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Contracts Settled

Sometimes instead of negotiating all the raises for a contract, Local 459 teams negotiate wage reopeners. The contract is settled but negotiations resume over wages each year. It makes sense under certain circumstances because the employer may not have the money at the time of the contract negotiations. Or the employer may not know what its budget is going to look like that far out into the future.

Clinton Eaton Ingham Mental Health Reopener

There are three (3) Local 459 bargaining units at the Clinton-Eating-Ingham Community Mental Health Authority (CEI-CMHA) – one for RNs, one for Residential employees and one for all other employees (called the Large unit). The approximately seven hundred employees are currently in the middle of a five (5) year contract with reopeners negotiated for 2017, 2018 and 2019. The 2017 reopener was solely for wages for the Large and RN units, while the Residential unit had both a wage and paid personal days reopener.

Projected budgets at CEI-CMHA have been a roller coaster. In June, the administration estimated the agency had a \$1.5 million budget deficit for next year. In August, the projection changed to a \$360,000 surplus due to increases in Medicaid funding. The administration prioritized spending most of this surplus on software upgrades for email, Finance and Human Resources. The Local 459 bargaining teams advocated that employees should not be forgotten. Eventually the administration agreed to include raises.

The wage agreement for all three (3) units include a one percent (1%) raise and a one half percent (1/2%) one-time bonus. In addition to the wage increase, the bargaining team was also able to negotiate an additional \$18,000 per year increase to the Retiree Health Care Fund. Eligible CEI-CMHA retirees are able to receive a monthly subsidy of up to \$150 through the Fund to cover health insurance costs if he or she chooses to continue to purchase CMHA-CEI health insurance after retirement. The subsidies only last as long as there is money available to pay them, so additional contributions are important to insure the Fund remains on firm financial footing.

The Residential unit members include Residential Technicians, Overnight Technicians, and Resident Managers. As part of the agreement, Overnight Technicians received an additional ten (10) hours of personal time and Resident Managers received an additional eight (8) hours. Residential Technicians do not receive personal days and prior to the current reopener could only call into work for their own illness or that of a family member. This left little flexibility for emergencies. The bargaining team was able to reach an agreement that now allows residential technicians to use their time off for emergencies provided they make a reasonable effort to cover their shift.

The agreement was overwhelmingly ratified by the membership. The Large unit voted for it 231 to 9. The Residential Unit approved it 57 to 1. The RNs unanimously ratified it 14 to 0.

The Large bargaining team was **Paul Brooks, Jennifer Garza, Bernie Gaughran, and Brooke Hall**. The alternates were **Kelly Bernath** and **Erin Brady**, The Residential team was **India Hudson, John Stewart, and Greg Womack**. The RN team was **Mary Huffman** and

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Contracts Settled

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Sally Humphrey. The teams were assisted by Local 459 servicing staff **Naudia Fisher** and **Jeffrey Fleming.**

Northeast Community Mental Health Wage Reopener

Local 459 represents both Professionals and Paraprofessionals at Northeast Community Mental Health (NECMH). Recently, a wage reopener led to good raises for these members.

Professionals received a five-percent (5%) general wage increase plus a one-percent (1%) lump sum payment if they were not at the top of the scale. If they were at the top of the scale, they received a seven-percent (7%) lump sum payment.

Paraprofessionals were underpaid. Most of them made ten-dollars and ten-cents (\$10.10) per hour. Not enough for taking care of all of the needs of their consumers. Local 459 negotiated a raise of one-dollar and sixty-one cents (\$1.61) which took most employees up to eleven-dollars and seventy-one cents (\$11.71) per hour. They also received a state mandated "pass through" for fifty-cents (\$.50) per hour which took them up to twelve-dollars and twenty-one cents (\$12.21) per hour.

Employees at the top of the scale received the fifty-cent (\$.50) "pass

through" which took them to fourteen dollars and forty-nine cents (\$14.49) per hour, and they also received a four-percent (4%) lump sum payment.

The Professional bargaining team was **Deb Schackmann** and **William Kaiser.** The Paraprofessional bargaining team was **Debbie Greene** and **Donna MacAulay.** The bargaining teams were assisted by Service Representatives **Lance A. Rhines** and **Charles Terry.**

The Paraprofessional agreement was ratified by a vote of 35 to 7. The professional agreement was approved by a vote of 22 to 1.

Touchpoint Employees get a contract!

Local 459 represents about seven-hundred (700) associates at Touchpoint. These members work in the Detroit area at three (3) different locations. Ascension Health hospitals (St Johns) subcontracts the Food Service and Environmental Services to Touchpoint. They have been the subcontractor there for about five (5) years.

Touchpoint at St. John's Oakland Hospital in Madison Heights has been a part of Local 459 for many years. They were in the Union when they were St. John employees, and stayed in the Union when Touchpoint took over. About two (2) years ago, Local 459 organized the Touchpoint Associates at St. John Macomb Hospital in Warren. Last December,

Local 459 organized the Touchpoint Associates at the Main St. John Hospital, St. John Moross in Detroit.

