

RWDSU

UFCW

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WORKERS RISING: OUR MOVEMENT IS GROWING!

Over 900 Join RWDSU at REI, UHAB, Barnes & Noble, GrowNYC, and Bedrock Care



Workers at **REI Cleveland** (pictured) and Chicago stores win with RWDSU.



Nonprofit workers at **UHAB** in New York City joined the RWDSU to improve working conditions and communication with management.



Workers at five **Bedrock Care** facilities in Pennsylvania gain an RWDSU voice.

Also in This Issue

\$600 Grant Available for Poultry Workers!

PAGE 6



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INSIDE THE RECORD

- First NYC Cannabis Store Opens 3
- Organizing Training 4
- Importance of Global Solidarity 5
- \$600 Grant for Poultry Workers 6
- Organizing for our Future 7
- Workers Win RWDSU Voice 8-10
- Around our Union 11
- Contract News 12-13
- Steward Training 14
- Union Plus Benefits 15
- Health and Safety 16

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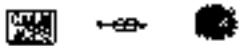
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The objectives of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union are to unite into this organization all workers employed in its jurisdiction in order to advance and safeguard their economic and social welfare...The Retail, Wholesale and Department 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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MESSAGE FROM YOUR OFFICERS

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Why Unions?

We in the labor movement are the foundation of so much of what is right with our world. And we are the solution for so much of what ails this world. It can't be said enough; the reason a strong middle class was even possible in our country was because of the efforts of the labor movement.



Workers – like these at GrowNYC in New York – are joining the RWDSU and the labor movement to create better jobs and better lives.

It was the labor movement that waged the battle for decent wages, improved working conditions, health benefits, pension plans, social security, and paid vacations and holidays. The resulting victories were due to the long, sometimes bitter, often painful and always hard-fought efforts of the trade union movement. And our victories benefited not just union members but all working people.

But the labor movement was always more than simply a means to improve the economic wellbeing of workers. It is, above all, an opportunity to express and make real the ethical values in which we all

believe. The labor movement is about the struggle of everyday people, of all races and creeds, faiths and backgrounds and identities, to bring meaning and dignity to their work while living and raising their families, free from the fear of deprivation and intimidation that is often the fate of the weak and powerless.

Growing our Union

In this issue of the Record, you'll read about over 900 working people who have recently won a union voice with the RWDSU at Bedrock Care, GrowNYC, UHAB, and multiple stores at Barnes & Noble and REI outdoor sports. With their new union strength comes the power to win higher wages, better benefits, job security, and safer workplaces. Most importantly, these workers will have a way to ensure that they are heard at work; their concerns can no longer be ignored, and the issues that are important to them will no longer go unaddressed.

And, you'll read about the organizing training that is being provided for RWDSU members. RWDSU instructors are conducting organizing training sessions across the country for shop stewards, officers, staff, and others; and it's making us more effective in growing our union.

The labor movement continues to be a powerful and democratic voice for the everyday decent concerns of millions and millions of workers; and, just as importantly, it is the means by which we make our nation's democratic experiment a successful reality for all of us. If we are to turn the corner and shake off

the problems that are challenging working people, the labor movement is central to that effort. Our future depends on it. ■

With the new RWDSU members' union strength comes the power to win higher wages, better benefits, job security, and safer workplaces.

RWDSU A VOICE FOR WORKING PEOPLE

RWDSU Difference for Retail Workers the Focus at DOL Event

RWDSU Local 1102 member Artavia Milliam was a part of a roundtable discussion in Washington, D.C., sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor focusing on scheduling in the retail industry. She told thousands of people watching live online about the positive impact that a union contract has made at her H&M store in New York.

The roundtable, titled "Frontline Flexibility: The Benefits of Fair Scheduling for Workers and Business," was moderated by then-U.S. Labor Secretary Marty Walsh. The panel featured conversations focusing on scheduling flexibility for hourly and frontline workers, its impact on job quality and

businesses' performance, and solutions for fair scheduling practices that improve workers' lives and economic stability.

Milliam has worked at H&M since 2005, before the stores in New York organized, and she talked about how with her RWDSU contract and union voice, she is better able to care for her family. Favoritism is no longer an issue when it comes to changing shifts, and she always receives two-weeks' notice on her schedule so she can plan her life easier.

"With my RWDSU contract, I'm guaranteed at least ten hours between a shift, and I know I can go home and get some sleep even if my commute takes longer than usual. And, I know I'm guaranteed 36 hours

at work every week," Milliam said. "This stability and transparency is so very important to myself and my co-workers." ■

Local 1102 member Artavia Milliam with then- U.S. Labor Secretary Marty Walsh. Milliam was in Washington, D.C. to discuss how union membership can help with scheduling issues at work.



Local 338 Members Staff First NYC Adult-Use Cannabis Store

History was made when the first adult-use cannabis dispensary in New York officially opened late last year, and the facility is staffed by Local 338 members. The new store is operated by Housing Works, a non-profit where hundreds of RWDSU Local 338 members are employed.

The RWDSU and Local 338 have spent a decade fighting for responsible legalization that creates good jobs that help New York's communities. Local 338 now represents 100 percent of the workers in New York's medicinal industry, and the union is now organizing throughout the state's adult-use industry. With unions, workers in this new industry will have quality jobs that support themselves and their families. ■



Local 338 member Bella King is proud to work at NYC's first legal adult-use cannabis dispensary.



Business is booming as Local 338 members help customers.



On May 26, Mayor Eric Adams signed the bill into law at New York's City Hall.

