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# STEWARDS UPDATE

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## From the President: Stewards Need to Help Explain Pilot Programs

By now, stewards working at Meijer should be well aware of the test programs the union and the company are conducting in various workplaces in preparation for contract negotiations later this year.



**John Cakmakci**  
President

These initiatives have been featured in union publications. Additionally, your union representative should have discussed the following four test programs with you in detail.

**1. Advanced Scheduling:** Schedules are now being posted for two weeks to address members' desire for a more predictable work schedule. Stewards should have seen postings and handbills detailing how the test will work.

Initial reaction from the majority of members has been extremely positive. Some members are playing the "what if" game, asking "what if something comes up?" Ask them "what if something came up under the old system?" A few have complained to me that advanced scheduling is "forcing them to plan." My response to them is, "and that's a bad thing?"

The union has lobbied very hard to get Meijer to test an advanced scheduling program as it is an extremely positive change for a majority of the

### How to Talk to Members About the Meijer Pilot Programs

The President's article contains tips on how to talk to members about specific pilot programs. The following information applies to all of the test programs.

**Pilot Programs are Addressing Members' Concerns:** Through their surveys and conversations with union representatives, members identified several areas where they want contract language changes in their new contract. Potential changes are being tested through the pilot programs to ensure they work for members before being negotiated into the new contract by the union later this year.

**The Union Initiated the Pilot Programs:** While UFCW 951 and Meijer are working together on the implementation of the pilot programs, members need to know that the union started this process with the goal of improving contract language to benefit the membership.

**This is a Process of Trial and Error:** These are test programs, meaning some aspects will work, while others won't. The union expects to make changes to the processes being tested prior to negotiating the language into the contract. It is much easier to fix problems before the contract is ratified rather than after it becomes effective. Members are encouraged to contact the local with their suggestions of how to improve any of the pilot programs.

members, and stewards should present it that way.

**2. Limited "Greyed Out" Vacation Weeks:** Members disliked Meijer's past practice of "blackening out" a majority of weeks on the vacation schedule to indicate no vacations would be granted during that time.

UFCW 951 frequently fought against this practice and recently presented a more reasonable alternative to Meijer in preparation for bargaining -- let managers pick the few weeks that

their department is busiest and "grey out" those weeks indicating vacations will be limited during those weeks. As a result, the 2016 vacation schedules were posted with no more than six weeks "greyed out."

Members are thrilled with this change. Stewards need to let members know the union fought for this change for them. The company did not suddenly decide to change their practice regarding the limiting of vacations.

See "From the President" on page 2

Help Spread the Word



For over a decade, the UFCW 951 Foundation has been helping ease the cost of attending college for members and their families. Nineteen \$2,000 scholarships and five \$400 textbook scholarships will be awarded in 2016.

Applicants must be a member, or a member's spouse, child or grandchild (grandchildren must be under 25 years of age). Winners must have 90 days in good standing with UFCW 951 as of June 1, 2016, and must remain a member in good standing for the entire academic year.

Applicants must be full or part-time students attending a college, university, community college or post-high school vocational program. Complete eligibility requirements can be found on the application.

Applications are available from union representatives or online at [www.ufcw951.org/members/scholarships](http://www.ufcw951.org/members/scholarships), and must be received by Friday, March 25, 2016.



### The UFCW International Scholarship Program

In 2016, the UFCW International will award several scholarships of up to \$8,000 to members and their unmarried dependents nationwide.

For more information or to apply, visit [www.ufcwcharityfoundation.org/scholarship](http://www.ufcwcharityfoundation.org/scholarship).

You can also contact the UFCW International Scholarship Program at [cfscholarship@ufcw.org](mailto:cfscholarship@ufcw.org) with any questions.

**Applications are due by Monday, April 25, 2016.**

## Steward Spotlight: Rachel Weeks, A Voice for Members at Meijer #201

Though Rachel Weeks is the newest steward at Meijer #201 in Greenville, she has excelled in her role and is a powerful voice for members at her store.

“Rachel has been a steward for almost one year. During her training, she took the initiative to reach out to more senior stewards, even if they were from another

great steward as well.”

In the 18 years that Weeks has worked for Meijer, she has held a variety of roles, including management. Her experience in these roles has proven valuable for her current position as a steward. The time that she had spent as a non-union manager at Meijer allowed

when she was working in a non-union position in the pharmacy, Rachel said, “One day the store was really busy. I had been working for five hours or so with no break, and I was ready to go on break, at least to get a drink. I was told, ‘You’re not in the union anymore, you’re not getting a break. We’re too busy for you to take a break.’ It was then I realized there are many simple things like breaks — you don’t have without the backing of the union.”

The trust and respect that Meijer #201 members have for Weeks is a key part of her success as a steward.

“Rachel is great with the members. She generally resolves issues at the store level without needing to file a grievance. She has great relationships with management and the respect of the membership. She is a safety committee member, and because she helps with orientations she is one of the first people that new members meet when they start their job,” Zacarias said. “She is an awesome steward!”

support. It also addresses complaints from high-senior, part-time employees who are tired of working full-time hours later in the day.

By having more full-time employees working second shift and weekends, the company has the ability to offer more senior full-time and part-time employees earlier schedules and provide a better shopping experience for customers.

As we get closer to negotiations, we expect other programs to be tested, including one that will address the unfairness of the current disciplinary points system.