The Associates are overworked and underpaid. They needed a Union badly. But, it takes time to get economic justice. And, we have a long way to go. We needed to get a contract under our belts so that we can continue to bargain for better wages and benefits. It took Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) Charges, a Federal Mediator and several informational pickets just to get the process started. Local 459 recently negotiated a one (1) year contract that encompasses all three (3) groups. Touchpoint members agreed, and ratified a contract by a vote of one-hundred-forty-three (143) to fourteen (14).

The contract includes the usual grievance and arbitration procedure, just cause for disciplines, representation and other boiler plate language on job postings and seniority rights.

Touchpoint Oakland and Macomb also received a three-and-one-half percent (3.5%) wage increase, with one-and-one-half percent (1.5%) being retroactive to January 1, 2017. Touchpoint Moross had been given a raise last year, but did receive a two-percent (2%) wage increase with one-and-one-half percent (1.5%) being retroactive to January 1, 2017.

Now it's time to continue that process until we get a fair wages

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Local 459 • On the Web: www.local459.org



459 Update

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Contracts Settled

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and benefits.

The Touchpoint Oakland bargaining team was Chief Steward **Louversa Fair, Kerchai LeFlore, Debra Lowe, and LaDawn Penny.**



Touchpoint employees at Macomb

The Touchpoint Macomb bargaining team was Chief Steward **Blenda Coward, Neil Alton, Clinton Howard, Tina Marcantoni, and Debbie Oldani.**

The Touchpoint Moross bargaining team was Chief Steward **Betty Parker, Jackie Brown, Darlene Curry, Janie Drombowski and Derek Holmes.**



Touchpoint employees at Moross

The bargaining teams were assisted by Service Representatives **Lance A. Rhines and Charles Terry.**

Towing Program

OPEIU's towing program is popular around the country and especially with Local 459 members. It offers members in good standing twenty-four (24) hour service calls for tows, roadside assistance, battery service, lockout service and tire service. Every OPEIU member is entitled to two (2) tows/service calls valued up to \$80 each per year for themselves and family living in the same household. (For tows over \$80, the member must pay the remainder at the time of service.)

So far this year, more than one hundred (100) Local 459 members have used the service at least once. Once a member uses the towing service, they often use it a second time. The fact that our members live in Michigan and we represent many lower paid classifications may explain why we use the service more than almost every other OPEIU Local.

The service is provided through Nation Safe Drivers (NSD). All calls for service have to go to NSD. Local 459 members are automatically enrolled. You just need to call 1-800-617-2677 and give them your name. If they ask for a membership number, tell them Local 459 does not issue membership numbers. Be sure and mention OPEIU.

You can also download the OPEIU app at www.opeiu.org and get a direct link with all the towing information.



Executive Board Action

The Local 459 Executive Board is made up of members elected by the membership. The Board meets at least monthly. It is at these meetings that many of the decisions regarding Local 459 members are presented, discussed, and decided.

Executive Board decisions made during September and October 2017 of possible interest to the membership are outlined below. Decisions which have been discussed elsewhere in this newsletter are not included.

ARBITRATIONS

Arbitration is the final step in the grievance process. The vast majority of grievances are settled prior to reaching arbitration. Both the Union and management present their case before a neutral arbitrator who makes a binding decision based on the merits of the case. Arbitration is an expensive and time consuming procedure. Local 459 has limited funds and cannot afford to arbitrate every grievance. Therefore, all unresolved grievances are presented to the Executive Board for review.

Two (2) grievances were presented to the Executive Board for consideration for arbitration.

MGL POST – Termination – approved

CEI CMH Large Unit – Termination – not approved for arbitration

BUSINESS

The Executive Board appointed Stewards and Alternates at the MGL Technical unit where only one (1) member expressed an interest in the position.

The Executive Board approved appointing a temporary Chief Steward for Red Cross Collections. The Executive board also appointed members to two vacant Executive Board positions: Member at Large MGL Technical – Karah Sorensen and Member at Large LAFUCU – Pamala Hegmon.

The Executive Board approved donations to the OPEIU Hurricane Relief fund for members in Florida, Puerto Rico and Texas.

The Executive Board called a special membership meeting for November 14, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. to review the decision of the Board not to arbitrate the CEI-CMH Large unit member grievance.

APPEAL PROCESS

The Local 459 Constitution allows the membership to modify or overturn any action of the Executive Board but any such decision must be done at a membership meeting in which a quorum is present and which is held or properly requested within one (1) calendar month of the Executive Board action.

A special membership meeting may be called upon a request submitted to the President by not less than three percent (3%) of the members in good standing. Currently, there

are 2,699 members so a petition would require approximately eighty-one (81) signatures. Petitions are available from the Local 459 office.

For reviewing a decision to arbitrate or not to arbitrate a grievance, a special meeting may also be called by three quarters of the members in the bargaining unit in which the grievance arose. For some bargaining units this is less than three percent (3%) of all Local 459 members in good standing

The regular meetings of the Executive Board are held the second Tuesday of each month. Draft minutes of the meeting are available no later than two (2) weeks following the meeting.

Please see the Constitution for specific details. Copies of the Constitution are available from the Local 459 office and on the Local 459 website.

QUESTIONS?

If there are any questions or concerns about these decisions, please feel free to contact President **Sharon Taylor** by phone at 887-8844 (Greater Lansing area) or (800)-833-1103 (outside Greater Lansing) or by email at staylor@local459.org.