RWDSU-Backed Law Will Fight Size Discrimination

Any size, shape, or form of discrimination is wrong, which is why the RWDSU and a coalition of community and advocacy groups fought for and won the passage of a new New York City law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of a person's height or weight in employment, housing and public accommodations. RWDSU activists were on hand on May 26 when New York City Mayor Eric Adams signed the bill into law.

Height and weight discrimination is an issue that affects many workers in the retail industry. Workers who are not protected by a union have no recourse against a boss who wants to discriminate against someone due to body size. Workers at some fast

fashion stores have reported being forced to diet or risk being fired, with some even required to send full-body photos to executives for review.

At the bill signing, RWDSU Director of Public Policy Josh Kellerman talked about the importance of ending height and weight discrimination.

"The RWDSU fights to ensure that all workers are treated with dignity and fairness. We have heard many stories about retail workers who don't fit the company image being ridiculed in front of coworkers, passed over for promotions or fired. This law, to end appearance-based discrimination, is an essential step in that fight," Kellerman said. ■

RWDSU A VOICE FOR WORKING PEOPLE

Training to Organize: Fortifying our Union for the Future

Organizing is the lifeblood of our union, and the entire labor movement. That's why throughout the Midwest, RWDSU Representatives recently conducted steward and officer organizing training sessions. Through these sessions, RWDSU members are learning how to communicate with working men and women about the union difference, the power we have when we stand together, and how to organize workers into the union, both internally and externally. Together, we are stronger, and organizing will bring us an even louder and more effective voice.



Local 825

Local 825 stewards and officers in Lawton, Michigan, from Welch's. The Local 825 and Local 705 training sessions were conducted by RWDSU Representatives Rose Dietz and Tim Ferguson, and Regional Director Michael Flanery. ■



Local 705

Local 705 stewards and officers in Holland, Michigan. Local 705 represents Heinz condiment workers. ■



Local 184-L

In Kansas City, Missouri, RWDSU Regional Director Roger Grobstich joined RWDSU Recorder Joseph Dorismond and Organizing Director Adam Obernauer for the officer and steward training for Kellogg's members. ■

Local 374 & Local 530



At the Local 374 union hall in Battle Creek, Michigan, Local 374 workers from Post cereal and Local 530 members from Gerber took part in training sessions conducted by RWDSU Recorder Joseph Dorismond and Organizing Director Adam Obernauer. ■

GLOBAL SOLIDARITY: Alliances Help Organize and Protect Workers Worldwide

The RWDSU believes in the power of global solidarity; working people should stand together no matter where they live. And, the RWDSU represents thousands of workers employed by global corporations, such as H&M, Zara, Pepsi and Coca-Cola. The relationships that we have built with networks of global union federations have proven useful to us as we organize and negotiate stronger contracts with these international corporations.

The RWDSU has organized thousands of workers at H&M and Zara fast-fashion retail stores in recent years. These were some of the biggest organizing wins in fashion retail in the U.S. in decades. In these campaigns, our partnership with UNI and the pressure that was put on the American management of these European owned companies to respect workers' rights was helpful for the workers' campaigns. Today, one in four U.S. Zara stores are now unionized, and with the continued support of the global labor movement, we are trying to secure a new national neutrality agreement that will help unions organize more H&M stores.



The Zara campaign shows how global solidarity can help activists organize global companies, with one in four Zara stores in the U.S. now unionized.

Protecting Workers Worldwide

Our participation in the global labor movement helps protect workers overseas. The RWDSU supported the successful campaign to create the landmark International Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, which has made work safer for over two million garment workers in Bangladesh. These workers, who produce items for over 160 brands, some of which are sold in RWDSU retail stores, were once among the most

imperiled workers in the world. Conditions were dangerous and often deadly; in 2013, the Rana Plaza collapse killed over 1,100 garment workers and injured over 2,500 in the deadliest garment factory disaster in history.

To date, over 30,000 factory inspections have taken place under the agreement, with over 400 facilities making changes to remedy safety issues. Hundreds of factories have lost their contracts with clothing brands due to poor safety standards.

The global labor movement has helped save countless lives at factories in Bangladesh, and created accountability for companies that buy clothes produced there. And, there are plans to expand the accord to other countries. The RWDSU will be there to lend its support to any efforts that can make workers safer overseas.

Our International Allies

UNI Global Union represents over 20 million workers in the service sector (including retail) in 150 different countries. UNI has negotiated over 50 global agreements and protocols that have secured the rights of tens-of-millions-of workers worldwide. These agreements help promote gender equality and workplace safety, and help workers organize and negotiate contracts without employer intimidation and interference.

IUF is a global union federation representing food workers, including thousands of RWDSU members in poultry, food processing, and the beverage industry. IUF is composed of over 420 member organizations in over 120 countries, representing over 10 million workers.

Both IUF and UNI are based in Switzerland. ■

New Local 1-S Leadership Team Elected

On February 6, the new leadership team at RWDSU Local 1-S was sworn in at the offices of the RWDSU in midtown Manhattan. RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum delivered the Oath of Office. Local 1-S, one of the RWDSU's oldest locals, represents thousands of workers at Macy's department stores in New York.

The new leadership team is made up of President Felix Ocasio, Secretary-Treasurer Marc Singer, Recorder Allan Subervi, 1st Vice President Christopher Martin, 2nd Vice President Mike Jones, and 3rd Vice President Sherry Elder. Serving on the Social Services Committee are Debra Ryan, Joan Solomon, and Jesus Hernandez. ■



The newly-elected Local 1-S leadership team is sworn in by RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum.

