



SEIU 517M
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

The **E-Former**

The Official Electronic Newsletter of
SEIU Local 517M

March 2023

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Click on the map to find out which Region your unit is in.



New Constitution and Bylaws Approved



The SEIU Local 517M Election/Tally Committee met on Friday, February 17, 2023 to count the votes in the SEIU Local 517M Constitution and Bylaws ratification election. With an approval rate of over 96%, the changes have been approved by the membership.

The SEIU Local 517M Executive Board met on March 2, 2023 and certified the election. The new Constitution and Bylaws became effective at that time. [View the new Constitution and Bylaws.](#)

“On behalf of the union, I would like to thank the Committee for their hard work developing the new SEIU 517M Constitution and Bylaws.”, said SEIU Local 517M President, Joey Combs. “These updates ensure that our bylaws align with the latest SEIU International Bylaws and allow us to be better suited to meet the challenges of the future.”

2023 Scholarship Applications Now Available



The SEIU 517M - Tomorrow’s Michigan Today Scholarship is open to dues-paying members in good standing (as defined in the SEIU Local 517M Constitution and Bylaws), their spouse, children, step children, adopted children or grandchildren with college or trade school expenses.

There are 15 scholarships available and the amount of each scholarship is \$600. These non-renewable scholarships will be awarded to students based on successful completion of the application process and meeting certain criteria. Awards will be made via a lottery system from all eligible submissions.

Applications are now available. [Click here.](#)

2022 Scholarship winners were: Alexander Allen, Blaine Barkovich, Sierra Beck, Jania Clowers, Jack Cuncannan, David Early, Christian Gross, Sophia Herb, Braden Johnston, Katelyn Kramer, Sophia Lozmack and Alaina Moseley.

STAND TOGETHER — STAND STRONG

www.seiu517m.org [Facebook at: SEIULocal517M](#)

City of Saginaw Unit Hosts Unit-Wide Bulletin Board Challenge

Submitted by Clint Bryant, Region 1 Labor Relations

Over a three week period, member-leaders in the City of Saginaw hosted a unit-wide “Bulletin Board Challenge”. Members were tasked with updating their workplace bulletin boards with various informational flyers. Topics included unit meeting dates, member benefits, and local scholarship applications.

“It is important that our members are informed and receive as much information as possible. Bulletin Boards haven’t always been our focus but updating our workplace boards and our social media page have been pivotal to improving communication for our units. It has been great to see our members receive more information and our site stewards unleash their creativity.”, stated Unit President, Barb Rasche.

Members from the Inspections, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and Environmental Department who won the challenge celebrated with pizza party at lunchtime. (See the winning entries below.)

The contest was held from the end of December 2022 to the end of January 2023.



Above: Members from the Treasurer’s Office and Payroll won with the submission to the right.



Below: Members from Code Enforcement and CDBG won with their submission at lower right.



2023 Calendar Year State Employee Premium Holidays

The State of Michigan has announced a limited pay-period premium holiday for the State Vision, the State Dental, Preventative Dental, and the Long Term Disability (LTD) Insurance Plans. They can offer the holiday since those items are self-funded and there has been lower than expected costs.

Your normal deductions will not be deducted on the holiday pay-periods and will resume when the holiday is over. You don't have to do anything, it will be automatic. Here are the details:

State Vision Plan: No premiums for 7 consecutive pay periods beginning 3/30/2023 and resuming on 7/6/2023 for Employer-paid premiums, part-time and DROP employee-paid premiums. Full-time employees pay no premium for enrollment.

State Dental and Preventative Dental Plans: No employer or employee-paid premiums for 3 consecutive pay periods beginning 3/30/2023 and resuming on 5/11/2023.

Long Term Disability (LTD) Insurance Plan: No employer or employee-paid premiums for 7 consecutive pay periods beginning 3/30/2023 and resuming on 7/6/2023.

HSS Member Turns Passion for Art into Short Film Honoring Healthcare Workers

Human Services Support unit member Kimberly Johnson turned her passion for art into an outlet for stress and to honor the service of others.

As her mother entered her final days due to cancer, Kimberly would sketch her feelings and the scenes around her. Her mother's interactions with the nursing staff, their challenges and group support during COVID.

When her mother passed, she placed her brushes and sketchpads into storage, the passion was gone.

About six months later she had a change of heart and wanted to explore art again. She found her sketchbooks and turned her sketches into watercolor paintings. These paintings were turned into a 20-minute film that was narrated by Grammy award winning singer Debby Boone. Kimberly had met Boone on an online celebrity access site.

The movie had a private viewing on February 17, at the public access station WKTV studios in Wyoming, Michigan. A public showing of the film is being planned for the future.

For more details, read [the February 13, 2023 WoodTV story from Gabrielle Phifer.](#)



[Watch the broadcast story here.](#)

March is Women's History Month

11 Quotes from Women Labor Leader

By: Jordan Steinberg, U.S Department of Labor

Throughout our nation's history, women have frequently been influential leaders in the fight for workers' rights. Women have been pioneers of workplace safety, fair wage advocates, and labor organizers have helped to uplift and improve conditions for all workers. In honor of Women's History Month, here are eleven inspiring quotes from women labor leaders.

"I am sick at heart when I look into the social world and see woman so willingly made a dupe to the beastly selfishness of man." –Sarah Bagley

Sarah Bagley was an influential leader for working women's rights in the industrial city of Lowell, Massachusetts. In the 1840s and 50s, Lowell was filled with cotton factories and mills, most of which were staffed by women. In 1844, women of such mills who were working under oppressive conditions for low wages came together to form the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association. Sarah Bagley was president of the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association. Bagley advocated for a 10-hour workday in front of the Massachusetts legislature. She continued to break barriers when she became the nation's first female telegraph operator in 1846.

