



SEIU Local 73 Pride

SERVING THOSE WHO ARE CALLED TO SERVE



FROM CRISIS TO CHANGE: THE BATTLE FOR A PROGRESSIVE STATE INCOME TAX AND THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Fact: In the mental health and developmental disability areas alone, 200,000 Human Services jobs will be added nationwide in the next few years. Many of these new workers will be employed by community-based non-profit social services agencies.

Fact: From 2003-2010, \$4.4 billion was cut from Human/Social Services in Illinois, when inflation and population growth are taken into account. Illinois ranks at or near the bottom for state funding of critical social services.

Fact: The implementation of a fair Illinois progressive income tax (PIT) could result in \$2.4 billion a year in additional State revenues, while reducing taxes for 94% of Illinois residents (those earning less than \$150,000 a year). **Source: Center for Tax and Budget Accountability [CTBA] study, February 2012**

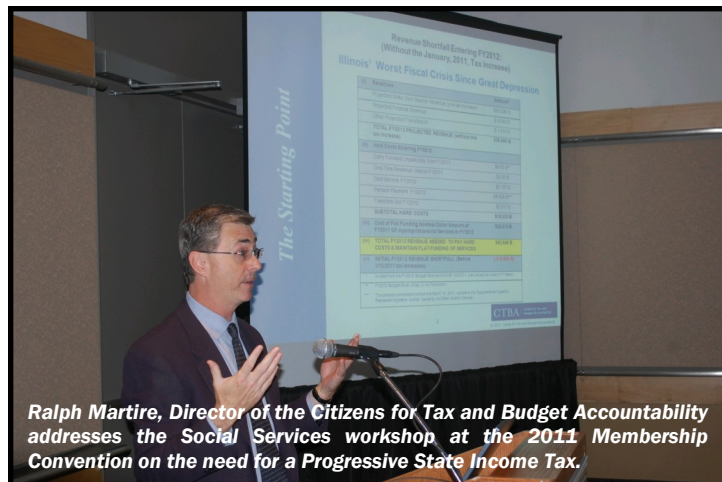
What do these facts mean for us, the community-based social service workers, who stand between the most vulnerable members of our communities and the horrors of homelessness, isolation, joblessness, and prison? They mean that society depends upon us to deliver vital services to mentally, developmentally, and physically disabled adults and children, seniors in need, and troubled youth. And the need is increasing. They mean that while the State of Illinois sinks in the quagmire of fiscal crisis, we provide these services, with inadequate pay and benefits, job insecurity and often-dangerous understaffing.

But above all, these facts mean that we can take a giant step toward resolving the crisis by organizing a movement for a progressive income tax (PIT). We must fundamentally and structurally reform the regressive state income tax. Illinois is one of just seven states that forces low and middle income citizens to pay the same percentage of their

income as those earning \$150,000 a year – and also to pay the same percentage as Illinois' 29,000 millionaires.

The implementation of this simple, practical, overdue and just reform requires an amendment to the State Constitution, and can be accomplished with a 60% majority of the State legislature. We, the Social Service Workers in SEIU, must take the lead in making the demand a reality. We must reach out to other social service workers not in Unions, clients and their families, the disabled rights movement, Agency leaders, our communities and all working people. We will work toward a special Social Services conference to bring together that coalition. And we will use the upcoming Lobby Day in May to put the issue on the political agenda in this State.