RWDSU A VOICE FOR WORKING PEOPLE

Enhanced DHS Procedures Will Empower Car Wash, Immigrant Workers

The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) has announced enhanced procedures for immigrant worker protections that will protect immigrant workers from exploitation and intimidation. Under the new DHS guidelines, local, state and federal labor agencies will be able to request "deferred action" that allows undocumented workers to apply for two-year work authorization. Workers who are speaking out about wage theft, retaliation, discrimination, intimidation or unlawful actions by an employer during a union organizing campaign will be given a Social Security number and be safeguarded from legal action regarding their immigration status.

"The new enhanced DHS procedures give union activists and immigrant workers stronger tools to stand up to exploitative employers, and using this strength we will continue to fight for a fair resolution for car wash workers and any other employer who tries to illegally intimidate immigrant workers," said RWDSU Collective Bargaining Representative Danie Tarrow.



The RWDSU has been a leader in reforming the industry and bringing car wash workers a voice.

Car wash workers have won their two-year work permits with the help of the RWDSU.

Deferred Action Helps RWDSU Car Wash Workers Fight Back

These new protections are already helping empower immigrant car wash workers in New York City. While the car wash industry

is a better place to work because of the RWDSU's efforts to reform it, workers at several area car washes are still currently facing contentious contract negotiations. Employers have engaged in intimidation and threats, and refuse to negotiate in good faith.

Because of the illegal behavior of these car wash owners, the RWDSU filed Unfair Labor Practice complaints and requested deferred action for a number of workers. In June, the union got word that all of the workers who applied have won deferred action and are receiving their two-year work permit. This means they can work without fear of deportation or other legal action and have peace of mind as they stand together for strong new contracts.

Workers will be able to apply for another two-year permit at the end of the initial two-year period. ■



RWDSU Meat Processing Workers Eligible for \$600 Grants

RWDSU members employed in the poultry and meatpacking industry at USDA-inspected plants have become eligible for a \$600 grant that recognizes their sacrifices and hard work since the pandemic began in 2020. It's all part of the \$668 million USDA Farm and Food Workers Relief Grant program, which the RWDSU/UFCW fought for. "This grant is long overdue for RWDSU members in the protein and poultry industry," said Mid-South Council President Randy Hadley.

Who can Apply, and How?

These grants continue to be rolled out in different states over different months, so not everybody is immediately eligible. Your local will notify you if you are eligible, tell you which steps to take and assist you in the process.

"RWDSU members have earned these grants with their hard work. They feed America," said Southeast Council President Edgar Fields.

In February, at the Tyson plant in Camilla, Georgia, RWDSU Southeast Council representatives helped workers at the plant apply for their \$600 grants. Workers came to the break rooms at the facility and

applied for their checks. Grants are available to any non-management worker in the meatpacking industry at USDA-inspected plants and farms. Application is open to all workers, regardless of citizenship or immigration status. ■

"RWDSU members have earned these grants. They feed America."

- Southeast Council President Edgar Fields.



Poultry workers represented by the RWDSU Southeast Council applied for their grants in February at the Tyson plant in Camilla, Georgia, with RWDSU representatives on hand to help process applications.



THE STEPS TO FORMING A UNION

STEP 1: FORM AN ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Building a successful union requires you to organize a structure with your coworkers that can navigate collective decision making about what you want to fight for and how. An ideal organizing committee should be developed mindfully to be representative of the collective identity and needs of the workplace. This is important not only because you want to make sure that decisions made by the OC reflect the will of the broader workforce but also because any excluded groups will be less likely to stand in solidarity with their coworkers in the future and are more likely to be swayed by management's propaganda. The size of an organizing committee will vary but a good rule of thumb is to aim for at least 10-20% of a total workforce to play a consistent role in the OC.

STEP 2: SIGN A UNION AUTHORIZATION CARD

If the majority of workers sign union cards, the company can voluntarily recognize the union and move to the next step. This is rare, and more often than not: **the card's main function is to indicate to the National Labor Relations Board that workers want to hold a vote on unionization.** While only 30% of workers need to sign a card to file for an election, moving forward with such a low amount of support is never a good idea. Signing a union card is confidential, the employer never finds out who signed a card or how many signed one.

STEP 3: UNION AUTHORIZATION VOTE

Unless a company voluntarily recognizes the union, a secret ballot election will be held at the workplace. This vote is supervised by the National Labor Relations Board. If a simple majority votes for unionization, **the company is then legally obligated to negotiate in good faith with the union over issues pertaining to wages, benefits, and working conditions.** Elections are typically held about a month after filing.

Once workers are represented by a union, the company enters a period called "**Status Quo**" This means that they can no longer make unilateral changes to issues pertaining to wages, hours, and working conditions without negotiating with the union. For example, if the company wanted to cut an employee discount, they would have to get permission from the union to do so.

STEP 4: NEGOTIATIONS

Workers will survey the workplace to identify and prioritize key issues in the facility. Then, workers choose representatives to form the Bargaining Committee from amongst themselves. **The Bargaining Committee, along with union organizers and attorneys, sits down at the negotiating table with the company to make proposals based on the workers' issues.** The purpose of the negotiation process is for both parties to agree on a fair and equitable contract.

STEP 5: CONTRACT VOTE

Once the company and the Bargaining Committee agree on a proposed contract, **all the workers covered by the contract will get to vote on whether or not to ratify it.** If a majority votes to approve the contract, then and only then do the provisions in the union contract take effect. Not only the contract but all major decisions in the union are decided by workers voting.

STEP 6: UNION!

