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STEWARDS UPDATE

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From the President: Stewards' Work Continues with Contract Implementation

I would like to thank all of the stewards working at Meijer who assisted the union in securing the best Meijer contract in over 30 years! Whether you served on the bargaining committee, worked to turn out the vote, helped educate members on the new contract, or drove members to the polls, you played a vital part in the process. We could not have achieved the contract gains or the record voter turnout without your assistance.



John Cakmakci
President

While we savor the success of these negotiations and ratification, our work is not over. Now we must successfully implement the new contracts. As a union, we must carefully monitor how the company is implementing the new contracts to ensure the intent of what we negotiated at the bargaining table is not being changed by improper implementation of the agreement.

Stewards will play a key role in this process by actively working with their union representative to make sure the terms of the new Meijer contracts are being correctly implemented and members know their union is continuing to fight for them. This process will involve educating members, challenging managers and solid communica-

tion between stewards and the union.

Currently, several managers are incorrectly telling part-time employees that they no longer have the right to be scheduled up to 30 hours per week because the 12-hour weekly minimum was removed from the contract. This is the exact opposite of the intent of the language removal. The change was designed to help high senior, part-time employees receive more hours, not less.

Part-time employees still have the right to use their seniority to claim up to 30 hours in their department and expanded departments, and to sign the additional hours sheet (which must be made available to them) to get extra hours. Part-time employees also have the right to claim hours on any day they are not scheduled. This right is not forfeited by requesting a day off, as some managers are claiming.

It is critical that stewards work with part-time employees to help them get all the hours their seniority will allow. Some members may need to be educated on how to identify which shifts they can claim. Stewards should also file grievances for members whose claims for additional hours are improperly denied. The resolution to these grievances is very much appreciated by members who enjoy getting paid for not working, and quickly gets the company's attention. After paying several members to sit at home, I expect they will stop violating members'

rights and schedule them according to the contract.

UFCW 951 and Meijer are also in disagreement over the new live load/unload contract language impacting truck drivers. The union maintains that drivers should receive the live load/unload pay anytime they perform this job function, not just when it is designated at the time of dispatch, which is the company's position. While we work to resolve this issue, all drivers who feel they are not paid the live load/unload rate should file a grievance.

Implementation disputes can be successfully resolved. One example involves members who were scheduled to receive a double wage bump in August because they were due their 700-hour wage increase just prior to the new contract's August 21 raise. These members only received the August 21 wage increase.

After much discussion, the parties agreed these members will be paid their correct wage rate, without their 700-hour clock improperly resetting, and provided with back pay.

UFCW 951 is committed to properly implementing the new contracts, ensuring members receive all of the agreements' benefits. With the assistance of stewards and an educated membership, we can ensure that members receive all the hard fought gains we made during contract negotiations!

Help Spread the Word

Membership Matters
Give-a-Way!



Through UFCW 951's new Membership Matters Give-a-Way, all UFCW 951 members will be eligible to win over 40 prizes just for being a member! Members can choose which prizes they would like to win, and can win an unlimited amount of prizes during 2017. Prizes include weekend getaways, vacation packages, gift cards, event tickets, shopping sprees, small appliances and union jackets.

To enter, members can complete an entry form located on page 7 of the September 2016 *The Voice of 951* or complete the form online at www.ufcw951.org/members/membershipmattersgiveaway. Applications are also available from union representatives.

Encourage members to follow us on Facebook to see highlights of the monthly Give-a-Way prizes throughout the year.

Steward Spotlight: Stewards Shine During Contract Ratification

In August, three new Meijer contracts were ratified, and UFCW 951 stewards played an essential role in every step of the process. Some put in long hours at the bargaining table to secure meaningful gains for their fellow members, while others dedicated their time to ensuring a strong voter turnout and educating members on contract changes.

"Stewards are the backbone of the union, and their efforts to get out the vote were commendable," John Cakmakci, UFCW 951 president, said. "Because of the number of polling sites, union representatives had to rely on stewards to manage their stores effectively to achieve their voter turnout goals. Many stewards went above and beyond, contributing to the record turnout at the polls."

The contract vote's success depended on many stewards who were not on the bargaining committees, but stepped up to support the committees' recommended "yes" votes.

Elisa Hatter, from Meijer #194 in Charlotte, spent days educating mem-

bers and encouraging them to vote.

"It was important for people to have access if they wanted to have their voices heard," Hatter said. "I wanted to make sure they had the opportunity to vote, so we put up a sign-up sheet on the boards for those who were interested in voting but needed a ride."

Felecia Forrestall, from Meijer #32 in Canton, echoed Hatter's focus on making sure members could cast their vote.

"It's important to me to educate members," Forrestall said. "That was my focus. My job was to educate members so they could make their own informed decision at the polls. I contacted at least 50 people the day before and the day of voting to remind them to go vote."

Callie Lewis and Dajuan Flowers, from Meijer #188 in Livonia, worked as a team to educate members and drove several groups of members to and from the polling sites.

"Callie and I split the store up and met in the middle," Flowers said. "We made it a goal to take at least two mem-

bers from each department to vote."