New Local 459 Executive Board being sworn in at its November meeting

From the President's Desk



By Sharon Taylor, Local 459 President

When is it enough?

That's a question I find myself asking a lot lately. When I hear proposals from employers asking for pay and benefit cuts. When I read profit and loss statements or audit reports from employers. It feels like almost all of these groups are asking for concessions and give backs from their employees despite increasing profits.

When is it time to share that wealth with the people doing the work every day? Why are CEO's and upper management getting bonus's and entry level workers being asked to pay more of their wages for health care or to give up benefits?

Some employers ask for give backs no matter what their fiscal statements look like. It never stops. Will it ever be enough?

Who is it that the patient or client sees every day? Is it the CEO? Is it the directors? Is it the managers? No. It is the nurses, direct care workers, dietary aides, housekeepers, receptionists, billing people, tellers, phlebotomists, social workers, surgical techs, and aides that interact every day with those their organization serves. Corporations need to understand that it is the people who work directly with their clients or patients on a day-to-day basis that make their organizations work and make them profitable. These are the people that make the real difference.

I believe it was the English business magnate **Richard Branson** who said, "Clients do not come first. Employees come first. If you take care of your employees, they will take care of the clients." And this is true. Organizations that take care of their employees engender employees who are motivated to do a good job and are loyal to the organization. If the goals of the employer and employee are the same you get good customer/ patient care.

Many organizations manage to be fair to their employees even through hard times. They manage to find ways to be fair. During this past year one employer significantly increased their employee wages because it found itself in the position of people working for them, getting good training and then leaving for competitors who paid more. They decided that they wanted to be the place employees chose to work so they increased their wages and added benefits. Even in tough times some CEOs decide to increase wages to maintain staff. Many organizations have the wisdom to know that staff turnover and training is costly, so they make that a priority. Other organizations build increases in wages in their budget planning process every year.

It's all a matter of the will of the people at the top. If they view their employees as deserving, as an asset to their organization, as a valuable commodity then they build fair raises and benefits into their budgets. They see increased employee compensation as part of the price of doing business, just like increases in utilities, the cost of food, etc. If employee compensation is an afterthought you end up with an organization where burnout and dissatisfaction run rampant, even in professions like nursing and social work that people go into in order to serve and help others.

So, when is the profit enough? It depends on values. If you want to know what an organization's values are, look at the rate of pay of the employees who work with the clients or patients. Then look at what it pays its CEO.

Happy Holidays From Local 459 Officers & Staff

Grievances Settled

The members, stewards and staff of Local 459 settle many grievances each quarter. There is insufficient space to publish all of them. Grievances which are unique or affect a large number of members are more likely to be published. If you would like to publicize a grievance you have settled, contact your Service Representative.



MGL POST But What About the Pay?

Sharon Hensley is a Cath Lab employee at McLaren Greater Lansing (MGL) hospital. She was classified as part-time but worked full-time hours for over one (1) year. Recently she was changed to full-time status.

Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas** felt that **Hensley** shouldn't have not only received her full-time status, but she should also receive her benefits retroactive. **Davis-Thomas** who filed a grievance with HR department and they agreed that Hensley would be paid retro holiday pay and refunded part of her health care co-pay.

MGL POST Tardy is 90

Tina Kress is an MGL employee who works in the Emergency Department. **Kress** received a step one (1) discipline for being tardy. MGL has an absentee policy and a tardy policy. The absentee policy looks back one (1) year. The tardy policy looks back ninety (90) days. If an employee is tardy three (3) times in ninety (90) days the employee is subject to discipline.

Kress was disciplined for dates going back a year. Apparently the department confused the absentee and the tardy policy. **Kress** contacted Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas** called a grievance meeting. HR agreed with **Davis-Thomas** and removed the discipline.

MGL POST

Return from Layoff not a New Hire

Jane Crouch, was laid off from MGL Dietary when that department was subcontracted. She decided to come back to work for MGL within her recall rights time period and took a part-time position in the EVS department. She came back with all her seniority intact. MGL set a starting pay for her. **Crouch** found out that employees with lower seniority were making more than she was.

Crouch was told to contact Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas** to get this corrected. **Davis-Thomas** contacted the HR department who said that **Crouch** was given the correct pay step. **Davis-Thomas** filed a Step two (2) grievance. A meeting was held in HR and it was agreed that **Crouch** should be moved up and also receive retro pay.

MGL POST 120 is Full-Time

Ashley Morris, a part-time Patient Access department employee was working full-time hours. **Morris** read her contract and thought she should be given full-time status. **Morris** contacted Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas** to see what needed to be done for her to be made full-time. **Davis-Thomas** investigated and discovered that she had been working full-time hours for over one hundred and twenty (120) days, the required time period.

Davis-Thomas tried to settle it at verbally but, an agreement wasn't

reached. **Davis-Thomas** filed a step two (2) grievance with the HR department and an agreement was reached that **Morris** would be changed to full-time status with retro pay.

MGL POST EVS Extra Hours

Lisa Bryon, an MGL EVS second shift employee signed up to work extra hours in the department. **Bryon** found out that a lower senior was called in to work the shift instead of her. **Bryon** is a steward in EVS and she knew she should have been granted the shift. She contacted Chief Steward **Lois-Davis-Thomas** requesting to file a grievance. **Davis-Thomas** contacted EVS manager **Tony Yeo**, who agreed that a mistake had been made and he agreed to pay her for the shift as if she had worked.