The company must adhere to the contract and cannot modify the contract as it is written now or without renegotiating with the workers. The company must abide by what was negotiated in the union contract, it is a legally binding document.

Once the contract is voted on and goes into effect, the workers are now officially union members! Only then do you commence paying union dues. The dues are used to cover the costs of union offices, lawyers and union representation that the workers need. Dues structures vary by local union. **Workers will be able to review the contract and vote on it before paying any union dues.**

You can also learn more about your right to organize at <https://www.dol.gov/general/workcenter/unions-101>

ORGANIZING FOR OUR FUTURE

The RWDSU is always organizing – conducting campaigns to bring new working people into our union. We are organizing to grow our strength at the bargaining table; more members in our industries means stronger contracts. We are organizing to grow the strength of the labor movement; more union members bring us a louder collective voice advocating for working people on the issues that matter to us, like wages, working conditions, health care, paid sick days, and secure retirements.

Simply put, organizing is the lifeblood of the labor movement and our union. By growing our union density and strength by helping more workers win a union voice, we are organizing for our future.

Unfortunately, many employers will do whatever it takes to keep their workplaces union-free, or to slow down internal organizing efforts. They'll spread misinformation, and they'll even break the law with threats and intimidation. That's why it's important for us to be familiar with the process, worker rights, and the facts, and to be prepared for the many anti-union, union-busting tactics that workers and organizers might face in a union organizing campaign.

This year, the RWDSU has conducted numerous successful organizing campaigns that have brought over 900 new members into the RWDSU and made all of us stronger, with more new campaigns ongoing. For more information about the benefits of union membership, or to contact an RWDSU organizer, visit www.rwdsu.org. >>>





ORGANIZING FOR OUR FUTURE



Hundreds of workers in Pennsylvania at Bedrock Care facilities are now proud RWDSU members.

RWDSU Voice and Contract for 400 New Members in Pennsylvania

Four hundred Certified Nursing Assistants, dietary, and house-keeping staff at five Bedrock Care nursing home and rehabilitation facilities in the Keystone State have succeeded in their organizing drive and joined RWDSU Local 262. The workers have also ratified their first union contract.

The first contract brings substantial wage increases.

As union members, the workers will be able to better their jobs and also to improve the lives of the residents at the facilities. Workers will now be able to better communicate with management and make sure residents' concerns and issues are addressed as well.

The Bedrock Care workers' new contract brings substantial wage increases, and improvements to their benefits. For the first time, these workers will have a grievance procedure in place, enhanced job security, and all of their pay and benefits in writing.

At Bedrock Care, a union voice is laying the foundation for a better workplace for these new RWDSU members. Workers say that morale has already improved at the facility. ■

REI Cleveland Win RWDSU V

REI workers in Beachwood, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland, have won their RWDSU election at the outdoor sports store. The election win for these workers means that 56 new members are joining the RWDSU.

For REI workers known as "green vests" due to their signature attire – a progressive, and adventurous workforce – it's an important step toward improving their jobs and ensuring that their employer lives up to its advertised values of "people over profits."

"I love working at REI, and with a seat at the table, I know we can make it better for workers and customers alike. As new members of the RWDSU, we green vests are united in our desire to create more transparent and consistent policies and a workplace that will be

Union Victory for NYC UHAB Workers

Workers at the Urban Homesteading Assistance Board (UHAB) in New York City have joined the RWDSU. UHAB advocates for low to moderate-income New Yorkers by supporting affordable housing cooperatives and promoting accessible paths to home ownership.

Workers at UHAB say that they were inspired to join the RWDSU after going through the pandemic, when their voices weren't being heard by management. According to workers at UHAB, management wasn't transparent when it came to raises and seniority.

"It was not clear why people who had been here for decades were receiving proportionally less frequent and smaller raises than people who had been here for shorter amounts of time," said Molly Radwell, a project associate who was involved in the organizing drive. "We wanted better lines of



Non-profit workers at the Urban Homesteading Assistance Board are proud to join the RWDSU. They joined the union to better their jobs and improve service for tenants in New York City.

communication with management and more attention internally to racial justice. With so many issues for low and moderate income homeowners coming to light during the pandemic, we wanted to ensure that our vision to build

helping with budgeting, and dealing with cleaning power capabilities.

Workers Rock, Vote!



REI Cleveland workers celebrate winning their RWDSU union election on the evening of March 3.

Workers walked off the job, and their show of solidarity forced the company to quickly backtrack.

Workers' Strike Forces REI to Fair Election

In February, REI's union-busting tactics hit their peak when management refused to reach a stipulated election agreement with the union and tried to exclude over half of the eligible workers from voting in the union election. Workers walked off the job in a ULP strike action, and their show of solidarity forced the company to quickly backtrack and reach an 11th hour agreement that allowed all NLRA eligible workers to vote in the union election. It was a complete victory for the workers that proved their unity and strength, and it foreshadowed their overwhelming win in the election.

Now that REI Cleveland workers have won their union election, they are united and ready for their next fight; the negotiation of their first

contract. These negotiations are happening at the same time as those in Berkley, California, where workers are represented by the UFCW, and Soho in New York City, where the workers won RWDSU representation last year. Cleveland workers met via Zoom with the other unionized REI workers in the week leading up to their election, and REI Soho workers in New York City held a celebration the night of the Cleveland win to show their support. With unity at the bargaining table and now even more REI workers with union representation, REI workers' collective voice is stronger than ever.

"As we enter contract negotiations alongside our union family in SoHo and Berkeley, we'd like to remind REI that we always 'start from a place of respect,' and we hope they will too," Heilgeist said. ■

respected. Like a long hike to the top of a mountain, it wasn't easy, but their persistence and effort helped push them to the top.