"The medical benefits, pay raises – I used a lot of strategies to convince people to come vote," Lewis said.

Sheila LeBlanc and Susan Alessio, from Meijer #46 in Brighton, also teamed up in their efforts.

"I would stay an hour after my shift ended to talk to members for two days prior to the vote," LeBlanc said. "For the people who didn't want to vote, I gave them examples from my friends and family who work in right-to-work shops about what it would be like without a union. There was only one person I couldn't convince to come vote."

While all contracts passed, the work has only begun for Meijer stewards.

"These and many other stewards proved their ability and dedication during the Meijer contract vote," Cakmakci said. "Now it's time to take their skills into orientation meetings to sign up new members, educate them about their contract and help implement the new contract language."

Tips for Answering Members' Questions About Right to Work

Most UFCW 951 members are now working under "Right to Work" conditions, meaning employees can choose not to join the union and pay their fair share for the benefits the union has negotiated for them.

As a steward you are responsible for helping ensure that new employees join the union and current members stay in the union. It is critical to the strength of UFCW 951 that all, or nearly all, employees at your workplace are dues paying members.

You will likely be asked to obtain signed union applications from new hires, and you may be approached by current members looking to "get out of the union." The information below will help you successfully handle these situations.

Q: Do I have to join the union?

A: In units covered by a right to work contract, members do not have to join the union. If a new hire asks you this question, ask them why they wouldn't want to join the union. Explain to them that nearly all of their coworkers are union members, and point out what has been gained because their workplace is organized under a union contract.

Many new hires, and even some current members, don't realize that everything from their breaks to their healthcare has been negotiated for them by the union. This is also a great opportunity to share how the union has helped you and other members, along

with UFCW 951's members only programs, discounts and events.

Q: If I don't join, won't I still receive the same benefits without having to pay union dues?

A: Some managers have told employees they will receive the same benefits as union members, but for free, if they choose not to join the union.

This is not true. While they would be covered by the contract, they would not be eligible to vote on their contract, meaning they forfeit the right to vote on their own wages, benefits and working conditions in the future. Nor can they attend union meetings or benefit from Foundation fundraisers and scholarships. They would also be ineligible for union discount programs, and they will not be allowed to attend any UFCW 951 events.

The benefits of your union contract are not free, and when someone decides not to be a dues paying member, they are a free loader, forcing their coworkers to cover their fair share of the benefits of a union contract. If free loaders grow in number, the union will not be able to operate, and all workers will lose the benefits and protections of their union contract.

Q: I just can't afford union dues; is joining the union worth it?

A: The value of the union to its member is worth far more than what members pay in dues.

Generally, dues cost members less than one hour's pay per week. If a member takes four paid breaks in a week, then their union contract has already given their dues back to them with this benefit alone.

Additionally, their union contract puts money in their pocket and brings peace of mind in a variety of ways, such as guaranteed wage increases, paid time off, retirement benefits, job security, and representation in the grievance process.

Being a UFCW 951 member provides access to many money saving benefits including low cost events, discounts on entertainment and services, the opportunity to apply for scholarships and reimbursements, and eligibility for UFCW 951 Foundation fundraisers.

With all of this at stake, can employees afford not to join the union?

Q: How do I get out of the union?

A: If a member asks you this question, ask them why they would even want to get out of the union, and use this as an opportunity to educate them on the benefits of being a UFCW 951 union member.

If they still insist that you tell them how to opt out, inform them that your job is to represent your coworkers who want to be in the union to make the union stronger not weaker. Advise them to call the union office, and let your representative know immediately that this individual is looking to become a free loader.



"Members need to be active. Voting tells Meijer that members are looking at the contract and uniting to say something about it. If you're a steward, it's your place to be an example."

-Sheila LeBlanc, Meijer #46

"I talked to members about the contract vote for two weeks. I wanted everyone to know what they were voting on – we needed a better contract."

-Dajuan Flowers, Meijer #188



"Our store has a team of stewards that do new member orientations. Remember the faces you see in those meetings. When you see them later, check in with them, even just to say hello."

-Eleanor Holland, Meijer #203



"It's important to me to educate members. . . . My job was to educate members so they could make their own informed decision at the polls."

-Felecia Forrestall, Meijer #32



"To be an effective steward, you need to be visible so members don't feel shy coming to you. If you're accessible, it gives them a chance they might not have taken on their own initiative."

-Elisa Hatter, Meijer #194



"A lot of the [company's] core values just aren't there anymore. They can't carry us. We need to carry each other. Working together as a union makes things easier."

-Callie Lewis, Meijer #188



Spread the Word! Stewards, Share Your UFCW 951 Story on Our Facebook Page

The UFCW 951 Facebook page is one of the best ways to stay up-to-date with the latest UFCW 951 news, find information on upcoming events, and connect with other UFCW 951 members. If you haven't already, please take a moment to "LIKE" us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/UFCW951. Then share what your union means to you by writing a review on our page. Use your voice and let other members know how being a UFCW 951 member has made an impact on your life and the lives of your fellow members.