MGL POST 2nd Time is the Charm

Lindsay Waite, a Nurse Aid on 6 South floor at MGL was scheduled to work fourth (4th) of July. **Waite** was pulled to 5 South to work a one-on-one because they didn't have an aid coming in until later. Once the other nurse aid arrived, the charge nurse told **Waite** she was no longer needed and she could go home. **Waite** asked the Charge nurse if she could finish her shift because she drove in from her vacation to work her scheduled holiday. **Waite** was told no because they had low census on her floor and she was no longer needed. **Waite** discovered that a non-union per diem employee remained working, while she was sent home.

Waite contacted Steward **Wendy Yaney**, who started the grievance process with **Julie Ashi** who denied the grievance. **Yaney** forward the grievance to Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas** who contacted **Ashi**

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again stating the facts that **Yaney** had presented, there should never be a per diem working when sending home a regular employee. This time **Ashi** agreed to settle by paying **Waite** an additional three (3) hours holiday pay.

MGL POST Zippi Do Da Right Thing

MGL Patient Access employee **Selena Shatney** signed up for several open shifts in the Patient Access department. She wasn't receiving any calls to work those open shifts. When she discovered that part of the open shifts were being worked by a lower senior employee, **Shatney** contacted Post Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas**. **Davis-Thomas** contacted Patient Access manager **Mary Zippi** who investigated the issue and found out a lower senior worked and **Shatney** didn't get offered those times. **Zippi** agreed to pay her for those three (3) partial shifts as if she had worked them.

MGL RN 2 out of 3

In the MGL RN contract a mandatory shift is defined as "any portion of a shift or an entire shift that an employee is required to come in or remain at the end of heir/her shift to fill a hole in the schedule." When working a mandatory shift, RNs are paid double their hourly wage. Greenlawn PACU RN **Kristen Silvers** asked her manager to pay her for three (3) shifts that someone was either on vacation or absent and caused her to have to stay after her shift. The PACU supervisor denied the request.

Silvers reached out to Chief Steward **Julie Murray** for help. **Murray** filed a grievance, took it to HR and again it was denied. **Murray** was certain these shifts qualified and pressed further to the pre-arbitration phase where she met with the VP of HR and the Chief Nursing Officer. **Silvers** provided great documentation and a settlement

agreement was reached to pay her for two (2) of the days totaling a little more than four (4) hours. They denied one (1) day that was 30 minutes over claiming it was incidental overtime not mandation.

MGL RN 1/2

Lisa Driver is an MGL RN on 6 North who had picked up an extra shift in August but was cancelled the morning before the shift due to low census. She then realized that a lower senior nurse was allowed to work extra that day. The investigation showed that this was not done intentionally.

After **Driver** had been cancelled there were several call-ins. They tried to call **Driver** back. However, she didn't see the message until it was too late to come in. They were able to reach the lower senior nurse. Chief Steward **Julie Murray** got involved at **Driver's** request. As they tried unsuccessfully to call **Driver** back, the supervisor agreed to pay for half the shift. **Driver** agreed to the settlement.

MGL RN 24

If MGL management wants to change a day on a nurse's schedule they can do it with twenty-four (24) hours' notice. A nurse from 6 South was off on a weekend and happened to check her schedule on line late Sunday night. She saw they had changed her day to work from Wednesday to Monday. She was not able to make the change and quickly called the nursing supervisor to alert her that she would not be able to work. The supervisor told her she would have to take it as an unexcused absence.

The RN notified Chief Steward **Julie Murray** as she didn't think they could just change her day without any notice. **Murray** contacted the director. She agreed a mistake had

been made and took the unexcused absence off her record.

MGL RN Investigation Pays Off

The MGL HR department put a nurse on a three (3) day suspension while investigating an alleged incident of inappropriate comments in patient care areas. Chief Steward **Julie Murray** went with the nurse to the investigation meeting and they issued a Step 3 discipline along with the suspension. **Murray** investigated and was provided written testimony contradicting the allegations. She also went to the department to see the layout of the area the alleged episode occurred. While the nurse was in one of the rooms talking with a patient and their family, someone reported they could hear what she was saying and reported that it was improper. When **Murray** saw the distance between the rooms she was able to testify that it would not have been possible to overhear any conversations from one room to another.

As it is required that a fair and complete investigation be done when management is issuing a discipline, Chief Steward **Murray** was able to show you have to talk to everyone that may have knowledge of what occurred. The discipline was revoked and the grievant was reimbursed for her lost pay.

This is a example of why union representation is needed in investigation meetings. Without having a union, management can take the word of another coworker and just fire them on hearsay.

MGL Technical Unit When Does Bereavement Start

Kathy Olsen is a mammography tech on days at the MGL Green lawn campus. Her father passed away on

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September 2nd. **Olsen** was scheduled to be on vacation the following week. The Technical contract says that she does not need to use her PTO and is given paid bereavement instead. She was given bereavement leave for September 5, 6 and 7 but PTO was taken out for September 11th. HR told **Olsen** that her bereavement leave was starting on Sept 2nd and since her department was a 24/7 operation, the weekends counted for bereavement.

