

# RWDSU

UFCW

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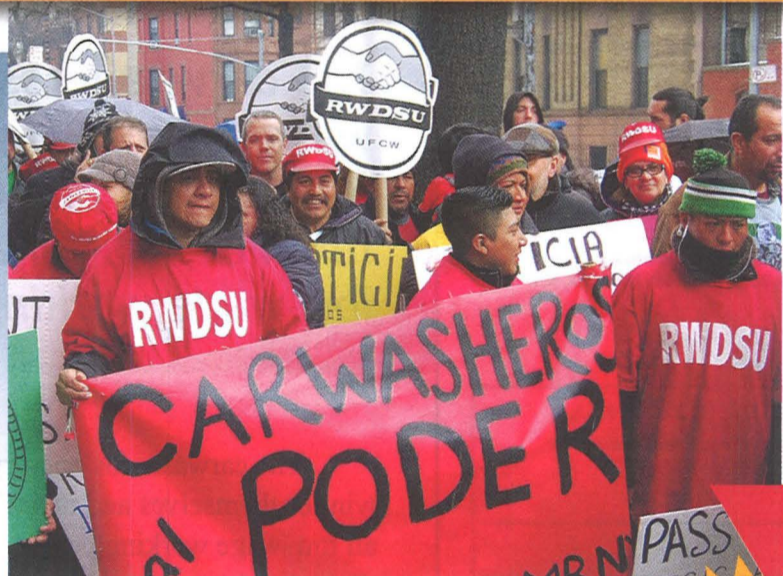
## Young Workers Step Up

*At the Next Up Summit, a new generation of worker activists take center stage*

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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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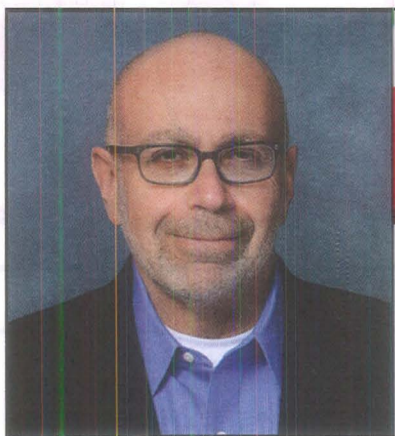
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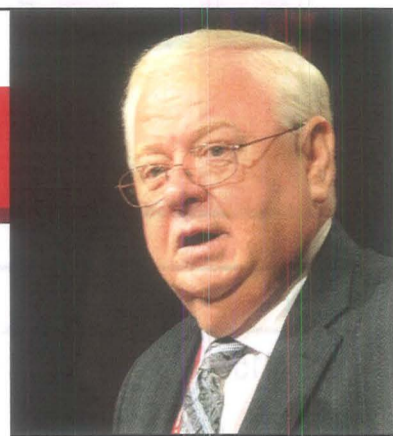
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**MESSAGE FROM  
YOUR OFFICERS**

# Car Wash Workers Win Strike and Send a Powerful Message

**C**arwasheros at Vegas Auto Spa in Brooklyn, New York, have won their strike and ratified a landmark contract agreement that includes wage hikes, strong worker protections and a \$1,500-per-person signing bonus. These workers stood strong on the picket lines for four long months – during one of the coldest winters in memory, and throughout a difficult holiday season. Their resolve was tested. They sacrificed for their belief in a voice on the job and a fair contract. And they won.

Vegas workers – and those at nine other car washes who have joined the RWDSU during the three-year old WASH New York campaign – have succeeded at winning a voice, and changing their lives. Workers at every RWDSU-represented car wash in New York now have their first union contract.

*The carwasheros' victory wasn't just a win for themselves and their families, but for all low-wage working people.*

The carwasheros' victory wasn't just a win for themselves and their families, but for all low-wage working people, who saw the power workers can create when they join together with a union.

Empowering workers is important now because of the times we live in – a time when the income equality gap is greater than ever, when workers and immigrants are increasingly under fire in legislatures across America and in the Halls of Congress, and when low-wage workers in car washes, fast food restaurants, airports and retail stores are struggling like never before.

*Empowering workers is important now because of the times we live in – a time when the income equality gap is greater than ever.*

In most parts of the country, millions of these workers make the federal minimum of \$7.25 an hour. Even where the minimum is higher, it is still much too low. That's why workers are seeking a union voice, and why we are seeing – and participating in – campaigns like the "Fight for Fifteen" and "Low-Wage Rage."

The courageous carwasheros at Vegas Auto Spa have achieved an inspiring victory that sends a powerful message to all low-wage workers: You can join together, and you can win. Together, we can push back against the growing inequality that threatens our entire economy. Together, working people can demand – and win – economic justice. ■

# Breakthrough for NYC CAR WASH WORKERS

## Victory at Vegas! Carwasheros End Strike

**A**fter four months on the picket lines that spanned a brutally cold winter and a difficult holiday season, 'carwasheros' at Vegas Auto Spa in Brooklyn, New York, have won their strike and ratified a landmark contract agreement that includes wage hikes, strong worker protections and a \$1,500-per-person signing bonus.

It's a resounding victory for the workers, who went on strike in November after being denied overtime pay and enduring unsafe working conditions without proper protective equipment. The facility's owner also agreed to settle a suit the workers filed for wage and hour violations.

"We went on strike because we wanted a union contract," said Vegas carwashero Angel Rebolledo, 53. "We wanted an end to exploitation, and we wanted fair wages, fair schedules and protection from the dangerous chemicals we use," Rebolledo added.

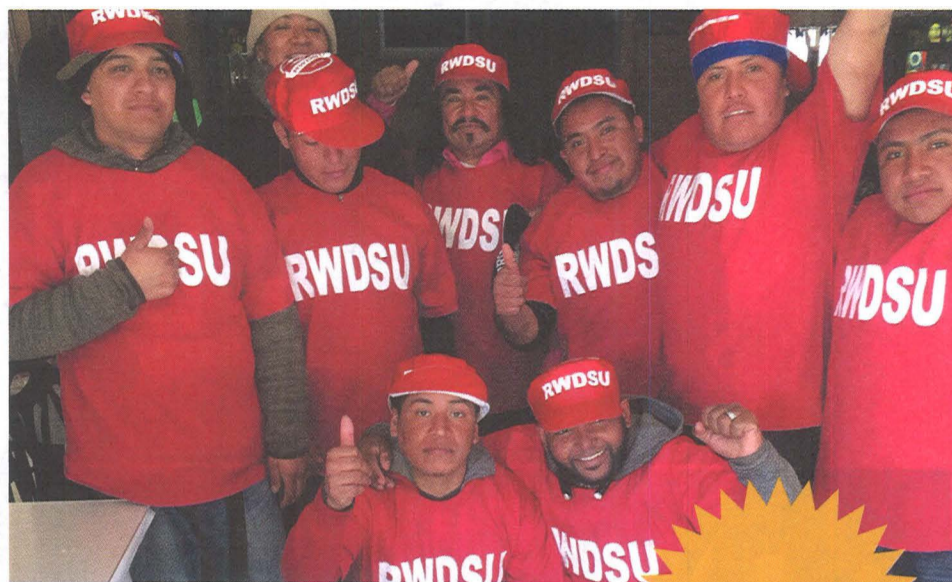
### Rallies and Civil Disobedience Arrests Help Spur Victory

During the long strike, a number of rallies and actions were held to bring the community's attention to the workers' fight for a fair contract. One of the biggest was held in March, when labor leaders including RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum and UFCW President Marc Perrone, and other activists and elected officials blocked traffic in front of the car wash and were arrested.

Before the arrests, hundreds of activists marched through the streets of Brooklyn to the facility, and rallied in front to call for justice.

Activists' chants of "si se puede" (yes we can) and "no contract, no peace!" echoed

Community activists, labor leaders, and elected officials marched in the streets of Brooklyn to demand a contract for Vegas workers.



Carwasheros at Vegas Auto Spa have won their strike and a fair contract.

## carwasheros

throughout the neighborhood.

They sent a message that the community, workers, and the labor movement were united in a fight for a fair contract at Vegas Auto Spa. In the wake of the rally and the press it generated, negotiations followed and within a few weeks the contract was won and the strike was ended.

"This is a perfect example of what



RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum was among those arrested in March in a show of support for Vegas workers.