**FROM CRISIS TO
STRUCTURAL REFORM!
THE TIME IS NOW!
COMMIT YOURSELF TO THIS
FIGHT AND GET INVOLVED!**

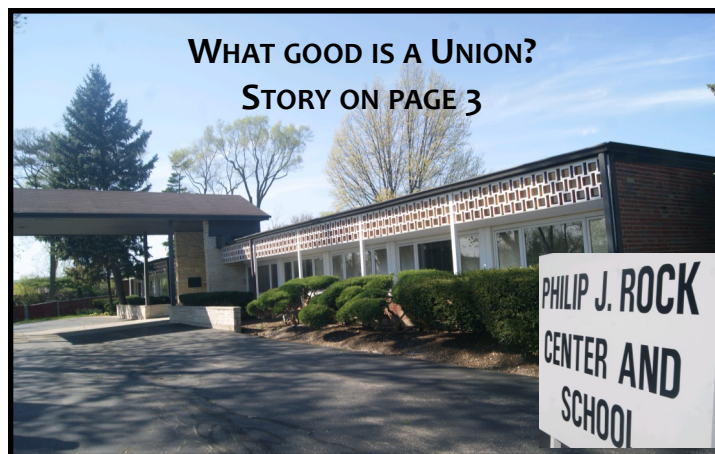


Ralph Martire, Director of the Citizens for Tax and Budget Accountability addresses the Social Services workshop at the 2011 Membership Convention on the need for a Progressive State Income Tax.

A FAIR AND JUST PROGRESSIVE INCOME TAX WOULD:

- Generate revenue that could be a major step toward the proper funding of community-based social services, making needed wage and benefit gains possible.
- Reduce our own tax burden as working and middle class people.
- Generate the much-needed real economic recovery that has been lacking in Illinois, creating at least 36,000 private sector jobs. The additional state revenue will lead to a multiplier effect in which state funding of new social service workers' salaries leads to more purchases in the local economy and more jobs. (Source: CTBA study February 2012)

WHAT GOOD IS A UNION? STORY ON PAGE 3



Social Service Bargaining Unit Roundup

Anixter Center

(Serving people with mental and physical health needs, especially on Chicago's North side):

Sidebar negotiations after the signing of the CBA resulted in a major agreement that has reformed unfair disciplines and potential job losses over alleged errors in medication passing at the residences. *Tiffany Johnson was a member activist who was terminated in conjunction with inequities and confusion regarding med passing and the handling of medical emergencies. Recently her grievance was favorably resolved a grievance at the arbitration level.*

Envision, Unlimited

(Serving developmentally disabled people, especially on Chicago's Southside)

A grievance filed by Senior Program Counselors and Residential Workers (Community Living Specialists) will go to arbitration. It deals with inequities in arbitrarily unequal starting pay raises, creating a situation in which some people with many years seniority are earning less than newly hired people doing the same work.

Grand Prairie Behavioral Health Services

(Serving clients with a mix of mental/behavioral disabilities especially in the South suburbs)

Wage reopener bargaining continues as the member-driven bargaining committee struggles for wage increases. Union and management continue discussions aimed at coping with the pressures and stresses upon the members relating to fees for services and billing requirements. The Union will pursue the issue of management's assertion that employees transferring jobs within the agency are put back on probation.

The Jewish Federation

(comprising of five agencies and serving a very broad range of clients, especially on Chicago's North side and in the Northern suburbs)

The Union and Management settled favorably the Dorothy Loving In-Home Service workers grievance which stemmed from a disagreement on recent contractual provisions relating to pay when a worker arrives at a home to find that the client has cancelled the appointment. Several concerns of Council of Jewish Elderly drivers were resolved (such as greatly alleviating cost and inconvenience to transport drivers over new uniform

dress procedures, and the adoption of premiums for special "Medicar" driving). Labor-Management discussions around safety concerns at JCFS's Therapeutic Day School are under way, led by steward and Local 73 Executive Board member Laurie Lambert.

The Larkin Center

(serving youth with a mix of problems, in the Elgin area)

The Union's efforts averted several potential payless paydays caused by the State's failure to pay its bills on time. An active member bargaining committee continues to pursue wage reopener negotiations. Management and the Union agreed to streamline and make fairer the grievance procedure. Local 73 congratulations and welcomes Dolly McComb, Teacher and Jeff Richert, Team Counselor who have become stewards since Larkin joined our social services Division. They have already done great things!

Philip Rock Center and School

(serving deaf & blind children over the entire state)

See article on IMRF legislation in this newsletter. The IMRF crisis resulted in a hiatus in the bargaining of a new CBA which will soon resume. The members' focus includes, proposals similar to the Job/Union security provisions in other units (see article in this newsletter) and improving and clarifying the grievance procedure.