"You show me the women and I'll turn them into organizers." –Kate Mullany

An early, ardent advocate for the rights of working women, Kate Mullany helped organize her fellow laundry workers. Mullany helped start the Collar Laundry Union, the country's first all-female union to advocate for shorter hours, higher wages and safer working conditions. Following a five-and-a-half-day strike, the union secured safer working conditions and fairer wages. In 1868, Mullany became the first woman appointed to a labor union's national office.

"There is no possible conflict between the good of society and the good of its members, of which the industrial workers are the vast majority." –Margaret Haley

Born in 1861, Margaret Haley was an educator and a prominent leader in the national push to unionize teachers. Chicago was the first city to have a major teachers' union, and Haley was a leader for the Chicago Teachers Federation. Her 1904 speech "Why Teachers Should Organize" was immensely influential in the growing movement of teachers' unions.

"Let woman choose her own vocation just as man does his. Let her go into business, let her make money, let her become independent, if possible, of man." –Maggie Lena Walker

Maggie Lena Walker was a businesswoman who made a name for herself as the first Black woman to charter a bank and serve as bank president. She used her success to finance a newspaper, open a department store, and run the fraternal benefit society, the Independent Order of Saint Luke. Walker used her accomplishments to create opportunities for others, particularly Black Americans and women.

"Nothing will ever be won by waiting around. You've got to put your shoulder to the wheel to get ahead." – Rose Pesotta

A Ukrainian immigrant to the United States, Rose Pesotta moved to New York City at the age of 17 where she began working at a shirt waist factory. While working, Pesotta joined the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) which was primarily made up of Jewish and Latina garment workers. She was elected to the all-male board of ILGWU Local 25 in 1920 and went on to organize workers for the union around the country. In 1933, she helped organize garment workers in Los Angeles and as a result of their success in the Los Angeles Garment Workers Strike that year, Rose Pesotta was elected vice president of ILGWU. She eventually resigned from the board of the union due to that 85% of the union was female workers, she was the sole woman on the executive board.

"The interests of labor and the people are one." –Luisa Moreno

Born in 1907 in Guatemala, Luisa Moreno began her career as a reporter in Mexico City. When she moved to New York City in 1928, she found work at an industrial garment factory. Faced with horrific working conditions and low wages, Moreno participated in many strikes at the factory before becoming an organizer with the American Federation of Labor in 1935. Travelling the country, Moreno worked to organized workers across industries, though one of her biggest contributions was starting the Spanish-Speaking People's Congress in Southern California which combined labor and civil rights activism.

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[Continued from Previous Page]

“[T]he strike was the best thing that ever happened. It changed our lives. We overcame bigotry, didn’t we? ... I know it was a turning point in my life.” –Sue Ko Lee

Sue Ko Lee was a Hawaiian-born Chinese American labor organizer and garment worker. As a founding member of the Chinese Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Association, she participated in the 15-week strike against the National Dollar Stores garment factory. The strike was immensely successful and at the time was the longest strike in the history of San Francisco’s Chinatown. Sue Ko Lee went on to become a leader in the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Association, working to improve the working conditions of female garment workers around the world.

“Without community service, we would not have a strong quality of life. It’s important to the person who serves as well as the recipient. It’s the way in which we ourselves grow and develop.” –Dorothy Height

Dorothy Height was a lifelong activist and public servant. She was one of the chief organizers of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, served as president of the National Council of Negro women for four decades, and served on numerous federal councils to improve U.S. worker’s quality of life. Dr. Height was awarded the Citizen’s Medal for distinguished service in 1989 and the Congressional Gold Medal in 2004.

“I didn’t know what the union was. But I know that I needed help and here was the place that I could get that help. I knew that I wanted to help other workers, and I found out that I could help them by joining with them and making the union strong and powerful enough to bring about change.” –Addie L. Wyatt

Addie L. Wyatt began working in the meatpacking industry in 1941, canning soups for the army. During the war, Wyatt moved to different packinghouses but soon became involved in her local chapter of the United Packinghouse Workers of America. She climbed the ranks of the union, becoming the first Black woman to hold a senior office in an American labor union, at both the local and international level. An ordained minister, Wyatt was a vocal activist for worker rights, civil rights and women’s rights. She was inducted into the Labor Hall of Honor in 2012.

“Workers have a right to expect they won’t be killed on their jobs.” –Dr. Eula Bingham

Dr. Eula Bingham was an occupational health scientist who served as the fourth ever head of the Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) under President Jimmy Carter. As head of OSHA, Bingham focused on enforcement and ensuring that companies complied with regulations to protect workers from occupational illnesses and diseases. Her work to ensure the safety of workers has saved numerous lives and remains a gold standard of the work of OSHA.

“The union taught me how to fight for what I needed and what I had, and if it was something I wanted, how to go after it” –Hattie Canty

Hattie Canty was the first Black woman elected president of the Culinary Workers Union which she first joined as a hotel room attendant in Las Vegas, Nevada. Canty went on to lead the longest strike in U.S. history, lasting over six years.

These are just some of the many incredible women that have helped advance the dignity of working women and the rights of all workers throughout our nation’s history. Follow the Department of Labor on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram, where we’ll be highlighting inspiring leaders throughout Women’s History Month.

Jordan Steinberg is an intern in the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Public Affairs. This article appeared on the Department of Labor website March 2, 2023.

Save the Date!



Mark your calendar for the SEIU 517M Scholarship Golf Outing on Friday, June 9, 2023 at Wheatfield Valley Golf Course in Williamston. More information to follow.