## Contract Win for Bronx Car Wash Workers

**W**orkers at the East Tremont Car Wash in the Bronx have signed a union contract with their employer, providing wage increases and crucial worker protections.

The "carwasheros" at the shop voted 21-4 to join the RWDSU last August. Workers organized due to low pay and poor treatment at work, and despite an anti-union campaign that included captive meetings and last-minute attempts to win workers over with perks and promises. With this contract and the ratification of a contract for

workers at Vegas Auto Spa, workers at all nine RWDSU car washes now have their first union contract.

"For us, there is no turning back," said Guillermo Brizuelas, a young immigrant worker from El Salvador, who received an almost \$3 an hour raise with the new contract.

The two-year contract calls for many improvements including wage increases in each year of the agreement, fair scheduling, better access to overtime work, paid time off, increased protections for immigrant workers, and a grievance procedure to protect workers and handle workplace issues. ■



Carwasheros and the union's negotiating team celebrate the first contract for East Tremont car wash workers.

# RWDSU A VOICE FOR WORKING PEOPLE

## Solidarity and Support for RiverVue Workers

In March, dozens of activists from the RWDSU and other unions came to Tuckahoe, New York, to rally in support of RWDSU Local 338 members at The Fountains at RiverVue, an assisted living facility. The workers there are demanding their employer negotiate a fair contract with them. Management has refused to bargain in good faith, and is demanding that employees pay even more money into an unaffordable health care plan. In addition management has pressured and intimidated employees into giving up on trying to win a contract.

RWDSU members from locals 262, 670, 1102, 338, and 108 were on hand, marching in front of the facility and chanting in support of workers, while receiving honks of support from community members driving by.

"These workers have been without a contract for too long. It's time for The



RiverVue workers are demanding their employer negotiate a fair contract.

Fountains at RiverVue to take care of the people who take care of those who live at the facility," said RWDSU Local 338 President John Durso. ■

## CW Post Workers, Supporters Rally for Fair Contract



Activists rally at Long Island University.



Local 1102 President Gemma de Leon (with megaphone) addresses workers and activists who want a fair contract for CW Post workers.

A large group of Local 1102 members employed by CW Post at Long Island University were joined by RWDSU members and community allies at the school's Brookville, New York, campus in March to demand a fair contract. The members are custodial and mechanical unit workers at the school.

"I have been working here nearly 16 years and have always been proud to be a part of Local 1102," said Bob Picard, a custodian in the maintenance department. "For three years now, my coworkers and I have been fighting for a new contract that includes a pay raise and adequate health benefits which is long overdue. It's time for the administration to quit stalling and give the workers what we've earned."

Since October 2012, the union and a

committee of workers at CW Post campus have attempted to negotiate a contract with the school's management, and they have been unwilling to bargain in good faith.

"CW Post employees care deeply about the future of the university, but the administration's demands puts too much of the burden, caused by years of mismanagement and a lack of vision, on the backs of the very people who keep the campus running smoothly – it's workforce," said Local 1102 President Gemma de Leon.

Protesters rallied and marched in the rain, and distributed literature about the contract fight to students and staff leaving and entering the university's campus.

"We will continue to stand with our members to win a fair contract because they deserve better," de Leon added. ■

# RWDSU Marches Again in Selma

In March, RWDSU activists returned to the site where 50 years earlier civil rights pioneers marched for the right of all Americans to vote. RWDSU members of the Mid-South Council were among thousands who gathered at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, to mark the anniversary of "Bloody Sunday," a brutal police crackdown on civil rights marchers. That event, along with subsequent actions in March, 1965, helped create one of the civil rights movement's greatest victories, restoring and protecting voting rights for African-Americans in the South.

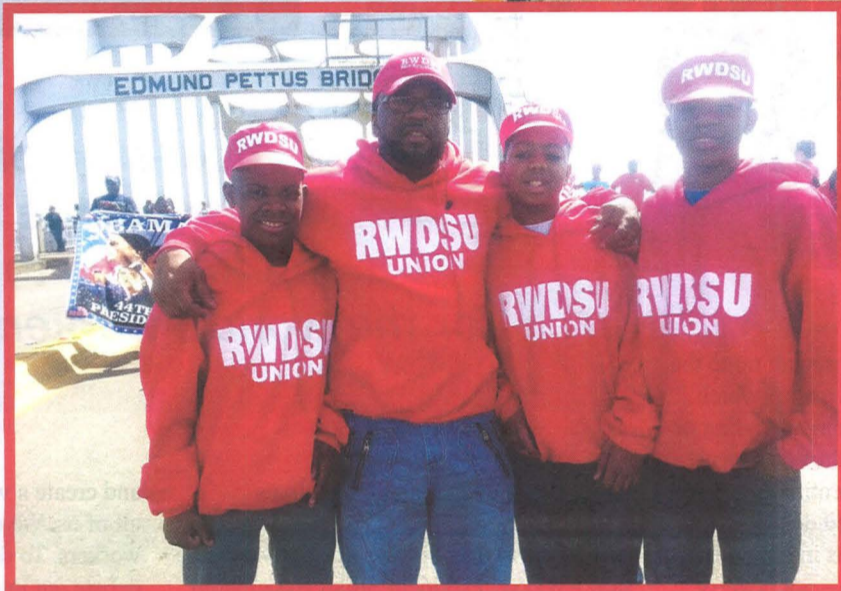
RWDSU members participated in those historic marches, by marching and by working with civil rights leaders including Martin Luther King, Jr. during the planning stages and beyond. Mid-South Council members helped by bringing supplies to the march route. It's a proud part of our history, and a reason that RWDSU members came to commemorate these historic events that helped protect voting rights for generations in the American south.

At the 50th anniversary commemoration, RWDSU Mid-South Council members proudly displayed a banner with the "Without Change, Nothing Changes" slogan that has helped define recent successful Mid-South Council organizing drives at poultry plants.

"In Alabama, we've seen that by standing together we can fight back against oppression and make change – creating a fairer society," said RWDSU Mid-South Council President John Whitaker. "Our union was part of that change in society during the civil rights movement, and it's a part of change today as we help working people build better lives."

With voting rights under attack in the

RWDSU members proudly displayed their banner at the commemoration event.



RWDSU activists of all ages gathered at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama.

U.S. by right-wing interests, it's important to remember and celebrate the change we've won in the past, while looking to protect and expand voting rights in the future.

President Obama addressed the rally, noting how the echoes of history continue to call Americans to action in defending

our rights today.

"First and foremost, we have to recognize that one day's commemoration, no matter how special, is not enough. If Selma taught us anything, it's that our work is never done," Obama said.

"Fifty years from Bloody Sunday,

our march is not yet finished, but we're getting closer. Two hundred and thirty-nine years after this nation's founding our union is not yet perfect, but we are getting closer. Our job is easier because somebody already got us through that first mile. Somebody already got us over that bridge." ■



Thousands of people – including Mid-South Council members – celebrated the past and looked to keep voting rights secure in the future.

**"In Alabama, we've seen that by standing together we can fight back against oppression and make change."**

## RWDSU Celebrates King Legacy in Atlanta



(left to right) RWDSU member Michael Isler (Chief Steward at SouthernTea), President of N. Georgia/Atlanta Labor Council Dewey McClain, RWDSU Pres. Stuart Appelbaum, RWDSU Southeast Council Pres. Edgar E. Fields, AFL-CIO Exec. V.P. Tefere Gebre, RWDSU Rep. Greg Scandrett, RWDSU Rep. Sandra L. Williams, Southeast Council Sec.-Treas. Rick Wilson, RWDSU member Ashley Mount (Aluma Systems Chief Steward) and RWDSU Communications Director Janna Pea at the AFL-CIO Georgia Labor Breakfast.

At the 2015 Martin Luther King Jr. Civil and Human Rights Conference in Atlanta earlier this year, labor and civil rights leaders and activists came together to commemorate the life of Dr. King, and work to further his dream of social and economic equality.

It was an opportunity to develop labor-community relationships, and the RWDSU was there to help reinforce these partnerships.

"This is an important event because the labor and civil rights communities come together and we work on strategies to make us all stronger. By fostering these relationships we can grow together. We can protect workers' rights, civil rights, and voting rights," said RWDSU Southeast Council President Edgar Fields. "That's why the Southeast Council has been involved with this event since it began back in the 1970s," Fields added.