Technical unit Chief Steward **Kerry Miller** filed a grievance arguing the employer should not use PTO for any scheduled hours within the first seven (7) days. The seven (7) days are counted from her first day of bereavement leave, not the day her father passed away. HR agreed to reinstate the PTO hours back in her bank and submit the time as bereavement.

MGL Technical Unit Faulty Discipline

Brittany Seiler is a Surgical Tech on days on the MGL Greenland campus. She was hired as per diem in October of 2016 and took a regular position in May of 2017. During that time, she had a few call-ins and was sent home two (2) days in a row for illness. In September **Seiler** was written up for excessive absenteeism. The discipline used her absences as a per diem and in the Union position.

Steward **Angela Witt** notified Chief Steward **Kerry Miller**. **Miller** informed **Seiler's** supervisor that the discipline was faulty. She cannot be disciplined for her absences as a per diem employee the same as a bargaining unit employee (i.e. lump the absences prior to May 2017 with the absences after May 2017). Also according to the contract and attendance policy, back to back illness counts as one occurrence, not two separate occurrences.

After getting no response from her supervisor, **Miller** contacted HR and explained the situation. The discipline has been removed from **Seiler's** file

MGL Technical Unit Double or Nothing

The Anesthesia/Perfusion Techs at MGL have a three (3) person department. There are no part-time or per diem employees. Scheduling can be tricky but they are pretty self-sufficient and reliable employees that cover for each other as necessary. But there are rules for compensation. In September a co-worker was on vacation for a week. **Mike Holley** and **Dave Smith** were not given mandation pay (double time when being mandated to work for filling a hole in the schedule). Each employee was mandated to work on their day off to cover for the vacationing co-worker; "filling a hole in the schedule". The OR manager was notified but refused to pay mandation pay, only offering time and one half (1½).

Chief Steward **Kerry Miller** was contacted by Steward **Smith**. **Miller** contacted HR. After many phone calls and emails, a formal grievance was filed. HR agreed to payment on next paycheck.



Touchpoint at Macomb 8 for Roach

Brittany Roach is a Touchpoint housekeeper in the environmental service department at Macomb hospital. **Roach** was not offered an extra eight (8) hour shift and it was awarded to a less senior coworker. **Roach** told Chief Steward **Blenda Coward** who filed a grievance on her behalf. The grievance was granted and **Roach** was paid eight (8) hours for the shift.

Touchpoint at Macomb 16 for Coward

Blenda Coward is a Touchpoint employee working at Macomb hospital. She is a food service worker.

Management failed to follow seniority by not contacting **Coward** and offering her shifts on two ((2) separate occasions. **Coward**, being the Chief Steward filed her own grievance and it was granted. **Coward** was paid sixteen (16) hours of overtime for the shifts.

Touchpoint at Macomb Not All His Fault

Stephon Dilliard-Mariweather is a food service worker for Touchpoint in the food and nutrition department of Macomb hospital. One day **Dilliard-Mariweather** was working on the tray line that sends food to floors and the patients. He was working along several other coworkers who worked different food serving stations. The food was not getting to the floors and to the patients quick enough. **Dilliard-Mariweather** received a discipline for being away from his station.

Dilliard-Mariweather contacted Chief Steward **Blenda Coward** who filed a grievance. **Coward** effectively argued that the food being late could not be attributed only to **Dilliard-Mariweather** since he had permission to be away from his station and he was not the only one on the tray line. But he was the only one disciplined. The grievance was granted at the third step and the discipline was removed.

Touchpoint at Moross No-Win Situation

Betty Parker is a Touchpoint food service worker at Moross hospital. One day **Parker** was serving food in the cafeteria when a worker from another department was inquiring about the food prices and portions. **Parker** explained what they were, but the worker either did not like her answer or her tone and went to **Parker's** supervisor and complained. **Parker** was given a discipline. **Parker** filed a grievance.

During the first step grievance meeting, it was successfully argued

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that sometimes the associates are in a no-win situation if people are not happy about prices or portions especially if they fluctuate and also that tone can be a matter of interpretation. The grievance was settled by reducing the discipline to a non-disciplinary verbal warning.

Touchpoint at Moross Sampson's Hair

Tawan Sampson is a Touchpoint food service worker at Moross hospital. **Sampson** was approached by a supervisor about not wearing a beard guard for his minimal amount of facial hair. **Sampson** briefly protested, but did comply and left to go get a beard guard. To **Sampson's** surprise, he received a discipline.

Sampson filed a grievance. The grievance was granted and the discipline was removed.

Touchpoint at Oakland It Pays to be Union

Jessica Brown is a Touchpoint food service worker in the food and nutrition department at Oakland hospital. One day **Brown** showed up for work and there was another staff assigned to the same job assignment. **Brown** was sent home. The other staff was a temporary service worker while **Brown** is a Union member.

Brown contacted Steward **Kerchai Leflore** who filed a grievance on her behalf. The grievance was granted and **Brown** was paid for the entire shift.

Touchpoint at Macomb Granted is Good

Diyerra Hert is a Touchpoint housekeeper in the Environmental Service Department of Macomb hospital. **Hert** requested three (3) days off and it was granted, however another supervisor later denied **Hert's** days of without

her knowledge. **Hert** received a discipline for attendance.