Regional Mental Health Center, Tri City Campus

(serving clients with a mix of mental and behavioral disabilities in Northwestern Indiana)

See article on "Right to Work" in this newsletter. A ULP by the Union thwarted a "working committee" on the suspended incentives program in which management sought to decide who would represent bargaining unit members. The Union is now proceeding with its own working committee and will then demand bargaining. A grievance filed over unfair, unequal treatment in imposing discipline over productivity and billing standards will go to arbitration. The members will seek constructive dialogue with management on overwork and stress related to these pressures. A grievance on benefits and pay for workers in a schools program under a finite grant that ran out was successfully resolved by the Union and management.

WHAT GOOD IS A UNION?

PHILIP J. ROCK CENTER AND SCHOOL (PRC) AND THE IMRF

PRC is an exceptionally fine School and residential program, created a number of years ago by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), in Glen Ellyn. It serves some of the most profoundly disabled children throughout the State of Illinois – those who are both deaf and blind.

The paraprofessionals and other support staff make up a Local 73 bargaining unit, part of our Social Services Division. Our paraprofessional members are the ones who work with and care for these children on an around-the-clock basis both in the classrooms and in the dorms, as well as on field trips.

The funds from ISBE, by agreement, pass through Keeneyville School District 20, even though the school serves children from any school district in the state. Our members, just like paraprofessionals at regular public school districts outside of Chicago, have always participated in a pension plan under the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF).

But, in August 2011, IMRF informed District 20 and PRC that there was a large unfunded liability (relating in part to the economic downturn and resulting problems for pension funds). Under this pressure, the Keeneyville School Board decided it could not be responsible for the potential liability, and moved to outsource our jobs to a private firm. The result would have been to throw 25 Local 73 members out of the IMRF pension fund, after years of dedicated service for which they were promised an ongoing defined benefit pension. The outsourcing also would have negatively impacted the quality and stability of this vitally needed program.

At first glance, the situation appeared hopeless. But Local 73 President Christine Boardman knew better and promptly announced that our Union would not accept this and would stand by our members' right to their IMRF pensions. The PRC members and staff of Local 73 worked hard and brought together all the parties (IMRF, ISBE, PRC's management, the Governor's office, and District 20) and got them to work together for a solution.

State Senator Don Harmon of Oak Park sponsored an amendment in House Bill 3474 which will allow PRC employees to remain in IMRF. It provides that should severe financial problems develop for PRC, the pension liability would be spread out over all the school districts in Illinois, creating no substantial problem for any one district. The amendment passed the Senate unanimously and is pending in the House with bi-partisan sponsorship, including Representatives Sandra Pihos, Camille Lilly and numerous others.

The outsourcing, which had been proceeding relentlessly, has now been indefinitely put off by District 20, in order to allow the legislative process to proceed. In the very likely event of final success, the outsourcing bids will be cancelled.



*Yvonne Robinson stands outside PRC.
She delivered the speech below
to the Keeneyville School Board.*

STRAIGHT FROM THE MEMBER

*The following is the speech delivered at the February 2012 meeting of the Keeneyville School Board by PRC paraprofessional and Union steward **Yvonne Robinson**:*

“The PRC students are very unique and special individuals. They are fearless! But they are all deaf and blind along with other disabilities, such as Cerebral Palsy, Down’s Syndrome, Autism, seizures just to name a few. We paraprofessionals have a parental responsibility for the students and we provide all of their daily needs, such as bathing, brushing their teeth, combing their hair, feeding, transporting them to school and all their doctor appointments. We provide support in their educations.

No one knows these students better than the para pros. You need to be around them to relate and understand them. It takes a special individual to work with our students. Not only do we provide care for them during the day, we provide care on nights, weekends, holidays, and birthdays.

It is important not to disrupt the relationship of the paraprofessional staff and the students. Outsourcing would create instability, insecurity and would be disruptive. We the paraprofessionals are counting on the IMRF pension for our security. This is what we were promised. We have willingly worked for low wages and stayed committed to the mission.

As a result of the economy I lost my home after 22 years. However, I persevered and continue willingly because I care for the students, as well as the benefits and pension promised to us. We understand District 20’s financial problem. PRC, the Union and the IMRF are working with Senator Harmon to solve it through legislation that would spread the liability among all the school districts. By postponing your vote to proceed with outsourcing, it would allow us more time to come up with a solution. Thank you.”