The Southeast Council was a key sponsor of the AFL-CIO Georgia Labor Breakfast, where RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum introduced AFL-CIO Executive Vice-President Tefere Gebre – whose path from African political refugee to union member to labor leader shows the difference the labor, immigrant rights, and civil rights movements can make in the lives of working people.

RWDSU members also participated in a civil rights march and rally in downtown Atlanta. ■

# RWDSU POLITICAL & LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

## TPP Trade Deal Fast Tracks Economic Inequality

In April, the U.S. House and Senate began considering “fast track” legislation to pass the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the latest in a long line of trade deals that are a creampuff for global corporations and a rotten egg for the rest of us. “Fast track” would enable quick passage of the TPP, without any changes or input from the American public or our representatives.

Fast track is what brought us NAFTA, a trade deal that unions fought against back in the early 1990s. It has cost the U.S. economy hundreds of thousands of jobs and is one reason why workers in our communities haven’t gotten a real raise in decades.

As it currently stands, the TPP is poised to lower wages and working standards across 40 percent of the world’s economy, cost American jobs, and create a world where there is little corporate accountability for harming workers, the planet, and anything else that gets in the way of profits.

Some are calling the TPP “NAFTA on steroids,” a so-called free trade agreement that would be the largest trade deal in history, affecting 729 million people and

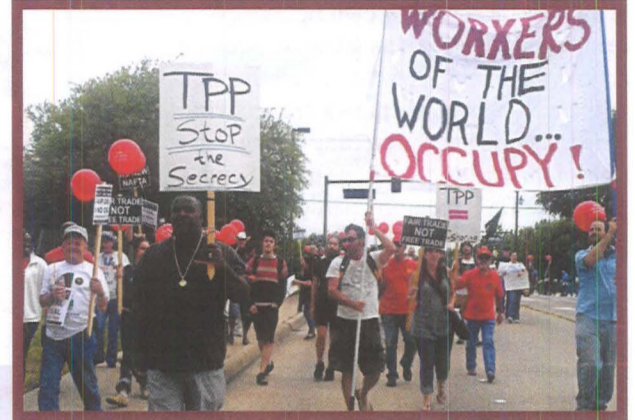
accounting for 1/3 of world trade.

Details on the deal have been leaked, and the TPP indeed recalls the worst of NAFTA – it’s an agreement that would increase profits by increasing the power of global corporations to undermine labor, environmental, health and financial laws and regulations. And, it would create private tribunals to resolve trade disputes that aren’t beholden to countries’ laws – effectively placing corporations above the law in many situations.

Worker-activists are saying no to the TPP, and saying no to “fast track,” which would prevent Congress from amending or changing any provision in the agreement and force them to vote the entire agreement up or down after a shortened debate period.

“We need better jobs in our communities that lift people up – not poverty wages and corporate roadblocks to building better lives. Rubber-stamping trade deals

Activists worldwide have been involved in the pushback against the TPP, including a global “Day of Action” on April 18.



*Rubber-stamping trade deals like the TPP speeds up the race to the bottom for the world’s workers.*

like the TPP does nothing to help us accomplish that, and in fact speeds up the race to the bottom for the world’s workers,” said RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum.

“We need to fight against fast-tracking of international trade deals like the TPP,

and create a world economy that works for all of us. We can make a deal that works for workers. To do that, we have to bring this debate out into the light of day,” Appelbaum added. ■

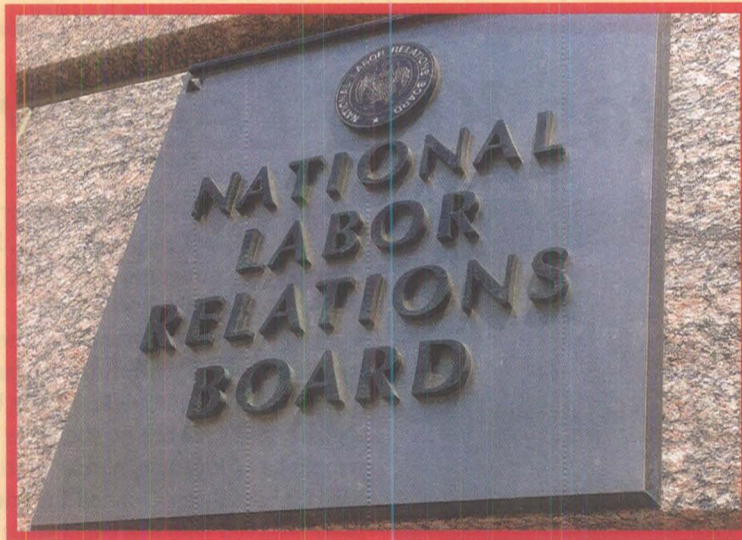
## NLRB Union Election Rules Changes Are in Effect

Union organizers are all too familiar with tactics employers often use to keep their workers from winning a union voice. Bosses routinely try to delay elections and hold mandatory anti-union meetings to wear down workers who were enthusiastic about voting yes.

On April 14, new National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) rules – established by the board last year – finally went into effect. RWDSU organizers have already petitioned for union elections under the new rules, which are designed to speed up the process and make it easier for workers to decide if they want a union to represent them with less interference from employers. Quicker elections should mean more successful organizing drives, and with less time between petitions and votes, locals can start negotiating contracts and representing workers much sooner.

Here are some of the most important NLRB rule changes that will help RWDSU organizers and workers who want to join the union:

■ **All paperwork can now be filed electronically.** Previously, union lawyers had to spend wasteful amounts of time printing and collating documents to submit to labor officials and companies. This would drain the union of valuable time and resources.



■ **Unions can call for a “quickie election.”** The NLRB determined that employees in a workplace have the right to vote in a timely fashion on whether to join a union. The board curbed the procedural tactics that employers often use to delay a union election and discourage workers.

■ **Employees can use work email to discuss unionization.** As long as it is done during non-work hours, workers will now be allowed to use their work email system to talk about whether to join a union.

■ **Unions will have better contact information for workers.** During a union drive, employers were previously only required to give the union the names and home addresses of workers in the shop. The NLRB now requires employers to hand over email

addresses and home phone numbers, making it easier to contact interested workers and discuss the benefits of being in a union.

Under previous Republican administrations, these changes would have been unheard of.

Time will tell if these rules changes help workers, but on paper these common-sense changes will help level an environment that has been slanted against workers’ voices for far too long. ■

# #ChangeZara

## Building Better Lives for Retail Workers

The RWDSU's Retail Action Project (RAP) is helping workers at retail store Zara organize and fight for more hours, better pay, advanced notification of work schedules, and equal opportunity for professional growth.

The massive global chain – the world's largest fashion retailer – has been expanding throughout the U.S., profiting off of its low pay and benefits.

But now, the #ChangeZara campaign is starting to make a difference for the workers who are the driving force behind the company's success and expansion. In 2014, RAP circulated a petition amongst Zara workers in New York City, garnering over 1,500 signatures demanding higher pay and control over scheduling.

In January, workers received a letter from the company promising higher wages – up to \$14 per hour. Jedidiah Labinjo, who's been a sales associate at Zara's SoHo location for a little over a year and started the petition, credits the #ChangeZara campaign for the wage increases.

"I believe that because of this Change Zara campaign we were able to have this change happen," Labinjo said. "We were able to get a little portion of what we expected."

The wage raises are only going to workers in New York City, and while the company also said it will increase the number of full-time positions and promote eligible employees to that status, it doesn't say how many will be made available. Zara workers still need more, and ultimately, they need a union contract to secure regular wage increases, benefit improvements, and control over their schedules to ensure they receive sufficient hours.

### Clothing with a Deeper Purpose

To bring attention to the #ChangeZara campaign and Zara workers' fight to create better jobs, activists from the RWDSU's Retail Action Project (RAP) spread the message that treating workers fairly is always in style at the Fashion Week event in New York City. RAP members designed and screen printed their own clothing, and modeled it during the popular event's last day at historic Lincoln Center alongside professional models who were showing off high-priced fashion to bloggers and paparazzi.

But unlike those models, Zara workers can't afford the clothes they sell, much less the high cost of living in New York. The activists attracted the attention of Fashion Week attendees with their custom-made #ChangeZara clothing. And, they asked attendees "What do you think of clothing with a deeper purpose?"