Through this trial and error testing process, our goal is to develop new contract language in several areas that will result in a win-win-win for members, the union and Meijer.

**“I used to be really shy and quiet, somebody who would be too nervous to speak up. So I think that my favorite part of being a steward is being able to help those people, the people that would have a hard time speaking up or not wanting to create waves. I like helping people who haven’t found their voice yet. People who know me now don’t realize how shy and quiet I used to be because now I have found my voice.”**

**- Rachel Weeks, Meijer #201**



store, for advice,” Tina Zacarias, her union representative, said. “We have an excellent steward team at Meijer #201. Rachel fits in well with this group of dedicated stewards, and with their guidance and support she has become a

her to build relationships with management which help her today to communicate effectively as a steward; working in non-union positions also showed her the benefits of being a union member.

Recalling an incident that happened

## Stewards Vital in Educating Members About Pilot Programs Being Tested at Meijer

*“From the President” from page 1*

### 3. Posting More Full-Time Jobs:

Many members want the benefits and security of a full-time job. Additionally, the union believes more full-time positions will address members' complaints of holdovers and unrealistic workloads, along with helping the company reduce its turnover.

Therefore, throughout the state, Meijer has agreed to post more full-time jobs. Stewards should encourage members to take these jobs. You should also remind current part-time employees that if they take a full-time job now, they can always return to part time in the future. However, if they choose to remain part time, it could be harder for them to obtain a full-time job in the future. Both the union and the company want to create a more stable workforce.

### 4. Constructing Schedules with an

**Emphasis on Full Time:** Members are profoundly unhappy with the workforce management scheduling system. They believe it is extremely unfair and punishes full-time and long-term part-time employees. The union agrees that new scheduling guidelines are needed and has secured agreement from Meijer to test a scheduling system that considers full-time shifts primary and uses part-time shifts to cover gaps and peak business times. These schedules are also being written to give all full-time employees two consecutive days off.

In their conversations with members, stewards should stress that this scheduling test more closely reflects the principles of seniority and the value of full-time positions that members'

## UFCW 951 Announces \$10,000 in New Membership Assistance Programs



**UFCW 951 has expanded assistance programs that help members and their families.**

As announced in the January *Voice of 951*, the UFCW 951 Foundation will award an additional \$10,000 to UFCW 951 members in 2016 through two new programs.

The Utility Reimbursement Program aids members with some of the most important and costly expenses paid by working families: electricity, water, natural gas and propane bills. The Family Enrichment Scholarship provides reimbursement for participation costs related to dependent children's extracurricular or community activities.

The following section answers common questions regarding the programs.

**Q: Who is eligible for the Utility Reimbursement Program and the Family Enrichment Scholarship?**

**A:** Any member in good standing with the union for 90 days or more at the time of the award is eligible.

**Q: How much are the reimbursements, and when are they awarded?**

Ten recipients of Utility Reimbursement awards in the amount of \$150 each will be chosen in March, June, September and December, with a total of \$6,000 being awarded to UFCW 951 members in 2016.

Ten winners of \$100 Family Enrichment Scholarships will be awarded in March, June, September and December.

A total of \$4,000 will be awarded to UFCW 951 members in the form of reimbursements for program participation costs paid in 2016.

**Q: What kinds of utility bills are eligible for reimbursement?**

**A:** Eligible utility bills include propane, natural gas, electricity and water. Other utilities, like telephone, internet or trash service, are not included in this program.

**Q: What kinds of expenses are eligible for the Family Enrichment Scholarship?**

**A:** Eligible activities include, but are not limited to, sports, scouting, dance, music and art classes, school clubs, lessons, tutoring, etc. Any costs directly related to program participation, including enrollment fees or required equipment and supplies, may be eligible.

**Q: Are there income guidelines I must meet to receive reimbursement?**

**A:** There are no financial requirements or restrictions for either of the new programs!

UFCW 951 believes all members can use extra money to help with utility costs and the expenses incurred by raising school-age children. The programs only require a winner to submit proof of payment for eligible expenses.

**Q: What if I play in an adult sports league? Can I apply for the Family Enrichment Scholarship to pay for my own participation costs?**

**A:** The Family Enrichment

Scholarship was created to reimburse parents or guardians for expenses incurred by a dependent child's participation in extracurricular or community activities. The goal of this scholarship is to allow all children the opportunity to be involved in extracurricular or community activities, which, while important to the child's development, often involve substantial extra costs for parents or guardians.

**Q: How does the reimbursement process work?**

**A:** If you are selected as the recipient of a Utility Reimbursement award, you will be contacted to submit proof of payment of an eligible utility bill. The address on the bill must match the address UFCW 951 has on file for you. Winners will be reimbursed up to \$150 in 2016; you may submit as many bills as needed to reach this \$150 maximum. UFCW 951 cannot pay any bill directly to a utility provider. Eligible bills must have already been paid.

If you are selected as a winner of the Family Enrichment Scholarship, you will be contacted to submit proof of your dependent child(ren)'s participation in a community or extracurricular activity, and proof of related program costs. This reimbursement can include multiple dependent children's participation costs in multiple activities up to \$100 in 2016.

**Q: How do I apply?**

**A:** Contact your union representative at 1.800.999.0951 for a paper application, or apply online at [www.ufcw951.org/members/scholarships](http://www.ufcw951.org/members/scholarships). One application is good for the entire calendar year.