*There is absolutely no doubt that without Local 73’s leadership and struggle in this crisis, the outsourcing and elimination of IMRF pension participation would have already happened by now. PRC is a small bargaining unit, but with Local 73, the rights and livelihood of every member are the top priority.
How important is it to have a fighting Union?
Ask the PRC members.*

SO-CALLED “RIGHT TO WORK” LAW PASSES IN INDIANA UNION PLEDGE DRIVE INITIATED AT RMHC



Despite massive protests from working people, the Republican-dominated Indiana legislature passed the so-called “Right to Work” bill in February 2012. Under the new law, Unions and employers can no longer agree to automatic dues deductions from the pay checks of Union members who sign cards.

This change applies to all Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) signed *after* March 14, 2012. So under any CBA currently in effect, dues deductions will continue until a new CBA is signed. Behind the political masks of “right to choose,” and of attracting (low wage, anti-Union) business into the state, the intent of Right to Work is to harm Unions by making it extremely difficult to collect dues effectively that members pay to keep their Union going strong. By relying solely on the dues of the members, Unions can truly be owned and controlled by the members.

The “Tri City” (northern section) campus of Regional Mental Health Center (RMHC) in Indiana is part of Local 73’s Social Services Division and falls under this new legislation. At the general RMHC Union membership meeting in February, member activists initiated a drive to ask fellow members to sign pledges to voluntarily pay dues either by asking Employer to deduct it (if that can be negotiated) or by direct deposit from their banks.

The activists are hopeful that the members will understand what they need to do because of a number of successful recent initiatives by the Union. Importantly, the members bargained a CBA in 2009, when the former Tri City Center was

bought out by a non-Union company. That CBA saved everyone’s jobs with guarantees of no loss of wages, preserved most of the hard won rights from the old TC contract and won a 9% wage increase over 3 years. That CBA expires at the end of September 2012. At the meeting, current ongoing efforts around incentives, the stress of tough productivity and billing requirements, and the upcoming CBA negotiations were all dealt with.

Stronger Together with SEIU Local 73!

Looking for ways to stay in touch with your Union?

Use the following resources!



Member Resource Center

- 312.588.7630
- Contact your Union Representative



Facebook

- Facebook.com/SEIULocal73
- Have your voice heard, comment on stories



Website

- www.SEIU73.org
- See latest Union news and videos
- Register for events



SEIU Says

- Every Tuesday at 6 p.m. on CAN TV
- Call in with questions: 312.738.1060

Retirees Spotlight

LOVINGS LOVING RETIRED LIFE

Two great long-time employees of the Council of the Jewish Elderly (CJE) and Union activists, Lee Loving (Central Transport Driver), steward and bargaining committee member and Dorothy Loving (In-Home Service Worker and bargaining committee member) retired in March 2012. Their spirit of service to the clients and their extraordinarily wise and dedicated leadership in the Union at the Jewish Federation will be fondly remembered and greatly missed. At the retirement party held at CJE central transport office, it was clear that the CJE unit's loss will also be the Local 73 Retiree Club and the Fight for a Fair Economy's gain!



Congratulations and best wishes for the future to Lee and Dorothy!

BARGAINING FOR JOB SECURITY/UNION SECURITY IN HARD TIMES THREE EXAMPLES FROM SOCIAL SERVICES

The huge funding cuts for social services have resulted in layoffs and stagnant wages in the social services sector. Fighting against the odds, members of the Social Services Division of Local 73 have won small wage increases in the majority of CBAs/reopeners negotiated in the last two years.

But in times like these, issues of job security, and the protecting of hard-won workplace rights come to the forefront. Our member-driven bargaining committees in the social services division have creatively taken on the challenges in many ways.

Just one example relates to non-Union (no just cause rights, no benefits) part-time and/or "registry" work at Union agencies, which may cut costs for hard-pressed employers, but which can erode bargaining units and threaten our livelihoods.

Three different recently-bargained social services CBAs have taken on the issue. At Grand Prairie Services, the increasing use of non-Union registry workers to perform work created by "temporary vacan-

cies," was greatly limited by an agreement to creating a voluntary pool of bargaining unit members who would have right of first refusal on that kind of extra work.