Workers endured an exceptionally harsh union busting campaign that included an attempt by REI to delay their election entirely. The company conducted intimidating daily morning one on one meetings with workers and managers, spreading inaccurate and incomplete information. Workers say they were subjected to unlawful surveillance by outside REI management who descended into Beachwood from other REI stores, leading to multiple Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) charges against REI.

sustainable for workers for years to come," said Nick Heilgeist, Member of the REI Cleveland Organizing Committee and Retail Sales Specialist at REI.

The RWDSU will represent all non-supervisory employees at the store, which includes all full- and part-time sales specialists, technical specialists, visual presentation specialists, shipping and receiving specialists, and certified technicians and mechanics.

Green Vests Stay Course on Long Road to Victory

When the Ohio REI workers won their union election on March 3, it was the culmination of a year-long campaign to have their voices heard and their wish to join the RWDSU

Workers

tenant solidarity and cooperative shareholder empowerment was front and center with everything UHAB does."

Workers are also seeking better pay, better access to benefit plans and time off, and more systems of accountability to the shareholders they work with. Now that they've joined the RWDSU, UHAB workers are forming a bargaining committee and beginning the process of negotiating their first contract.

"We want every single worker at UHAB to feel that they are being heard and have a voice. That's what RWDSU membership can bring us," Radwell said. UHAB employees work with tenants and shareholders at hundreds of buildings in New York City,

budgets, technical assistance, co-op electing with violations. They also assist build-energy initiatives including adding solar ties. ■



REI workers stand outside their store in Beachwood, Ohio, during their strike to force management to stop delaying their union election.



ORGANIZING FOR OUR FUTURE

Barnes & Noble Campaign Launches with Wins in New Jersey and NYC

The RWDSU is supporting Barnes & Noble bookstore workers who want a union voice in New Jersey and New York City. The campaign began in May with a victory at the Rutgers University Barnes & Noble store in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and with filings for union elections at the chain's flagship Union Square store in Manhattan and a store in Park Slope, Brooklyn. In June, workers at the Union Square store won their union election.

Workers at the stores say they face continued safety issues amid the rebound of the pandemic including workplace harassment, substandard pay for the industry below that of independent booksellers, unstable scheduling practices, a lack of structure when it comes to job duties and tasks at work, and favoritism by management.

"I'm organizing for pay raises in a city where the cost of living is rapidly increasing, but our wages are not. In addition, workers' safety is consistently brushed aside in exchange for high profits while we suffer the consequences," said Union Square worker Kaitlyn Keel.

The workers at the Barnes & Noble stores include Booksellers, Baristas, Cashiers, and all non-supervisory employees. ■



▲ Barnes & Noble workers in New Brunswick, New Jersey, became the first in the chain to join the RWDSU.



Over 100 employees at the Union Square location have joined the RWDSU.

Windy City is a Union City: REI Workers Join RWDSU

The "Green Vests" at REI scored another union victory when the outdoor sports chain's Chicago outpost became the fourth unionized REI store in the nation, and the third to join the RWDSU. The workers won their union election in May, like hundreds of other members who joined the RWDSU that month.

The RWDSU will represent approximately 60 workers at the outdoor sports store, with the potential for more members as the store increases capacity. The workers include all full- and part-time sales specialists, technical specialists, visual presentation specialists, shipping and receiving specialists, certified technicians and mechanics.

"I have never been more proud to work for REI and am inspired by the passion and courage of my fellow green vests. I look forward to negotiating more consistent hours and schedules to allow us to better plan our personal lives," said Andrew Loveland. ■



REI Chicago workers have won their RWDSU organizing campaign and are looking forward to contract negotiations.

GrowNYC Grows RWDSU in NYC; 200 Join!

Nearly 200 employees in New York City at around 70 GrowNYC Greenmarkets, farm stands, and CSA pick-up locations, and who work across GrowNYC's operations in hundreds of schools, joined the RWDSU in May after their employer agreed to voluntary recognition of the union. During its peak season during the Summer and Fall months, GrowNYC will employ 250 RWDSU members.

Earlier in the month, GrowNYC worker-activists met with management to discuss the fact that a majority of workers had signed union authorization cards and wanted to forgo the election and join the RWDSU as soon as possible. On May 16, management agreed.



The GrowNYC brought their enthusiasm and excitement to the RWDSU International office in New York City.

The workers at GrowNYC – who are employed in all five New York City Boroughs – include all full- and part-time GrowNYC workers including Greenmarket, farmstand, food distribution, composting, and nutrition and farming education workers across the city.

"Most of us juggle 13-15 schools per semester, seeing some of them only once every three weeks for only three to four months. I love my job, helping kids learn about composting and living a zero-waste life that helps our communities thrive, but it's challenging when I know that we only have a short time to create change in these buildings. We're joining the RWDSU because we know that the only way to make real lasting change and build stability at work is by unionizing," said GrowNYC employee Taige Rambarran. ■

RWDSU AROUND OUR UNION

“Union Family” Helps Victims of Kentucky Floods

Last year, back-to-back disastrous storms struck eastern Kentucky, causing record-breaking rainfall totals and flooding throughout the region. Multiple counties across Eastern Kentucky were impacted including Breathitt, Floyd, Perry, Knott, Leslie, Pike, and Magoffin counties. Nearly 40 people lost their lives and at least 600 people were rescued. Thousands more were evacuated from their homes including RWDSU members. Many families returned to their homes to a devastating sight; they had lost everything in the floods and storms.

