanagh each presented information and answered attendee questions.

### **Congratulations 2018 Leadership Academy Graduates**

Our SEIU Local 517M 2018 Leadership Academy has completed their year long journey and join us as we build on the foundation of our Strategic Plan and rise up to build a new Union movement. We started a year ago with twenty potential candidates applying for enrollment in the Leadership Academy. Seventeen applicants from every school & local government region and every state division within Local 517M were accepted.

To graduate from the Leadership Academy meant that all participants were required to attend at least three of the four Saturday workshops that were scheduled during the year and complete a project of composing a community partnership plan with specific outcomes.



Rod Jackson presents at one of the Saturday Leadership Training Sessions

on organizational equity and inclusion and how to write plans to effectively carry out a community partnership.

The Saturday workshops started out with showing the member leaders how to internally organize their workplaces to build and sustain real power. The workshops continued by giving the member leaders effective communication tools and resources. Finally, the last workshops were dedicated to building better communities by building strong relationships with fellow leaders and other allies. These workshops also showed our member leaders how to be strategic thinkers, to lead



With fifteen of the Leadership Academy participants completing their workshops and submitting community partnership plans, SEIU Local 517M conducted the first annual Leadership Academy graduation ceremony at our 2018 Annual Conference on July 20th. All fifteen of the graduates were recognized for their outstanding achievement and received not only a graduation certificate, but also a very cool and exclusive

“Leadership Academy” union jacket. Congratulations to all of the 2018 Leadership Academy grads. Graduates this year pictured Left to Right: Valley Ginn (Region 1), Ernie Ahmad (Region 1), Erric Poole (Region 1), Joy McWright (Region 1), Peter Anderson (Region 2), Chana Simmon (Region 3), Nicolle Wright (Region 3), Paris Johnson (Region 3), Jason Jackson (Tech), Symaria Davis (HSS), Bethany Arnold (HSS), and Greg Merricle (S&E). Also graduating but unable to attend the ceremony were Lisa Turner (Region 3), Jeff Marchetti (S&E), and Penny Hepler (Region 2).

The 2019 Leadership Academy applications are available now! The deadline to apply is September 14, 2018. Our goal is to enroll four member leaders from each region and division within our local. If you are interested in applying for the next academy session, please complete the following application: <http://www.seiu517m.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/40/files/2018/07/2018-19-LEADERSHIP-ACADEMY-APPLICATION-blank.pdf>

### **HSS Members Recalled**

After six years, the Human Services Support Unit was able to get 52 people recalled and/or transferred back into the work locations of their choice prior to their recall rights expiring on September 28, 2018. The State was going to hire new employees off the street and ignore our member’s contractually granted recall rights to those previously laid off members.

Through the efforts of then Unit President Joey Combs, Grievance Consultant Janice Cosey and Lansing Call Center Chief Steward Chereese Wilkerson, the people on the recall list were able to secure permanent employment back with the State.

This was a long and arduous battle and is yet another example of why America Needs Unions and why your union matters!

### **New Legal Services Member-Only Benefit**

SEIU Local 517M is proud to announce that the law firm Goodman Acker PC has agreed to provide discounted legal services to SEIU Local 517M dues paying members as part of our Member-Only Benefits program. Goodman Acker provides dues-paying union members and their families with expert, quality legal representation statewide at an exclusive reduced rate in almost all areas of

law. Goodman Acker has over 75 years of experience and provides legal services to several other unions in Michigan.

These services include:

- Toll-Free 24/7 hotline for non-employment related legal needs.
- Free, no obligation phone consultation.
- No upfront fees or costs until a recovery is obtained (if applicable).
- Saturday and evening appointments are available.
- Discounted legal services. Rates for members and families reduced from 33 1/3% to 25% for all personal injury cases. If the case is referred to outside counsel due to specialty or practice area, there is still a discount. Click here for the schedule of discount rates.

The hotline number is: 1-866-876-5294. They are also on the web at [www.goodmanacker.com](http://www.goodmanacker.com)

### **Calendar of Upcoming Union Events for August, 2018**

August 6: Scientific and Engineering Unit Board Meeting

August 7: Primary Election Day. VOTE!!!

August 10: SEIU Local 517M Scholarship Golf Outing, Wheatfield Valley Golf Course, Williamston

August 17: Human Services Support Unit Board Meeting

August 23: Technical Unit Board Meeting

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 and is intended for members in good standing of SEIU Local 517M.*

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