At both Envision Unlimited and also at the Jewish Federation, agreements were reached to disclose to the Union on a regular basis all part-time workers who have in fact worked above the contractual threshold for such work to be Union work.

Those part-timers who were worked over the threshold will become Union members with pro-rated benefits and just cause rights for the next six months. Paula Haley of Envision, Laurie Lambert of Jewish Child and Family services and Linda Adams of Grand Prairie Services, all members of their respective bargaining committees all stated their belief that members will continue to respond creatively to the challenges of difficult times.

Meet Your Steward

RUTH DEKKER, LCSW REGIONAL MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

Ruth Dekker has worked as a Therapist in the Outpatient Mental Health program at RMHC and at its predecessor, Tri City Community Mental Health, since 2001.

Q. When did you first become a Union steward and why?

A. In 2009 -- I have been in Unions most of my life, when I worked at a supermarket, and when I worked for Gary Mental Health. I've also been politically active, for example in protesting unfair property taxes on working people in my community, which is the Miller section of Gary. I have also been active in SEIU at RMHC since I started here, serving on the Bargaining Committee and attending Union meetings here at RMHC.

The two most important things that made me decide to commit to being a steward were: 1. My participation in the successful campaign to stay unionized and to protect everyone jobs, seniority dates, wage levels and other rights when Tri City was bought by a non-Union company and we became the North (Tri City) campus of RMHC. And 2. The pressure and stress on many direct service workers due to increasing billing requirements. These two things really brought home to me how important it is for social service workers to have a voice through our Union.

Q. What have you been involved with as a steward?

A. I help to make sure that the voice of RMHC direct service workers is heard and I make sure that the Union is visible and accessible to my co-workers. I distribute newsletters, bulletins, and flyers; I keep in touch with the people, especially in my department and find out their concerns. This has directly resulted in grievances being filed and resolved. I also maintain the Union bulletin board at Stark and have mobilized people to come to broader SEIU events such as conventions, demonstrations, and picnics.

Q. What are the some important issues and challenges facing RMHC members at this time?

A. We need to all commit to voluntarily have dues deducted when the so-called Right to Work law in Indiana goes into effect with the next contract. We need our Union and dues are needed to have a Union. It's simple!

The other big thing is the overwork caused by the billing requirements. Given the demands of that, there is not enough documentation time for billing during the workday, which must be mainly spent on the actual delivery of the services. Many people repeatedly have to use their own personal time to complete documentation. Through our Union, we are working on this at all levels -- grievances against unfair disciplines, investigating procedures and requirements -- and also politically. We have to realize that State requirements and funding policies have a great impact upon us and our clients.

Q. What advice do you have for young people coming into Social Services and RMHC?

A. Support and get involved with your Union. I have seen what can happen to working people with the huge loss of good manufacturing jobs and I have also seen what having a Union can accomplish. Your Union is your best tool to defend your livelihood and your dignity.



Ruth Dekker has been a Union Steward since 2009

LOBBY DAY Tuesday, May 15, 2012

THEY ARE BACK AND AT IT AGAIN!

STATE LEGISLATORS ARE LOOKING TO SLASH BUDGETS TO VITAL HUMAN SERVICES, CUT YOUR PENSIONS, AND GIVE AWAY YOUR UNION BARGAINING RIGHTS!

**COME TO LOBBY DAY TO TELL THEM:
IF THEY VOTE AGAINST US, WE WILL
VOTE THEM OUT IN NOVEMBER!**

LOBBY DAY SCHEDULE

7 a.m.: Buses Leave from Local 73 Chicago Office to Springfield

11 a.m.: Arrive in Springfield and Lobby Legislators

1 p.m.: Lobby Day Rally inside Capitol Rotunda

3 p.m.: Leave Springfield back to Chicago

7 p.m.: Arrive back at Local 73 Office

RSVP to reserve your spot on a bus to Lobby Day May 15:

- Call the Member Resource Center: 312.588.7630
- Sign up online at www.SEIU73.org

LOCAL 73
SEIU
Stronger Together