

LOCAL 284



We provide a clean, safe, nurturing place for children to learn and grow.

We support teachers, faculty, and families.

We work hard to provide for our families and we give back to our communities.

WE ARE PUBLIC EMPLOYEES AND WE ARE PROUD OF WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO!

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www.seiu284.org

The Communicator

A publication for SEIU Local 284 Education Workers Across Minnesota

STRONGER TOGETHER

WINTER 2013

The Time is Now to Unlock a Better Future for Minnesota's Children

As the 2013 session begins, our union has taken a leading role in laying the ground work to ensure the legislature passes significant education finance reform this year. Since 2003, as legislators played politics with our schools, local districts have been forced to raise property taxes to make ends meet. The result is that how well our children's education is funded depends on where they lived. We need a funding structure where all children, regardless of their zip code, have the same access and opportunities for a quality 21st century public education. That includes pre-kindergarten education access and all day kindergarten. It is time to do away with education funding gimmicks that we all know don't work. Decisions for too many years have resulted in disinvestment in public education through funding shifts and other gimmicks.

Stark income inequality continues to separate our society into two classes: the rich and the poor. We are now creating inequalities in our schools, because we have a failed funding system. The future for Minnesota's children must be built on a stable

financial foundation. We need to take a serious look at property tax reform that will provide a source of revenue for our children's schools like we used to have and we need to ask the 1% to do their fair share to re-build the middle class and invest in our communities. Now is the moment to stop giving Minnesota families the run-around, fix the problems and put us on a path to a better future.

The changes we are working to achieve are in coalition with others in labor and community organizations. These changes will not come easy and will take engagement from many of our members that have not gotten involved in the past. To get involved, contact your contract organizer. Together we can strengthen the state's economy, restore fairness and invest in a brighter future.

-Carol Nieters, Executive



Member Profile: Anna Angeles-Farris

My name is Anna Angeles-Farris. I have been a custodian with the Lakeville School District for 7 years. Over the years I have become more engaged in my union as new opportunities have presented themselves. I'm co-steward, on our bargaining team, and recently joined our union Executive Board.

Currently I have a role in our campaign to raise revenue for education. This is the third time I have had the chance to work with our union while on leave from my school job.

The first time I was offered this opportunity, I was quite surprised. One of my first tasks was to speak in public. I had never considered putting myself into a public speaking position, since I have always been terrified of it. It was probably THE BEST thing I could have done for my personal growth. It helped me understand that our union has so much more to offer our members and the people of Minnesota than I was aware of. I challenged myself to try any new things that were offered, even if it meant stepping outside of my comfort zone.

The second time was during the 2012 Elections. For me this was also a great education. I worked more on my public speaking and received a crash course on the many quirky rules of campaigning. I was amazed to see how different groups interpreted issues in different ways, and how attempting to pass laws is not as simple as it initially appears to be.

Having just started my third lost time campaign, I am already knee deep in reading and absorbing a lot of information. I can't wait to see all the new experiences that are about to begin. I hope I can take these experiences back to my unit and explain to them how this greatly and positively impacts us as a union, and as Minnesotans. I encourage all of you to explore what our union has to offer.



Above: Anna Angeles-Farris

Local 284 Welcomes its Newest Members: Forest Lake Nutritional Services

The Forest Lake Nutritional Service workers overwhelmingly voted to form their union with our local, SEIU 284! "Ready for a change," stated Cindy Taylor, a new member from Forest Lake, referring to her positive outlook toward the future.

The workers were strong, dedicated and took ownership of the campaign right from the beginning. At only their third meeting, the group decided to purple-up in SEIU t-shirts and march to Human Resources to ask for recognition of their union.

Next step: their first contract!



Pictured at left: New Forest Lake Bargaining Team left to right: Cindy Taylor, Rita Dufresne, Lisa Thill, Luanne Murphy, Lisa Lenz, Keith Niemi, Gina Rivard, Sandy Stanridge, Wendy Maxwell, Laurie Gray

Michigan Legislature and Governor Force Right to Work-

Minnesota Does Not Because We Elected a Worker Friendly Legislative Majority!

In a special legislative session called by the Michigan Legislature just before Christmas, both the Michigan Senate and House rushed votes to approve Right to Work Legislation. The legislation was signed by Republican Governor Rick Snyder who previously had said he would not support Right to Work legislation. The new Right to Work Law applies to both private and public sector workers in the State of Michigan and makes Michigan the 24th state to pass a Right to Work Law. The result of this will be the weakening of unions in Michigan and over time will reduce the number of union members within the state. This will result in the lowering of wages and benefits for all Michigan workers.

Why should we in Minnesota care? Well, Michigan was the state that was instrumental to the birth of the American Labor Movement. In Flint, Michigan, the United Auto Workers (UAW) called a sit down strike in the Fisher Body Factory owned by General Motors in 1936-37. This sit down strike forced GM to recognize the UAW. This led to the organizing of the U.S. Auto industry and many other

industries. The unionization of auto, steel, tire, aerospace, and many other industries brought fair pay and benefits to thousands of workers. It was the unionization of these large industries that led to increased pay and benefits for both union and non-workers and to the creation of the American Middle Class.