"People were intrigued by it, and wanted to know more. We told them about Zara workers and their struggles to improve their working conditions and scheduling policies," said RAP member Connor Hicks.



Zara employee Jedidiah Labinjo (with megaphone) and other activists call attention to the #ChangeZara campaign in New York City.

You can find out more about the #ChangeZara campaign and RAP at [retailactionproject.org](http://retailactionproject.org). ■

(l to r) RAP members Zuleyka Hamilton and Connor Hicks, with Director of the Retail Organizing Project at RWDSU Phil Andrews, model their #ChangeZara fashion line at New York City's Fashion Week.



## RAP Members Fight for \$15

On April 15, RWDSU members, along with the Retail Action Project (RAP) and members of the #ChangeZara campaign participated in the 'Fight For \$15' march that took over the streets of New York City. The event drew attention to the Fight For \$15 campaign, which sees low wage workers from across the country in industries including fast food and retail demanding a liveable wage of \$15 an hour.

During the march of an estimated 700 attendees, Zara employees lead the crowd in calling on the company to raise its wages, provide access to full-time hours and recognize their desire to unionize. Marchers stopped in front of the Lincoln Center Zara to call upon the retailer to treat its workers better.

"I'm trying to support myself while getting my education, but my hours and wages at Zara just don't cut it. I have to live with my parents since I can't afford to pay bills or make rent otherwise," Zara worker Darren Frett told the crowd.

"We, as workers, are fed up with this kind of treatment," Frett added. ■



Fight for \$15 marchers demanded better treatment for low-wage workers.

# Next Up, A New Generation of Worker Activists

**Y**oung Americans entering the workforce today face a host of challenging obstacles, including high unemployment and stagnant wages. But they also represent a big opportunity for the progressive labor movement to grow stronger, and they stand to benefit by getting involved in union activism.

Research shows that people under the age of 30 are likely to have a more favorable impression of unions than any other age groups. And yet, few young workers actually belong to one. Recruiting a new generation of members could do more than sustain the labor movement — it's the way unions will grow in the future and bring all of us more power at the bargaining table.

In March, the AFL-CIO hosted the Next Up Young Workers Summit in downtown Chicago. Over 1,000 union activists nationwide came together to discuss strategies for getting young people more involved in labor issues. RWDSU members from the Chicago Joint Board and Locals 338 and 1102 attended, along with members of the RWDSU's Retail Action Project (RAP).

By necessity, the retail industry will be central to any effort to organize young people entering the workforce. Despite the unemployment crisis of recent years, retail continues to have the largest number of projected job openings of any sector. Additionally, there is a high level of dissatisfaction among retail workers who have to deal with part-time hours, high turnover and erratic scheduling. This provides opportuni-



A large group of Next Up Summit attendees traveled to a Guitar Center store in Chicago's South Side to inform consumers about the chain's anti-worker practices.

ties for the RWDSU's organizing teams, including RAP.

One way the labor movement wants to get young people involved is through

young worker groups. The AFL-CIO has a panel aimed at youth outreach, known as the Young Worker Advisory Council (YWAC). RWDSU Director of International Affairs Sarah Meyer, a member of YWAC, spoke to the summit's attendees about the importance of young worker groups.

"Young worker groups are a way for us to work with local labor federations to take action around political fights, policy fights and organizing fights that are important to us," said Meyer. "We can immerse young activists in all facets of the labor movement this way," Meyer added.

Meyer also talked about actions that AFL-CIO has taken to boost youth participation. The federation has passed a resolution to dramatically increase outreach and training for young workers. In addition, a seat for young members has been added to AFL-CIO's general board.

## Young Workers Power Zara Campaign

The RWDSU and RAP are on the ground engaging young workers every day. RAP's interim director, Darrah Sipe, says that the organization is committed to addressing the issues that young workers face.

"RAP is really dedicated to demonstrating that young workers can have a voice on the job," Sipe said. "Sometimes young workers can feel their voices are absorbed and lost in a larger workplace environment."

At the Next Up summit, RAP organizer Dolly Martinez discussed the campaign to unionize fast fashion retailer Zara. Martinez, who is 27 years old, noted that young people were essential to the #ChangeZara campaign.

"There's nothing outside of us to get you — Dolly"

### Key figures

- 9.5 percent of workers between 25 and 34 years old are unionized
- 66 percent of workers between 18 and 29 years old have a favorable impression of unions
- 8 million young workers are employed in retail — the largest work sector for young people.
- 6.1 million young workers are employed in food service.
- \$545 is the median weekly earnings for young union workers
- \$434 is the median weekly earnings for young non-union workers



# NEXT UP



ke taking action  
aturday morning  
ood pumping.”  
rtinez, 27

“I should mention that almost every single Zara worker who I’ve been meeting with is under the age of 25,” she told the Next Up attendees. “And I just want to say to every single young person who is attending this conference that there is a possibility that you could be up here on this stage with your own campaign leading, motivating and encouraging every single retail worker throughout the United States.”

#ChangeZara has achieved some real victories in New York City. Workers recently gained access to full-time jobs and received raises of \$1 to \$3 per hour. However, Martinez told the summit that work on the campaign is not yet finished.

“Only Zara workers in New York City got those raises. Zara workers elsewhere, including here in Chicago, saw absolutely no changes,” she said. “That’s why I’m here.”

Martinez, along with other RAP and RWDSU leaders, took to the streets outside a Zara location in downtown Chicago to

lead an action in solidarity with workers at the store. The event drew dozens of attendees from the Next Up conference. They called for regular schedules and fair wages for the Zara employees in Chicago. The energy was high as conference members put the ideas from the conference into action.

“There’s nothing like taking action outside on a Saturday morning to get your blood pumping,” Martinez said.

It’s that kind of energy that the labor movement seeks to harness in engaging young workers.

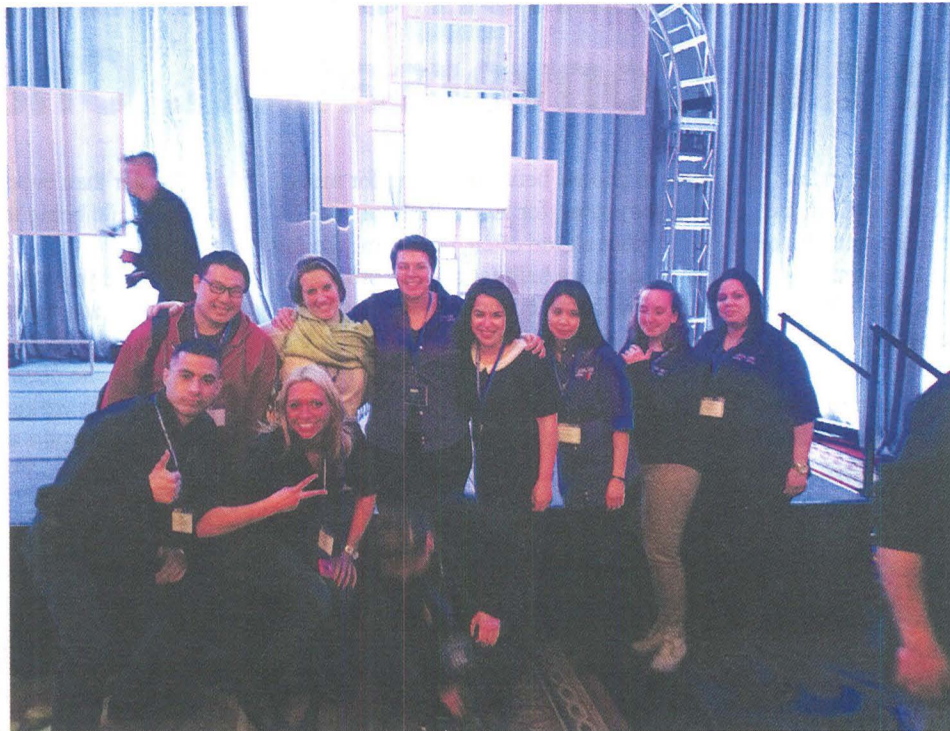
## Taking Action at Guitar Center

The conference heard from members of RWDSU’s Guitar Center campaign, which relies on leadership and involvement of young workers.