“In our union family, when one hurts, we all hurt,” said RWDSU Regional Director Michael Flanery. “That’s why RWDSU members wasted no time in jumping in to help out our union brothers and sisters.”

Members from around the union pitched in by giving funds, donating food and cleaning supplies, clothes, and even pet food. A carload and trailer full of donations from Local 386, Local 374 (Post), Local 530 (Nestle), Local 550 (Walgreens), Local 21 (Bimbo Bakeries), and Fresh Mark from the Mid-South Council were delivered to Eastern Kentucky.

For many, it will be a long recovery. For RWDSU members affected by the flooding, their union will be with them every step of the way. ■

Members from throughout the RWDSU pitched in to help those affected by the disastrous floods in Kentucky.



Bill Docherty (left) with Local 513 President Dennis Beaulieu.

Pepsi Cranston Members Retire after Decades of Service



(l to r) Local 513 Pres. Dennis Beaulieu, Paul “Twig” Cronin, NEJB Pres. Tina Buonaugurio, and NEJB Sec.-Treas. Phil Darcangelo with members of their Local 513 family.

Local 513 members Bill Docherty and Paul “Twig” Cronin, at Pepsi Cranston in Rhode Island, are retiring. Cronin worked there for 29 years, and Docherty retires after 38 years. Local 513, and the entire RWDSU, wish them a happy retirement. ■

Local 220 Members in Williamson, New York, Elect Officers

In January, Local 220 members in Williamson, New York, elected officers to new terms. Local 220 members work at KDP (Mott’s) and the Sodus Rehabilitation Center nursing home.

Elected were President Mike LeBerth, Secretary Treasurer Jerome Camp, Recording Secretary Christine Hermenet, VPs George Deon, Joe Schifano, and Jim King, Executive Board Members Jody Lynn Mattice and Connie Grant, Chief Steward Gerard Moran, and Committee Members Randy Allen and Jon LeFever. ■

(l to r) VPs George Deon, Joe Schifano, and Jim King, President Mike LeBerth, Recording Secretary Christine Hermenet, Executive Board Member Jody Lynn Mattice, Committee Members Randy Allen and Jon Lefever, and Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Camp.



RWDSU SOLIDARITY BRINGS BETTER CONTRACTS

Across the country, RWDSU members are using their collective strength to negotiate contracts that bring increased wages, better benefits, and a stronger union voice on the job. Solidarity makes us all stronger and helps create better lives for ourselves and our families. Here's some updates on new RWDSU contracts throughout the U.S.



Heinz Local 705
Michigan

RWDSU Local 705 members have ratified a new three-year contract at Heinz in Holland, Michigan. The workers – who produce condiments like ketchup, mustard, and relish – secured 23 percent wage increases, an increase in shift premiums (\$1 for 2nd shift workers, and \$2 for 3rd shift workers, including alternative schedule shifts), and increased vacation benefits. Aside from the big wage increases, electrical journeymen receive an additional \$1.25 per hour, their waste water treatment employee an additional \$1.25 per hour, and the Master Electrician an additional \$2.25 per hour as well as have all costs covered for the Master Electrician company required licenses and classes required.



The Heinz plant has operated in Holland, Michigan, since 1897.

PPE allowance was increased for safety boots and prescription safety glasses, health coverage was maintained with a minimum rate increase in only the second year. Retiree benefits were also improved, as was the bereavement leave policy.

Serving on the Local 705 Negotiating Committee were (pictured L to R): Margarita Kramer, Chief Steward nights; Craig Holcom, Committee Person; Rosa Balcazar, Recorder; Javier Rivera, Chief Steward days; Walt Gamble, Secretary Treasurer; Tomas Torres, Executive Vice President; Brian Kuzmanko, President. ■



Local 108 members vote on their contract at the Mushroom Company.

The Mushroom Company Local 108
Maryland

Significant wage increases, wages that are guaranteed to index above minimum wage, and the addition of an extra paid vacation day highlight a new three-year agreement for Local 108 members at the Mushroom Company in Maryland. The shift differential has been increased, and a new job category has been created for work in the freezer area. The contract was overwhelmingly ratified by members. ■



Oakwood Nursing Home Local 108
Pennsylvania

The Oakwood Negotiating Committee won a contract with wage increases for all members at the nursing home.

A three-year contract at Oakwood Nursing home in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, brings annual wage increases for all members, and protects both the 401K and severance benefits. The contract also puts a cap on future employee contributions for the medical plan, and eliminates medical plan contributions for senior employees. The negotiations were led by Local 108 Representative Abraham Asabor. ■



(l to r) Chad Lowery, Terry Rhodes, Joe Krause, and Raymond Dean Oakes serve the Borough of Berlin, and are already seeing the benefits of their new three-year contract.

Borough of Berlin Allegheny Regional Joint Board
Pennsylvania

Wage increases of up to \$4.75, the addition of Good Friday as a paid holiday, and no continued health insurance at no additional cost are among the improvements won in a new three-year contract for Allegheny Regional Joint Board members employed by the Borough of Berlin in Pennsylvania. These RWDSU members do a wide range of jobs in Berlin, including mowing, plowing, water main repairs, and sanitation.

The contract also increased pay differential for using heavy equipment, increased the safety shoe allowance, and provides reimbursement for employees for reviewing their commercial driver's license. Costs for PennDOT approved education courses will also be reimbursed, up to \$5,500. ■

RWDSU SOLIDARITY BRINGS BETTER CONTRACTS

CF Burger Creamery Local 87 Michigan



Chris Semark, who has worked at the facility for 20 years, served on the Negotiating Committee.