In contrast to what has happened in Michigan, in Minnesota, we have flipped the Minnesota Legislature and elected a worker friendly House and Senate. This happened because of the hard work of many union members who made phone calls and knocked on doors on behalf of these SEIU endorsed legislative candidates. Now, we don't have to worry about Minnesota becoming a Right to Work state for the next two years. However, remember it was only last summer when some politicians in the Minnesota Legislature were pushing for a Right to Work Constitutional Amendment here in Minnesota.

-Keith Niemi, President

Local 284 Welcomes Libby Kantner as our newest staff member.

Libby has accepted our position as Political Organizing Director and hit the floor running as the 2013 session is already underway. Libby comes to us from Organizing for America, where the philosophy was that relationships matter. Her experience will be an asset to the union and its members as we head into the current legislative session and into the future.

SEIU Scholarship Information

- **Local 284** offers 3- \$500 Scholarships awarded by random drawing. You must have your applications in by **March 31st, 2013**. Applications are available online at seiu284.org or by contacting your Contract Organizer.
- **SEIU International** also offers several scholarship opportunities. For information go to seiu.org/members

Affordable Care Act- Health Insurance Exchange To Help MN Consumers

The MN Legislature announced a plan to enact a robust, consumer-friendly health insurance exchange that would allow the state to negotiate with insurers to get higher quality, more affordable coverage for Minnesota's working families and ensure accountability to Minnesota taxpayers. The state's health insurance exchange, which will begin operating in 2014, is a central component of the Affordable Care Act and a historic opportunity to extend high-quality health coverage to over a million Minnesotans.

"The health insurance exchange is a key piece of the Affordable Care Act that SEIU health care workers fought

hard to achieve. Making sure that the state has the ability to strike a better deal for consumers and small-business workers is critical to connecting Minnesotans to the affordable health care they need," said Phillip Cryan, a Policy Specialist with SEIU Healthcare Minnesota who is a member of the state's Health Insurance Exchange Advisory Task Force. "The state has received a wealth of public input into this important policy discussion over the last two years, and we are proud of the role our Union of healthcare workers has played in this process." More information will be available on our website as it becomes available.

Local 284 Election Results

In late 2012 we saw a highly contested election for President of the Local. Keith Niemi, incumbent President, was challenged by Executive Board member and West St. Paul Paraprofessional Mark Krey. After a hard fought, yet respectful campaign, Keith retained his position as President with 59.8% of the vote. Both candidates visited many schools and spoke to hundreds of members.

The Local also had elections for three Trustees, a Sergeant at Arms, and a Member at Large. All three Trustee positions went to members who have never served on the Executive Board before: Anna Angeles-Farris, a custodian from Lakeville, Desiree Hemstock, a paraprofessional from Westonka, and Steve Miltich, a custodian from Orono. The Sergeant at Arms position went to former Trustee and West St. Paul paraprofessional, Terri Buttleman. The new Member at Large is Chris Michaelson, a custodian from Wayzata.



Left to right: Keith Niemi, Desiree Hemstock, Terri Buttleman, Ann Angeles-Farris, Steve Miltich, Chris Michaelson



Lobby Day 2013

Lobby Day 2013

- Equitable School Funding
- Fair Tax Revenue

Wednesday, February 20th

8:30am

Carpenters' Hall

710 Olive Street

St. Paul, MN 55130

You can register by going to seiumn.org or by contacting your Contract Organizer.



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If you have an article or suggestion for the newsletter, please contact Nicholas Frey:
nic@local284.com

LOCAL 284 OFFICERS

Executive Director:	Carol Nieters
President:	Keith Niemi
Vice Presidents:	Mark Hanson Sandy Ringler
Trustees:	Anna Angeles-Farris Desiree Hemstock Steve Miltich
Members at Large:	Chris Michaelson Bob Cook Donna Morris Mark Krey Valerie Rolstad
Sergeant at Arms:	Terri Buttleman
Senior Member:	Ginia Klamecki

The Officers of Local 284 make up the Executive Board. Executive Board meetings are open to all members in good standing. Please contact Union headquarters if you would like to attend.

Local 284 Meetings

January 31	Executive Board Mtg: 3pm (Hopkins)
*January 31	General Member Meeting and Chili Feed: 6pm Hopkins Community Center; 1001 Hwy 7, Hopkins, MN
February 21	Executive Board Mtg: 3pm (Local 284 Office)
March 21	Executive Board Mtg: 3pm (Local 284 Office)
April 25	Executive Board Mtg: 3pm (Local 284 Office)
*April 27	Leadership Assembly: 9am (Carpenters' Hall) 710 Olive St, Saint Paul, MN 55130

Change Address or Phone Number?

Please let us know by contacting our office at (651) 256-9100

Or by emailing Terri at terrib@local284.com