Hert contacted **Chief Steward Blenda Coward** who filed a grievance on her behalf. The grievance was granted when it was successfully argued that **Hert** did have the days granted off and should have not been disciplined.

Touchpoint at Macomb Return to Sender

Edward Watkins works for Touchpoint in the Environmental Service department of Macomb hospital. **Watkins** received a discipline for violating a policy on personal electronic devices. **Watkins** showed his discipline to Chief Steward **Blenda Coward** who notice that his discipline was not correct and also out of the timelines per the contract.

Coward filed a discipline and the grievance was granted and removed from **Watkins** file.



HOPE Another 16

Heather Pettway works as a Residential Instructor at the Breton Valley program for Hope Network. **Pettway** signed up to work two (2) shifts at her home program, but was denied and someone from another program was granted the shifts instead. The Hope contract says open shifts are to be offered by seniority within the program for five (5) days before the posting go out to any other program. **Pettway** did sign up within the five (5) day window but she was not awarded the shifts.

Steward **Sara Baraki** filed a grievance on her behalf, and the grievance was granted at the first step. **Pettway** was paid sixteen (16) hours.

HOPE Another 8

Amy Straub works as a Residential Instructor at the Cherry Valley program for Hope. **Straub** was not offered an eight (8) hour shift and the shift was awarded to a coworker with less seniority.

Straub contacted Steward **Lauryn Gallant** who filed a grievance on her behalf. The grievance was granted and **Straub** received eight (8) hours pay.



CEI CMHA Large Unit Denied Issues

Barb Woodworth, a Community Support Technician, at Transitions-South for Clinton Eaton Ingham Community Mental Health Authority (CEI CMHA) received a verbal warning for several issues: 1) conflict with a coworker, 2) disrespectful tone with a consumer, 3) refusal to mop a restroom floor, 4) failure to tube feed a consumer in a timely manner. **Woodworth** denied having negative confrontations with her coworkers, speaking disrespectfully to a consumer and refusing to mop the floor. She also claimed that she fed the consumer within the designated time.

Steward **Lee Major** filed a grievance on her behalf. **Woodworth** and Alternate Steward **Bruce Craig** met with Program Director Karla Block. **Block** agreed to reduce the verbal warning to a non-disciplinary verbal counseling.

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CEI CMHA-Residential “You Must” ≠ Volunteer

Stefanie Medina, Residential Technician at the CEI CMHA Arch Road program, was working her scheduled shift when told by her resident manager that either she or another employee must work the following shift after the designated employee was unable to come in. The other employee was unable to work the shift and **Medina** stayed for an extra 6 (six) hours. When **Medina** turned in her time card, Coordinator **Sharon Lopez** refused to pay the time and a half rate called for when an employee is mandated to work a back to back shift. **Lopez** claimed that **Medina** volunteered to stay for the shift and was not eligible for the extra pay.

Residential Chief Steward **Greg Womack** contacted Local 459 servicing staff **Naudia Fisher**. **Fisher** contacted **Medina** and the other employee who both verified that their resident manager stated one of them had to stay for the shift. **Fisher** relayed this information to HR and they agreed to pay **Medina** time and a half without a formal grievance needing to be completed.

CEI CMHA Large Unit 1 + 1 = 2

CEI CMHA employee, **Jeramie Hall** had two (2) part-time positions as a Peer Support Specialist; at Mental Health Court and Outreach Case Management Services. The combination of the two (2) positions added up to a full-time schedule. Steward **Brooke Hall** contacted Local 459 servicing staff **Naudia Fisher** to alert her of this change and see if his two (2) half-time positions could be combined into a single full-time one. **Fisher** contacted **Chief Human Resources Officer Sharon Blizzard** to change his status to full-time. He is now recognized as a full-time employee and eligible for full-time benefits.

Leadership Training

68 Michigan OPEIU members from across the state attended a Leadership Training sponsored by Local 459 in Lansing on Saturday, November 18th. These individuals gave up their Saturday in order to be better advocates and leaders at their individual worksites.

There were OPEIU members from Locals 40, 42, 393, 494, 512 and 2002 in addition to those from 459. OPEIU President **Richard Lanigan** spoke at length during lunch on the importance of building our membership. **Cindy Schu**, OPEIU Director of Organizing and **Kim Cook** from the Worker Institute at Cornell University spoke about building local union power, engaging and activating our members, effective new employee orientations, making our local unions meaningful and valuable through direct workplace actions.

Julie Murray, Local 459 MGL Chief Steward presented on the secrets of keeping high membership with open shops.

Local 459 staff, **Julie Murray**, **Charles Terry**, **Lois Davis-Thomas**, **Kerry Miller** and **Naudia Fisher** (also known at the Local 459 Prime time players) presented on Weingarten rights.

As you can see, much information was packed into a 6 hour training. Members left indicating they were “energized” and “ready to engage members”.



OPEIU President Richard Lanigan addresses the members





Steward Spotlight

Pam Hegmon LAFCU

Pam Hegmon has been at LAFCU Credit Union for thirty-one (31) years. She started as a Teller, went on to Member Services then Bookkeeping and is now in the Call Center. "When I started at LAFCU, we had a small community membership of UAW General Motor's employees. That was nice because you could get to know people personally. I still like talking with and helping the membership out after all these years." **Hegmon** hopes to retire in four (4) years.