Matt Pantelis, a 29-year-old former Guitar Center worker, told the crowd about complaints that employees have about the Guitar Center’s pay structure. Workers at stores in Las Vegas, Chicago, and New York have joined the RWDSU and are currently trying to resolve the issue through contract negotiations.

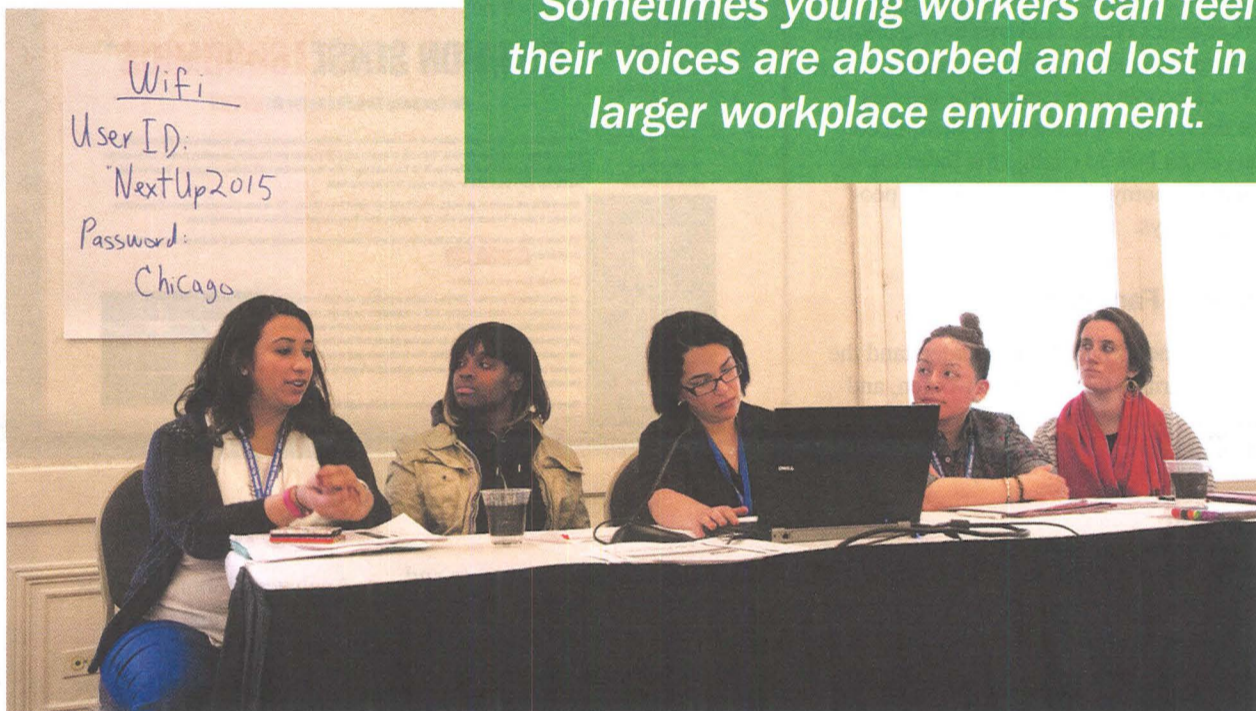
“Guitar Center directs their employees to push pro coverage – extended warranties – but they don’t cover their pros with fair treatment and dignity on the job,” Pantelis said.

The RWDSU led a labor action at a Guitar Center on Chicago’s South Side. Unlike the company’s Central Chicago location, the South Side store is not unionized. The crowd of about 50 labor supporters handed out flyers informing passersby about some of Guitar Center’s worst practices and ways that the union can make a better store for customers.



RWDSU activists came to the Next Up Summit to get young workers involved in the labor movement.

Sometimes young workers can feel their voices are absorbed and lost in a larger workplace environment.



(right to left) RAP Interim Director Darrah Sipe, RAP Organizer Dolly Martinez, and RWDSU Director of International Affairs Sarah Meyer gave presentations on young worker involvement at Zara and Walmart, and how the RWDSU’s Retail Action Project is reaching out to young workers. To their left are a Walmart worker and Our Walmart member, and the UFCW’s Silvia Fabela.

## Unions – a Voice for the Next Generation of Workers

“Unions are a natural ally for young workers,” Meyer said. “Unions advocate for issues of central concern to young people: student loan reform; access to job opportunities; improved wages; a voice in the workplace; and immigration reform.”

In addition, unions make a clear difference in the lives of young working people, ensuring they receive higher pay and better benefits. Young workers in a union earn over \$100 more a week than those not in a union.

“America’s unions should seize this opportunity to reach out to young people, even before they enter the workforce, and work together. We can achieve our shared goals of prosperity and pushing back against economic inequality, and we can create a fairer economy for everyone,” Meyer added. ■

# AFL CIO's Common Sense Economics Training: Change the Conversation, Change Our Economy

**A**t the RWDSU Convention last year, Roberta Reardon from the AFL-CIO gave a presentation on Common Sense Economics, a curriculum designed by the AFL-CIO to help working people take control over our economy.

“People should never have to choose between caring for their sick child, or being able to go to their job. People should never

have to choose between paying for medicine, or paying for food,” Reardon said.

But all too often, decisions like this have become a hallmark of our broken economy. It's an economy that serves the interests of the wealthy, and has the rest of us scrambling for the scraps.

The rich are getting richer, and the poor are getting poorer, and despite work-

ing harder than ever they are receiving less, all the while being told they are lucky to be getting it.

And yet, while the vast majority of Americans are suffering the effects of growing income inequality, it's the richest among us who control the conversation. Wall Street is setting the economic agenda and controlling the economic discussion.

And it's hurting all of us.

The AFL-CIO's Common Sense Economics (CSE) training program seeks to change that by educating workers on how the economy really works and to help working people create a voice in this economy. We can change the direction of today's economy, and create an economy that works for all of us.

## Core Issues of Common Sense Economics

CSE is broken down into interactive workshops that are based upon the following areas:

### Workonomics:

The Workonomics Guide analyzes how economic outcomes are the result of political choices.

“Once people understand how politics affect the economy, we can engage them in conversations about how to change the direction of the national economy so it helps working people,” Reardon says.

### Women and Families:

This workshop helps participants understand the economic disparities that exist for women, and the economic challenges families face when accessing child care.

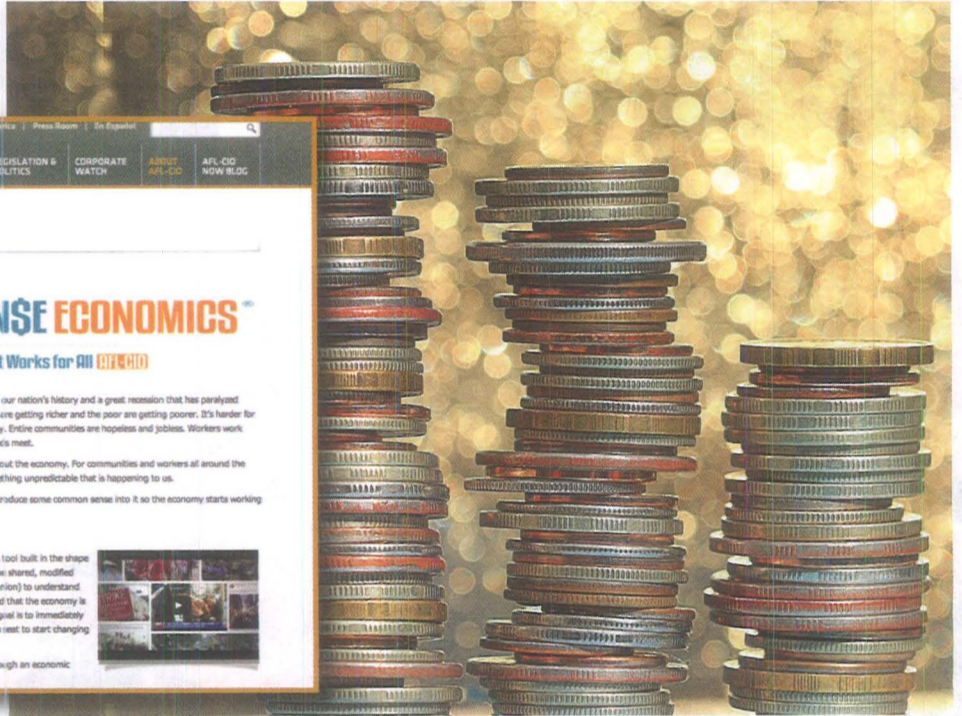
### Immigration:

The CSE Immigration Guide takes a focused look at our broken immigration system and its effect on workers. It outlines the contributions immigrants make to the U.S. economy, and how employers exploit the flaws in the immigration system. This workshop seeks to engage workers to take action to create an immigration system that works for all.