Marcus Hudson (right) and his son Marques work together at CF Burger Creamery, and are celebrating their strong new contract.

CF Burger Creamery workers, Local 87 members in Detroit, Michigan, who produce coffee creamers and ice cream for McDonald's restaurants, have ratified a new three-year contract with wage increases of \$4 per hour in the first year and two percent wages increases in years two and three. The union was also able to secure the RWDSU health plan for workers, one more paid personal day, and increases in life insurance coverage and 401K contributions by the company.

Marcques Hudson, Chris Semark, and Local 87 President Craig Welch served on the Negotiating Committee, with assistance from RWDSU Representative Joe Silva. ■

Niagara Fiberboard Inc. Local 139 New York

RWDSU Local 139 members in Lockport, New York, who work at Niagara Fiberboard, ratified a new three-year agreement in January. Members at the plant use 100 percent recycled paper to manufacture products used for a variety of industries; the products are used in everything from toys and furniture to industrial packaging and graphic displays.

Their new contract doubles their production bonus to \$2,000 a year, and increases wages five percent in year one, four percent in year two, and three percent in year three. Members with 23 years or more of service will receive an extra \$1 per hour increase. There were also improvements to the funeral leave, safety shoe allowance, and health care deductible reimbursement benefits. ■

Vlasic Local 87 Michigan

If you've enjoyed Vlasic products lately like pickles, relish, and pickle spears or chips, there's a good chance they were produced by RWDSU Local 87 members in Imlay City, Michigan. In December, the Vlasic/Conagra workers ratified a new four-year agreement that significantly increases pay.

All regular full-time employees will receive up to 25 percent wage increases. Over the next three years of the contract, workers will receive between 50 and 75 cents per hour increases. The Negotiating Committee also fought hard to protect the health care plan benefits, and won reduced costs for the Family Plan.

There are 400 year-round workers employed at Vlasic, and the number swells to over 500 during the April-December season.

Serving on the Negotiating Committee were: Mitch Pressel, Mindy Salcedo, RWDSU Rep. Joe Silva, Local 87 President Craig Welch, RWDSU Rep. Fred Jimenez, Nina Platz and Warren Tripp. ■



Negotiating Committee members celebrate the new Vlasic Pickle contract. (l to r) Mitch Pressel, Mindy Salcedo, RWDSU Rep. Joe Silva, Local 87 President Craig Welch, RWDSU Rep. Fred Jimenez. Not present for photo were Nina Platz and Warren Tripp.

Valley View Manor Local 139 New York

Nursing home employees at Valley View Manor in Norwich, New York, will receive instant significant wage increases of 18 to 32 percent based upon their job classification with their new three-year contract. All employees will receive additional two percent increases in years two and three of contract, along with a ratification bonus up to \$300, company match to the 401K plan for the first time, increased shift differential, and additional paid time off depending upon years of service. Reception workers have also been added to the Local 139 membership, giving them a union voice and contract for the first time.

Serving on the Negotiating Committee were Roland Graham, Christina Feliciano, Crystal Sisco, and Heather Norton. ■



(l to r) Crystal Sisco, Heather Norton and Roland Graham and the rest of the negotiating committee brought in a great contract with numerous improvements.

RWDSU AROUND OUR UNION



The joint training session at General Mills increased communication and collaboration between management and the union.

Joint Training Brings Communication and Positive Changes

In February, Local 110 conducted the first ever General Mills Union Steward Training and Joint Management Training sessions at the Local 110 union hall in Cedar Rapids. The four-hour fully-paid training sessions were won in the most recent contract negotiated by the union.

Over the weeklong training most of the management team from the plant participated in the joint training with General Mills shop stewards. The theme of the joint training was working together and “Seek to Understand”; the idea that prior to the union filing a grievance or management jumping to conclusions, that each side

takes time to gather the facts and have a conversation with each other that will help determine the next steps. The joint training also covered mutually agreed upon contract language clarifications, Letters of Agreement (which clarify contract issues) and grievance settlements.

“With the plant leaders – management and the union – communicating and working together, we can all drive positive changes and promote a safer and more productive work environment,” said Local 110 President Shane Forbes. “By coming together during our first ever joint training session, we were able to do just that.” ■

Quaker Oats Stewards Hone Skills

At the Local 110 Union Hall in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Shop Stewards from the Quaker Oats plant received a two-day training to better serve members, conducted by the University of Iowa Labor Center and the Local 110 Executive Board. Sessions focused on grievances, representation, workplace health and safety, and building solidarity. ■



Quaker Oats stewards received important training.

NY Bill Would Help Workers Beat the Heat



RWDSU members showed their support at the announcement introducing the Temperature Extreme Mitigation Program in New York City.

The RWDSU is among the unions and worker advocacy organizations backing a first-in-the-nation bill designed to protect workers from temperature-related illnesses. The bill is an important step toward protecting New York’s workers from heat-related issues that are only expected to get worse as temperatures continue to rise, and could serve as a model for other states and for the federal government.

In New York City alone, there are an estimated 450 heat-related emergency room visits, 150 heat-related hospital admissions, 10 heat stroke deaths, and 350 heat-exacerbated deaths.

The Temperature Extreme Mitigation Program would help protect workers by creating a statewide workplace standard on heat and cold that will cover workers in agriculture, construction, landscaping, delivery, and food service, indoor and outdoor, including vehicles. Extreme temperatures are a particularly important concern for New York’s farmworkers, some of whom are now members of the RWDSU after recently becoming the first farmworkers in the history of the state to organize into a union.