Hegmon has been a Steward since 2008, and is now the Main Office Steward. She has been on five (5) bargaining teams including the one that is currently working on a new contract. She also recently took over the Member at Large seat on the Local 459 Executive Board. So, she is involved in the Union about as much as anyone can be!



"The best thing I like about my Union positions are being able to work together with both sides, Union and Management. I make sure that people are treated fairly and equally. Whenever an employee gets in trouble, I put myself in their shoes." Said **Hegmon**.

Hegmon was married to her husband **Aaron** for thirty (30) years. Unfortunately, he passed away in 2013.

Hegmon has two (2) daughters, **Deanna** is thirty-one (31) and **Rachael** is twenty-eight (28). She has four (4) grandchildren. She loves spending time with her parents and the rest of her family.

When **Hegmon** gets time off from work, she likes to go on cruises. **Hegmon** also is very involved in her church. She spends a lot of time there and is in the choir as well.

As you can see, **Hegmon** is a busy person. But, we are glad that she spends so much of her time representing the members of Local 459!

Bethann Mckinley MGL RN

The RN steward for the McLaren Greater Lansing Emergency Department prefers to be out of the spotlight, but we would like to recognize **Bethann Mckinley** for all of her contributions to the RN bargaining unit. **Mckinley** has been a nurse since 1978 and an OPEIU member since 2002. She became steward in 2012. She started her career in the Emergency Department and has been a manager, charge nurse and a supervisor. She currently is a staff nurse and that's where she loves to be. Having worn several different hats in an ever-changing emergency department with such varied experience, makes **Mckinley** a great fit as the steward.



When **Mckinley** was asked why she feels being a part of the union is important she responded "Being a union member allows me to focus on nursing while my union protects my work life interests. I became interested in being a union steward to ensure that our union representation is aware of the unique challenges in the emergency department." She is absolutely right about that. Having **Mckinley** as a resource is so important, Chief Steward **Julie Murray** said. **Murray** relies on **Mckinley's** experience to keep on top of changes that might require union attention.

In balancing her work life with her home life, **Mckinley** enjoys spending time with her husband of 34 years, their two children, spouses and one grandson, at their cottage in Northern Michigan. Working in such a stressful environment it is important to be able to have that balance. We thank Bethann for her continuing support to Local 459.

Bargaining Unit Spotlight



American Red Cross Collections

If you have ever been to a Red Cross blood drive, you may think you have some idea of what the employees do, but there is much more to it than meets the eye.

Local 459 represents all of the collections Staff working for the Red Cross in Michigan except for the Detroit area. We have members in Lansing, Kalamazoo, Muskegon, Petoskey and Flint (and many places in between). These employees are made up of highly trained Phlebotomists and Nurses. We also represent the Mobile Unit Assistants / Drivers in Flint and Petoskey and the Apheresis employees in Flint.

Every day, the employees set up a mini-hospital at a different location. It is a tough job. These employees

travel two (2) hours or more in order to get to their drives. They must set up health history stations as well as donation beds before the drive ever starts.

The blood collection process is very highly regulated, as it should be, for the safety of the blood supply. This means that employees have to do things perfectly and according to regulations every time they take a donation.

Once the blood drive is over, the whole program needs to be broken down and loaded up. The blood must be packed in ice and transported back to the laboratory for testing and blood typing. This means that employees work twelve (12) or more hours every shift.

There is quite a bit of turnover at the Red Cross. People either love it or hate it. Many employees get hired in and leave in a very short period of time due to the stress of the job. Some stick around forever!

The positions in Red Cross Collections require a high level of training and regulation, an assembly line mentality, difficult schedules and great customer service. And, our Local 459 members are great at what they do!

Blood donations are necessary to save lives. If you would like to donate blood to the Red Cross, call

1-800-Give-Blood or go to www.RedCross.org.

Solidarity in Puerto Rico



Kyra Keusch one of Local 459's RN members at McLaren Greater Lansing hospital recently was given the opportunity through our International and the AFL-CIO to go to Puerto Rico to assist with disaster relief after Hurricane Maria. She relayed that it was a life changing experience. Here are some of her thoughts:

The International flew me to New Jersey where I met up with over 300 of our union brothers and sisters. They were from all over the country and from many different unions



including OPEIU, AFT, Teamsters, IBEW, NNU, CWA, Airline Pilots and Flight attendants and UAW. We all came together with the desire to help our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico. What we encountered there was beyond anything we could ever have imagined or even seen on the news.

Puerto Rico's whole power grid was destroyed. There were downed power line and poles everywhere we went. Cement power poles with steel reinforcement were snapped like toothpicks. Signs written on streets saying "Please help" and "The beach is hungry". Getting around was difficult due to large amounts of debris that had fallen from the mountains covering the roads with boulders the size of our small bus blocking the road way and roads were covered with downed trees and power lines. At times power lines needed to be lifted up so our buses and trucks could pass through.