At the RWDSU Convention last summer, the AFL-CIO's Roberta Reardon discussed changing the economic conversation and the direction of our economy.

*We can take control of this discussion, and we can take control of the economy.*



### Young Workers:

Analyzes economic trends and policies that impact workers under the age of 35, and focuses on how we can address the financial crises that plague this debt-ridden group.

### Globalization:

Global corporations are manipulating the world economy to the detriment of all workers. This guide seeks to inspire workers to take action that will have a global impact.

### Mass Incarceration:

Participants will learn about how the criminal justice system shapes our lives and the economy, and how we can work to improve it.

*While the vast majority of Americans are suffering the effects of growing income inequality, it's the richest among us who control the conversation.*

## Common Sense Economics Trainings

The AFL-CIO has educated over 300 trainers around the country – from unions and community groups, and labor organizations like the AFL-CIO. Union leaders and activists can bring CSE educators to their meetings, conventions, and training sessions.

To request a training, contact your local union. Visit the Common Sense Economics website at [www.aflcio.org/About/Common-Sense-Economics](http://www.aflcio.org/About/Common-Sense-Economics), or email [CSE@aflcio.org](mailto:CSE@aflcio.org) to learn more.

“The economic conversation – controlled by Wall Street – makes it seem like the economy is like the weather. It's unpredictable, and it happens, and we succeed or fail based upon which way the economic winds are blowing. But that's not so, the economy is not like the weather, and there are precise reasons for why it isn't working for us,” Reardon says.

“We can take control of this conversation, among our co-workers, family, and friends, and then with our elected officials. That's how we'll take control of the economy. It's time to take action,” Reardon adds. ■

# News From Around the **UFCW**

a **VOICE** for working America

## UFCW Retail Conference Focuses on Organizing and Bargaining

Local union leaders and staff from around the U.S. and Canada gathered in Chicago, Ill., in late April for a Retail Conference focused on organizing and bargaining in the retail and retail food sectors. Participants broke into groups to create region-wide and company-wide organizing and bargaining strategies. Participants also attended workshops on contract language, right-to-work and union shop servicing, pension funds, communications, and health and welfare funds.

"I think bringing everyone together so that we can rebuild our strength in retail is a great idea. It's long overdue," said Mia Contreras, Membership Action Director at UFCW Local 21.

"Being in the workshops and listening to other locals strategies is a learning experience. When you hear people talking about new things, you feel like it's something you could put in practice at your own local. At the same time there is a lot of things we are doing well. I hear a lot of different locals talking about strategies and tactics that are working – like working together with community organizations – where we are very successful. The UFCW is a big family – and it's great to hear what works well, and also it is also great that we are working together in creating new strategies to grow the union and build a better future for our members. This is what this conference is about," said Joseph Dorismond, Recorder/Organizing Coordinator, RWDSU.



UFCW President Marc Perrone at the UFCW Retail Conference.

Kroger workers will see numerous improvements with their new contract.

## New Contract for Kentucky, Indiana Members at Kroger

UFCW Local 227 members who work at Kroger grocery stores overwhelmingly ratified a new agreement by a nearly 4 to 1 margin. The four-year pact covers approximately 13,900 hard working men and women across Kentucky and Southern Indiana. The contract ensures quality, affordable health insurance that includes spousal coverage, and additional insurance options for part-time members. It also includes a raise for all members each year of the contract and prevented potential pension cuts.

Kroger, one of the world's largest retailers, employs nearly 400,000 associates who serve customers in 2,625 supermarkets and multi-department stores in 34 states and the District of Columbia under two dozen local banner names.



Allegro CNAs vote "union yes!"

## A Union Voice for Florida Nursing Assistants

Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA) at the Allegro Nursing Home in St. Petersburg, Florida, have voted to join UFCW Local 1625 so they can change their working conditions and be sure their voice is heard.

"I am so proud of my team today. We stood up to management's efforts to intimidate and divide us, and together, we won," said Eleanor Mitchell, who has worked for Allegro for 25 years. "With a union, we now have the power to shape a better future at Allegro."

The NLRB election saw over 90 percent of the workers voting to join the UFCW.

"The courage shown by these workers is extraordinary. These Certified Nursing Assistants are standing up for the dignity of all workers in the care-taking professions," said Ed Chambers, President of UFCW Local 1625.

The workers will now begin negotiating with Allegro for their first union contract and are looking to create a fairer and more transparent schedule for raises and better working conditions.

## Washington UFCW Local Lays Groundwork for Organizing Cannabis Workers

During a seminar hosted by UFCW Local 367, workers in the cannabis industry learned more about joining a union.

The Washington State House and State Senate recently passed legislation that regulates the medical and recreational cannabis industries and creates a fair and safe dispensary system. Many cannabis workers in Washington are looking forward to having a union contract to help make their jobs and shops better for workers and consumers.

UFCW Local 367 has negotiated a neutrality agreement with ten cannabis shops

that will allow for a fair and cooperative process for workers to join a union, if they choose. Recently, the local held a joint seminar with cannabis shop owners, employees, and the Federal Mediation Conciliation Service to lay the framework for cannabis workers to choose a union voice on the job.

Workers say that fair wages, fair scheduling practices, and affordable benefits are priorities. They also wanted the opportunity to join a union in order to

help legitimize the cannabis industry with rules and regulations that focus on worker, product, and consumer safety. Worker safety seminars are planned following the ratification of a first contract.

"We are pioneers in Washington for this industry," said UFCW Local 367 President Denise Jagielo. "The cannabis industry continues to contribute to the economic vitality of Washington with safe, living-wage jobs for their workforce."



The United Food and Commercial Workers International

[www.ufcw.org](http://www.ufcw.org)

# RWDSU CONTRACT NEWS



## Pepsi Local 513 Rhode Island

Pepsi workers won wage gains and benefit improvements.

The 130 RWDSU Local 513 members working at Pepsi Bottling Group, Inc., in Cranston, Rhode Island have a new four-year agreement that guarantees 3.5 percent annual wage increases. In addition, all members received a \$500 ratification bonus. The negotiating committee not only fought back against all attempts at givebacks, they won improvements to several benefits. The pension benefits were improved, and health insurance costs were lowered. Retiree benefits were all protected.

## Indiana Coca-Cola Workers Win Improvements

RWDSU Local 835 members in Fort Wayne, Indiana, have ratified a new five-year contract with their employer, Coca-Cola. The workers are employed in warehouse distribution, cold drink equipment service, and vendor delivery. The new agreement features hourly wage increases annually, along with protection of the health insurance and 401K program. It also clarifies and provides many language improvements in the areas of seniority, leave of absence, overtime assignment, paid personal days, holiday pay and vacation. Serving on the union's bargaining committee were Travis Fleischman, Kyle Palm and Demetrius Coleman. They were assisted by Indiana Joint Board President and Representative, Dave Altman.



(l to r) Local 835 members Kyle Palm, Demetrius Coleman and Travis Fleischman of Coca-Cola Fort Wayne, Indiana.

## Country Fresh Dairy Local 386 Michigan

RWDSU Local 386 members who work at Country Fresh Dairy in Grand Rapids, Michigan, ratified a new contract that gives workers a guaranteed pay raise every year, totaling 11 percent over the life of the three-year-agreement. In addition, the agreement maintains the RWDSU pension and health insurance programs for full-time workers. Members of the Country Fresh Dairy plant manufacture dairy products. There are over 150 RWDSU members employed at the plant. Serving on the negotiating committee were Local 386 President Ken Brown, Chief Steward Mark Kollar, Mike Bowen and Mike Brougham.