“This legislation ensures that employees have access to basic resources that can save lives such as; hydration, warmth in the winter and access to shade when the temperature goes above 80 degrees in the summer,” said Assembly Member Latoya Joyner, who co-authored the bill with State Senator Jessica Ramos. ■

The Union Plus Wireless Program **WORKS FOR ME**



“I look to find ways to save money. I got a code that I gave to AT&T and the benefits came up. With the rise in cost of living, we have to make up the difference in some way. I’d be a fool not to take advantage of all the benefits of being a union member. They’re there for the taking. I encourage union members to do their homework. There are benefits we can all take advantage of for being proud union members.” —union member



See more at
unionplus.org



RWDSU HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDE

THE HEAT IS ON: A Growing Concern for Workers

Average annual temperatures in the United States continue to rise and this poses the risk of serious health conditions, particularly at work. Too much exposure to heat causes physical stress on the body. And it is not just the temperature alone. A clearer picture of the potential danger of excessive heat is the heat index, which factors in the relative humidity and represents how the heat really feels. Excessive heat is not just a problem in outdoor work environments. Heat is a common problem in indoor workplaces like kitchens, laundries, warehouses and other sites with poor ventilation and/or cooling.

Despite excessive workplace heat being a common occurrence, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) does not currently have a standard on it. Very recently the Attorney Generals of seven states joined to publicly urge OSHA to issue an emergency standard as soon as possible.

OSHA could cite an employer under its General Duty Clause (the employer's legal obligation to provide a workplace which is protective from exposures which can cause death or serious injury). But establishing a case to defend a General Duty violation is often time consuming and difficult.

Since OSHA does not have a standard on heat, states are free to develop their own standard and several are doing that. In New York the RWDSU is working with the Teamsters union to pass legislation which would require all employers implement protective measures in their workplaces when exposure to heat poses a threat.

The absence of a workplace exposure standard should never be a dead end for us. If exposure to heat or other hazards is causing us health or safety problems we have a right and duty to take action. We can do that by demanding meetings with management, filing grievances or even taking public actions as we did when we saw that many of our employers were resistant to implement effective steps to reduce our exposure to the COVID virus.

We can prevent these problems in the future by establishing clear workplace policies and procedures that focus on how to reduce our exposure to heat, highlighting increased rest breaks and frequent access to water. And we need to know how to recognize heat related conditions and how to respond effectively to provide potentially lifesaving measures.

Heat Can Hurt, or Even Kill Workers

Overexposure to heat can lead to several different conditions including rashes, exhaustion, cramps and syncope (fainting). As we are exposed to hotter conditions, needed body levels of water and salt are depleted leading to a number of symptoms including severe body aching and spasms, extreme weakness, excessive sweating, dizziness, confusion and nausea.

The most severe heat related condition is heat stroke. This can occur when the body is no longer able to control its temperature. Body temperatures can rise to 106 degrees

or more. Symptoms often include hallucinations, chills, throbbing headaches, confusion and slurred speech. Death or permanent disability can result if prompt emergency treatment is not provided!

More Information

OSHA has prepared pocket cards and other educational material on how to help someone who is overcome by exposure to heat. They are available in both English and Spanish. Contact your union rep for these cards, or feel free to use/copy the examples here. ■

OSHA® QUICK CARD™

Protecting Workers from Heat Stress

Heat Illness
Exposure to heat can cause illness and death. The most serious heat illness is heat stroke. Other heat illnesses, such as heat exhaustion, heat cramps and heat rash, should also be avoided.

There are precautions that can be taken any time temperatures are high and the job involves physical work.

Risk Factors for Heat Illness

- High temperature and humidity, direct sun exposure, no breeze or wind
- Heavy physical labor
- No recent exposure to hot workplaces
- Low liquid intake
- Waterproof clothing

Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion

- Headache, dizziness, or fainting
- Weakness and wet skin
- Irritability or confusion
- Thirst, nausea, or vomiting

Symptoms of Heat Stroke

- May be confused, unable to think clearly, pass out, collapse, or have seizures (fits)
- May stop sweating

To Prevent Heat Illness:

- Establish a complete heat illness prevention program.
- Provide training about the hazards leading to heat stress and how to prevent them.
- Provide a lot of cool water to workers close to the work area. At least one pint of water per hour is needed.

For more information:
OSHA® Occupational Safety and Health Administration
www.osha.gov (800) 321-OSHA (6742)

OSHA® QUICK CARD™

- Modify work schedules and arrange frequent rest periods with water breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas.
- Gradually increase workloads and allow more frequent breaks for workers new to the heat or those that have been away from work to adapt to working in the heat (acclimatization).
- Designate a responsible person to monitor conditions and protect workers who are at risk of heat stress.
- Consider protective clothing that provides cooling.

How to Protect Workers

- Know signs/symptoms of heat illnesses; monitor yourself; use a buddy system.
- Block out direct sun and other heat sources.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Drink often and BEFORE you are thirsty. Drink water every 15 minutes.
- Avoid beverages containing alcohol or caffeine.
- Wear lightweight, light colored, loose-fitting clothes.

What to Do When a Worker is Ill from the Heat

Call a supervisor for help. If the supervisor is not available, call 911. Have someone stay with the worker until help arrives.

Move the worker to a cooler/shaded area. Remove outer clothing. Fan and mist the worker with water; apply ice (ice bags or ice towels). Provide cool drinking water, if able to drink.

IF THE WORKER IS NOT ALERT or seems confused, this may be a heat stroke. CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY and apply ice as soon as possible.

For more information:
OSHA® Occupational Safety and Health Administration
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