People had not yet received drinking water or food and this was more than 3 weeks after the storm. We heard about people rioting from FEMA but that is not what we saw. People were hungry and thirsty and desperate. We developed plans to provide people with basic medical attention and get



food and water to those in need. We worked with police, local volunteers, local union members from OPEIU and CWA, HUD officers, the attorney general's office and medical students.



The people I met touched my heart. There was the 103 year old gentleman so thankful that we were there checking on him and giving him food and water that he began to cry and hug me repeatedly saying thank you, thank you, thank you. There was the man who was

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Nurses Council

Coat Drive

In October the Local 459 Nurses Council teamed up with the LSEA which represents the Lansing school district teachers for a coat drive. The requests for coats come from the teachers who can see which kids are coming to school without a warm coat. This covers kids from preschool through high school and all coats of all sizes were collected. This was a great opportunity for Union solidarity between the two Unions.

Safe Staffing Legislation

The International OPEIU Nurses Council (ONC) has been busy supporting legislation for safe staffing. The RNs at MGL do have staffing ratios in their contract but that is not the case around the country. You can help make this happen for everyone and also give more accountability for the ones we have. We can't wait for this to happen on its own. If we believe in safe staffing we can put the pressure on our elected officials to pass the Nurse Staffing Standards for Hospital Safety and Quality Care Act HR 2392 and SB 1063. Just call, write, tweet, Facebook your representatives and let them know what you already know about

patient safety. Remind them they will be a patient some day!

In Michigan the bipartisan Safe Patient Care Act has been proposed. This would make hospitals more accountable by providing transparency with staffing at each hospital. This is a package of bills that will limit the number of patients a nurse can be assigned. Tell your state representatives that we need this to happen to insure our patients get safe patient care. Tell them to support HB 4629 and SB 387. This can only happen if we stand up for our patients and use our influence to get these bills passed. We live in the capital city. We can visit our representatives easily. Make an appointment today. Tell them what it's like when your assignment is unsafe. Write them every month to establish a relationship with your representative. Be persistent and let them know how important this is.



Coats piled up in the Local 459 waiting room

Puerto Rico

The AFL-CIO negotiated with United Airlines to provide a plane to send 300 Union members to Puerto Rico to help with relief efforts there. They sent skilled trade union members along with health care workers. Local 459 member **Krya Keusch** and Local 22 member **Chris Teed** were among them. **Elizabeth Moreno** from the Emergency Department went along as well. Thanks to MGL for releasing them to go.

Puerto Rico

(Continued from page 14)

just so happy to be alive showing us his home where the only thing left was the bathroom and a pillar from the front. The people were so grateful for any little thing we did for them or gave them. Simple things like a blood pressure check; a friendly smile or a hug. They were trying to care for us while we were caring for them.

I think the disaster in Puerto Rico is beyond even what FEMA imagined and planned for. From what I saw it

will take years to get things back to normal. It will likely be at least a year before everyone has electricity again. These people need help. I have plans to return on my own in the near future to work with people I met while I was down there.

I met so many amazing people and am so thankful for the opportunity. This experience has truly changed my life. It has been very humbling. It makes me appreciate the little things like having electricity and running

water and a roof over my head. There are more important things in life. I am very thankful for this opportunity provided by the AFL-CIO and OPEIU.



Holiday Baskets

Local 459 is now accepting donations for our Annual Holiday Basket Program. Cash, food and personal care items are acceptable.

Local 459 gives Holiday Baskets to our Union members that are especially in need.



Recipient names must be submitted to our office from a Steward or Alternate Steward on a "Recommendation for 2017 Holiday Basket" form.

The deadline for name submission is December 15th for Christmas baskets.

Contact **Ronda Ackerson** at 517-887-8844 or rackerson@local459.org with questions.

Identity Theft Coverage

OPEIU Introduces New Membership Benefit: Identity Protection

Now all OPEIU members will have a proactive, comprehensive defense against identity theft, all at no cost. OPEIU has contracted one of the nation's leading identity protection solutions, InfoArmor®, to protect members against this \$16 billion crime that impacted almost 15.4 million Americans last year.

Identity Protection Program Features

It's important that all OPEIU members sign up as soon as possible with OPEIU's identity protection provider, InfoArmor, to ensure you receive all benefits available. To activate the benefits described below, sign up immediately at www.OPEIUIdProtect.com. You can also activate by calling 855-990-0994. Don't delay; activate your benefits today.

If you do become a victim of identity fraud, InfoArmor's trained experts will help you to restore your identity as best as possible to what it was before the incident. This can save you hundreds of hours of your own time and productivity. It can also save you money!

Features of this benefit include:

Privacy Advocate® Remediation: Our Privacy Advocates are CITRMS® Certified experts in identity restoration. A Privacy Advocate will act as a dedicated case manager to act on behalf of the victim and resolve the issue from start to case completion.

Digital Exposure Report: This interactive, easy-to-read report summarizes what a real-time deep Internet search finds out about a subscriber, offers a Privacy Grade and tips to better secure personal information.

Internet Surveillance: Internet Surveillance constantly monitors the underground economy and dark rooms to uncover compromised, sensitive information such as Social Security numbers, wallet items and login credentials including emails and passwords.

Activate your benefit for free at www.OPEIUIdProtect.com. You can visit www.opeiu.org for more information. If you still have questions, call 855-990-0994.