## Perfection Bakeries Local 835 Indiana

On Tuesday, March 24, 2015, RWDSU 835 members who work at Perfection Bakery in Fort Wayne, Indiana, voted to ratify a new two and one half year contract. The new agreement maintains the employees' union pension and health insurance coverage, and increases the contribution match in the company 401K savings plan. Wages will increase by 96 cents per hour over the life of the pact, and health care coverage will be extended for employees who aren't working due to work-related injury. Part-timers will now receive paid funeral leave. There are 77 maintenance and production workers covered by the contract. Serving on the bargaining committee were Rod Gerig, Eric Schwartz, and Tim Rayl. They were assisted by Indiana joint Board President Dave Altman.

## Connor Corporation Local 835 Indiana

RWDSU members at Connor Corporation, who produce rubber, steel, brass, and plastic parts for industrial applications, have ratified a new three-year contract. The new contract was unanimously ratified, and raises hourly wages 50 cents each year of the contract. It also increases company contributions to the pension fund, and maintains employees' health coverage with no additional costs.

# RWDSU CONTRACT NEWS

## Coca-Cola Local 513 Massachusetts

Big wage increases highlight a five year contract for over 500 workers at two Coca-Cola plants in Massachusetts. Workers at the two facilities – in Needham and Waltham, Massachusetts - will see raises anywhere from 3 to 18 percent each year of the contract. Members can earn an attendance bonus of \$1,675 annually, and a ratification bonus and numerous incentives will bring workers more money.

In addition, the contract protects health care benefits and increases pension benefits, and retirees will be able to keep their health insurance and all of their other previously-won benefits. In addition, all existing benefits were protected.

Workers at the two facilities are Local 513 members.



The new contract covers Coca-Cola workers at two plants in Massachusetts.

Here's one more thing union families can share.

**Everyday savings add up** with union-member-only discounts from Union Plus on a long list of products and services including discounts on movie and theme park tickets, flower delivery, pet services and products, car rentals, wireless services and more. In addition, there's three credit card options designed to meet the needs of hard working union members.



Learn more at [UnionPlus.org](http://UnionPlus.org)

# RWDSU AROUND OUR UNION

## RWDSU Immigration Training in New York, Alabama, and Florida

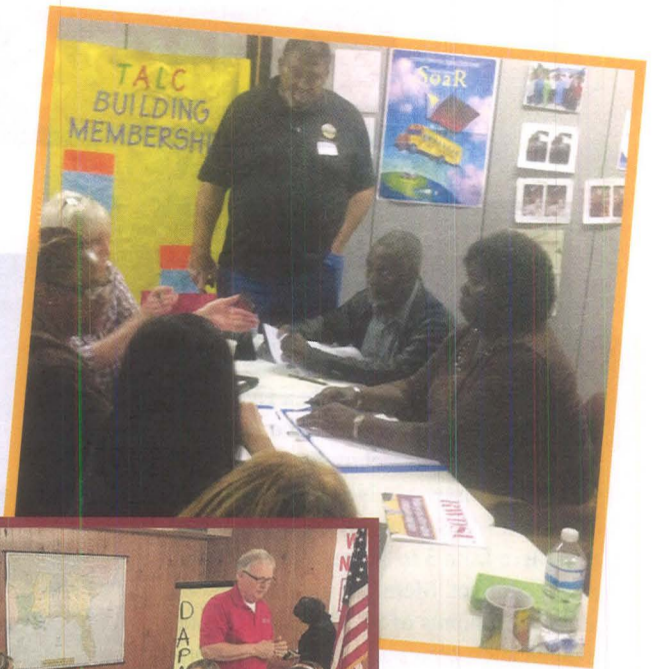
**P**resident Obama's immigration reforms promise to help countless working immigrants apply for documentation and a reprieve from deportation. The RWDSU is committed to helping its members and their families apply for the benefits of these reforms.

The RWDSU recently held training sessions hosted by the Southeast Council in Fort Myers, Florida, the Mid-South Council in Birmingham, Alabama, and Local 1-s in New York City. The sessions focused on training staff, union members, and volunteers from different organizations on how to disseminate information, screen members, and assist in applying around three immigration processes: naturalization, deferred action for childhood arrivals (DACA), and deferred action for parental accountability (DAPA).

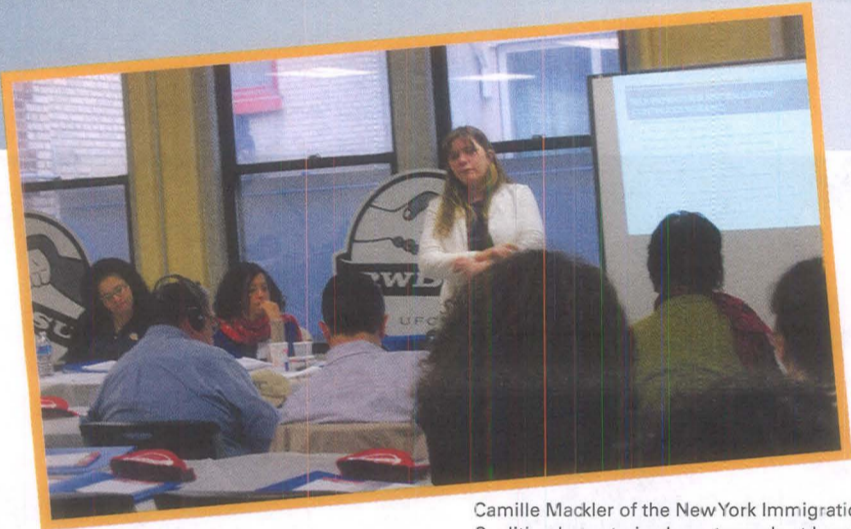
"These policies represent a great opportunity for countless working people, and many RWDSU members. We've fought for change, and now we've gotten it," said Mid-South Council President John Whitaker.

"These reforms will help keep families together and provide security for hard working immigrants. And the RWDSU will be here to help members through the process," said Southeast Council President Edgar Fields.

Southeast Council President Edgar Fields (standing) at the Florida training session.



The RWDSU is hosting training sessions across the country, like this one in Alabama.



Camille Mackler of the New York Immigration Coalition helps train shop stewards at Local 1-s in New York.

## Indiana Local Officer and Unit Elections

**R**WDSU members at Holsum Bakery, in Fort Wayne, Indiana, held their general election for Unit Officers. Elected to new two year terms of office were: Chairman Kevin Degitz, Vice-Chairman Paul Harless, Jr, Chief Steward Lloyd Schaper, Jr., Recording Secretary Francis Ikudabo, and Sergeant-At-Arms James Goodpaster.

There are 79 RWDSU Local 835 members in the Production and Maintenance Unit at Holsum Bakery.

Local 835 also held elections for officers of the local earlier this year.

Elected to new three year terms of office for Local 835 were President and Delegate Dave Altman, Secretary-Treasurer and Delegate Kevin Degitz, and Recorder and Delegate Lloyd Schaper, Jr.

RWDSU Local 835 members work for a dozen different employers. Local 835 members include bakery workers, warehouse workers, clerical workers, janitors, and soft drink and electronics workers.



(l to r) Francis Ikudabo, Paul Harless, Jr., James Goodpaster, Kevin Degitz and Lloyd Schaper, Jr.

## Commemorating Triangle Fire Anniversary

**I**n March, hundreds of worker activists gathered in New York City's west village to mark the 104th anniversary of the Triangle Fire tragedy. RWDSU members – including car wash workers, whose health and safety issues were one of the reason they have joined the union – were among them.

Carwasher Ernesto Salazar was one of the speakers at the event.

"Working with dangerous chemicals without proper equipment is a hard way to make a living," Salazar said. "We need to make sure that workplaces are safe and workers are protected."

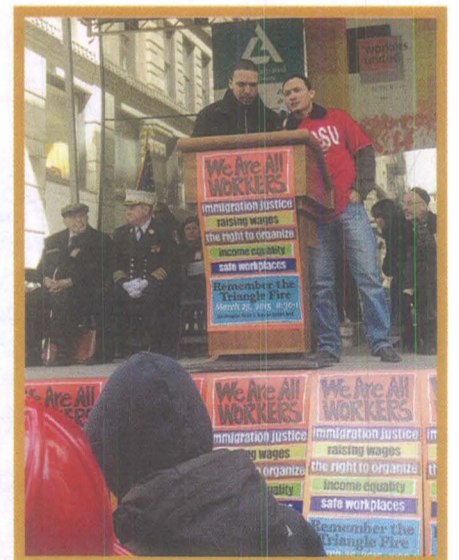
On March 25, 1911, a fire broke out on the top three floors of the Asch building, which were being used as a garment factory by the Triangle Shirtwaist Company. The doors on the ninth floor had been locked to keep out union organizers, and 146 workers either died in the fire or jumped to their death to escape the flames. The dead were mostly young Italian and Eastern European immigrant women, some of whom were as young as twelve or thirteen, who worked fourteen-hour shifts during a 60-hour to 72-hour workweek, sewing clothes for a wage of \$1.50 per week.

The fire put the spotlight on the exploitation of garment workers, who toiled long hours for low pay in often terribly dangerous working conditions in sweatshops. The fire and its aftermath resulted in new laws mandating safer factories. Every year working people mark the anniversary of this terrible event, and renew the call for safer workplaces and higher safety standards.

But unfortunately, garment workers continue to lose their lives in similar conditions worldwide while simply trying to provide for their families. In the last few years we've seen astounding tragedies including thousands who were killed or injured in a factory collapse in Bangladesh.

"We still have so much to do," said RWDSU Health and Safety Director Steve Mooser. "No worker should fear for their life to provide for their family – and no child should have to worry that their parent won't ever come home from work."

RWDSU member and car wash worker Ernesto Salazar (right at podium) addresses the Triangle Fire commemoration, discussing the ongoing importance of health and safety.



# RWDSU AROUND OUR UNION

## Local 108-Backed Center Opens to Offer Citizenship Help

**O**n April 21 in Elizabeth, New Jersey, the state opened an immigrant advocacy center to provide U.S. citizenship application assistance including preparatory classes for the citizenship test and referral, notary and translation services, at low- or no-cost to Union County residents. The center opened as a result of a cooperation between the state and Working Families United, a coalition of labor and community organizations led by Chairman and RWDSU Local 108 President Charles N. Hall, Jr.

It's the second such center opened in New Jersey.

"Becoming a citizen can be complicated, and we want to help any way we can," Hall, Jr., said. "This is a diverse community,



RWDSU Local 108 President Charles N. Hall, Jr. (far left) with elected officials and community leaders at the ribbon cutting for the We Are One New Jersey — Union County Center.

and many RWDSU Local 108 members will benefit from the services offered at the We are One New Jersey — Union County Center. Local 108 was proud to help lead the efforts to open this center."

Some 52,000 Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) live in Union County, including diverse and vibrant populations of Colombians, Ecuadorians, Portuguese, Haitians, Filipinos and more.

For more information on the programs and services available through We Are One New Jersey — Union County Center, call 908-355-4444 or email center Executive Director Elizabeth Montes at [Elizabeth@weareonenj.org](mailto:Elizabeth@weareonenj.org). ■

# RWDSU WORKERS WINNING A UNION VOICE

## Laminated Workers Win Local 262 Voice

**W**hen working people join together, they can create a powerful voice and demand respect. That's why workers at the Laminated paper products plant in Linden, New Jersey, voted to join RWDSU Local 262 on March 6.

The mostly Latino workforce of 40 at Laminated reached out to Local 262 after hearing about the difference the local has made in the lives of workers at other workplaces in the area. Workers demanded changes after years of poor treatment and pay.

"We were tired of working for low wages without yearly increases, and the working conditions were unsafe," said Laminated worker Jose Roman. "We had no benefits, no health care, and a lack of dignity and respect. Intimidation, harassment, and favoritism were all everyday parts of the job."

Management brought in anti-union consultants that held captive meetings in groups and one on one, threatening workers with immigration action and plant closure. But Laminated workers weren't tricked.

"They fought off these hostile anti-union consultants, and voted with their hearts," said RWDSU Organizer Luis Lopez. ■



Laminated workers joined RWDSU Local 262 to win a voice and respect at work.



New Local 670 members show their union pride.

## School Building Workers Join Local 670

**M**aintenance and kitchen workers at Yeshiva of Queens in New York City are long-term employees who have gone years without medical or pension benefits, and most never received wage increases. When the workers at the Jewish private school heard about the difference a union contract can make from workers at a neighboring building who are Local 670 members, they called the RWDSU to try to make a change.

The result was an overwhelming union election victory for the workers at the Jewish private school.

"We heard from them, and I headed right over. Workers were very enthusiastic and they were ready to win themselves a union voice," said RWDSU Organizer Mike Mesa, who spearheaded the campaign. "They wanted a union and they wanted it quick."

There are 900 students at the school. ■



# Keeping Workplaces Safe With the Three Rs

**A**s kids, many of heard about the importance of education via the folksy “Three Rs” of “Readin’, Ritin’, and Rithmatic’.” In the world of health and safety, we have three Rs too. They can be very important to help workers get home in the same condition as when they began their day. These Three Rs are:

**The Right to Know**

**The Right to Understand**

**The Right to Act**



## Knowing

A strong labor driven movement arose in the late 1970s demanding workers have a right to know about the hazardous substances they work with. OSHA had no regulation in that area. The movement was successful in getting a number of laws passed in cities and states. At one hearing before the City Council in Philadelphia, advocates uncapped a cylinder which started to release air into the room. Council members became alarmed. Cries of “What’s in the tank?” and “What are we being exposed to?” echoed through the halls.

Nothing at all poisonous was being released, but the stunt made a point. People have a right to know what they are exposed to. As more jurisdictions adopted Right to Know requirements, OSHA adopted the Hazard Communication Standard. The standard requires that employers compile an inventory of all hazardous substances in their workplaces and develop a written Hazard Communication program. Management needs to obtain information sheets from manufacturers on all hazardous substances, make sure chemicals are properly labeled and, at the time of initial employment, train their employees on safe chemical use and other protective measures. It is one of OSHA’s best standards, but unfortunately one of its most violated when inspections reveal that employers fall short in meeting their legal responsibility.

*Workers have a right to know what they are exposed to.*

## Understanding

OSHA maintains that to be effective all worker training should be easy to understand. One of the key elements of the Hazard Communication Standard is the requirement that your employer obtain Material Safety Sheets (MSDs) for each hazardous substance in your workplace and that the sheets be “readily accessible” to you and your coworkers. However frequently these sheets, which are prepared by the manufacturers of the chemical products, are difficult to read and understand. In order to address this issue OSHA has adopted the Global Harmonized System (GHS) of the classification and labeling of chemicals. The purpose of GHS is to make chemical hazard information more consistent and understandable, and to better highlight the most significant hazard of a chemical. This means changes we should see very soon in our workplaces.

As of June 1, 2015 chemical labels in our workplaces should show standardized GHS information and our employers should have Safety Data Sheets (SDSs). These new sheets should include 16 distinct, consistently listed sections of information about the product and include a specific pictogram and signal word which highlight the category and severity of the hazard. For example the symbol should highlight if a chemical is flammable, very toxic, can burn the skin or shouldn’t mix with other chemicals.

## Acting

The Right to Act is not written into health and safety regulations. It is something we must do together to make our workplaces safer. There are many ways we can do this. First we can talk about health and safety issues when we see them. Hazards can be reduced and injuries can be prevented. If you are concerned about a hazard, chances are your coworkers are as well.

*Talk with others — If you are concerned about a hazard, chances are your co-workers are as well.*

We can build health and safety updates into regular union meetings and conduct regular worksite audits. We can create a health and safety committee to be the focus point for gathering information and putting pressure to get needed changes.

The General Duty Clause of the OSHA law, Section 5(a)(1), states it is the legal responsibility of the employer to provide a workplace free of recognized hazards which are likely to cause death or serious injury. Together we can challenge our employers to “walk the walk”, to commit the human and financial resources to make our workplaces safer, to train supervisors that safety is at least as important as production and to hold them accountable for safety system failures.

We can also act with the power of our contract to develop and fight for language on health and safety, especially in areas like ergonomics (lifting, repetitive work risks etc.) where there is no OSHA standard. And we can use the grievance process to address specific hazard concerns.

None of us go to work wanting to get injured. Together we can take our knowledge and work experience to win changes that will make us all safer. ■



## More Information

For more information about GHS requirements – or more about your rights to know, understand, and act, contact the RWDSU Health and Safety Department at (212) 684-5300. ■