

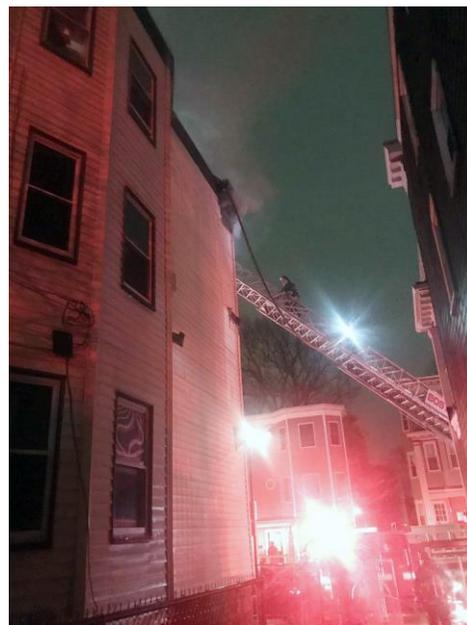
‘All of my things are gone’

Union delivers aid to member after devastating fire

Local 888 has helped out a member who was forced out of her home New Year’s Day when a three-alarm fire devastated her Dorchester three-decker.

“I want to thank SEIU Local 888’s Housing Trust and the union’s Benevolent Fund for helping me and my family after a devastating fire. I’m so glad that my union can help people in need. That’s what Local 888 is all about. God bless our union,” said **Marcelina Johnson**, who works at Boston Centers for Youth & Families.

“All of us at Local 888 were concerned about Marcelina and her family,” said **Tom McKeever**, the union’s secretary-treasurer. “We are deeply honored to serve our members whenever we can.”



TIME OF NEED: Marcelina Johnson appreciates the support she has gotten from her union after fire hit her home, right, on New Year’s Day. She is shown here with Local 888 Secretary-Treasurer **Tom McKeever**.

Published reports said that firefighters battled heavy flames to put out the fire. A total of 11 people lost their home, but no injuries were reported.

Johnson said that she was in Rhode Island to celebrate New

Year’s when she received calls about the fire. When she arrived back home, she found her street blocked off. “It was terrible,” she said. “I wish that such a thing would never

See page 4 for more on fire

Holyoke holds organizing meetups by phone



SAYKIN

Chapter leaders at the Holyoke Soldiers Home are plugged into 21st century tools. They are using a conference-call setup to stay in touch, because members work around the clock.

“The goal is to improve teamwork and promote unity,” said **Erin Saykin**, a Holyoke Home CNA and steward. “The

conference calls have aided communications between our stewards and officers, especially when we are not physically able to attend meetings.”

The conference calls require dialing into a phone line and using a secure pin number. “The result is that we are able to discuss any ideas, concerns, or issues that are currently going on

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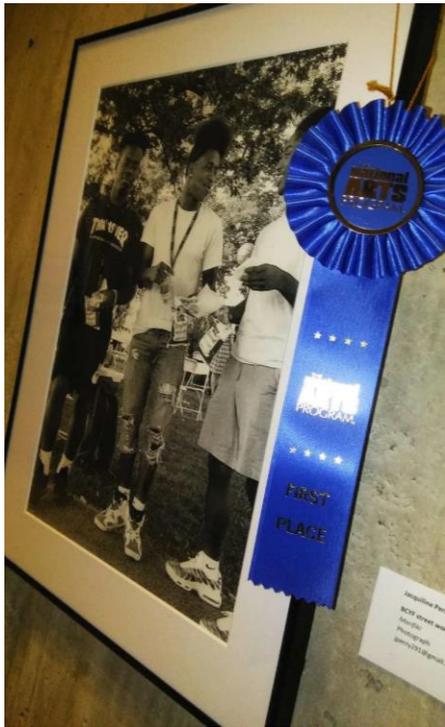
City worker's photo nets arts honors

City of Boston streetworker **Jacqueline Perry** took her talents to the streets — and landed a first-place award in a National Arts Program contest for her photography.

The arts program “has given us the opportunity to shine a light on those whose creativity and artistic talent often goes unnoticed,” said Kara Elliott-Ortega, the city’s chief of arts and culture. “By encouraging city of Boston employees to share their art, we’re expanding creative thinking into every single department.”

Local 888 member Perry works for the Boston Center for Youth & Families, which manages 36 facilities and services, including community centers and pools. She netted first place in the Adult Amateur Category.

As part of the program, city of Boston employees and immediate family members were invited to display their art at Boston City Hall. “The National Arts Program is a great way to recognize city of Boston employees and their dedication to improving the city through their work, as well as their creativity,” said Mayor Marty Walsh.



HANGING OUT: Jacqueline Perry's photo 'Marifiki' was honored in a city of Boston arts contest.

Plymouth sticking with union

In an interview with the Old Colony Memorial newspaper, Local 888 Executive Board member **Peggy Fitzgibbons** said that her chapter's members are sticking with the union in the wake of an anti-labor U.S. Supreme Court decision.

Fitzgibbons said that no members have left the union as a result of last summer's Janus decision. The high court ruling reversed a decades-old precedent that said unionized public workers could be required to pay “fair share” fees. Fitzgibbons, a leader of the town of Plymouth's clerical unit, said the Supreme Court case was about “big money trying to force labor unions out.”



FITZGIBBONS

Local 888 leaders are encouraged to talk with the local news media about the issues that matter to working families. For help with that, contact your union at communications@seiu888.org.

Barnstable wins pay increase, time for union orientation

The new contract for Local 888 members in the Barnstable County facilities includes a cost-of-living wage increase this fiscal year of 2 percent, plus a new “Step 8” that provides a 3 percent raise. In addition, the contract makes clear that the distribution of overtime will be done “equitably on a rotating seniority basis.” There will be additional COLA payments in upcoming years of the contract.

The new contract says that workers will receive overtime pay when working regular hours during a State of Emergency. In addition, there was an increase in longevity payments and uniform allowances.

Finally, one-half hour will now be allotted to provide union orientation for new employees.

For a copy of the hallmark union orientation language, Local 888 members can see their union rep or email myunion@seiu888.org.





A LOT ON THEIR PLATE: The three-year contract for the Fitchburg Public School Nutritional Services has Local 888 members receiving 2.7 percent to 3.4 percent each year, depending on which salary step they are on. The bargaining team, left to right, are **Deb Cleary**, **Beth Gallant**, **Carol Cotnoir**, **Roberta Phelan** (chapter chair), and **Darlene Spencer**.

Yarmouth inks new contract

The town of Yarmouth's Middle Managers (Unit B) has OK'd a new contract that includes cost-of-living raises of 5.5 percent spread over three years. In addition, the new pact improves on bereavement leave and increases vacation days for the more senior members. Also: Employees who have been enrolled in the town's health plan for at least one year may become eligible to opt out of taking that insurance — and get a stipend from the town in compensation.

"The negotiating team really did a great job," said field representative Joan Caruso. "All told, the package is quite favorable for Local 888 members." The 20-odd middle managers work in a variety of departments, with jobs ranging from golfing director to head of the board of health.

Law spotlights health, safety

A new state law that aims to cut down on health and safety problems experienced by public workers takes effect this month.

The law puts the onus on employers to ensure that a workplace is healthy and safe, MassCOSH trainer **Rick Rabin** told participants at a Local 888 Convention 2018 workshop.



"They need to make sure that workers are aware of any health and safety issues and know what the dangers are."

The new law makes federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations the minimum standard for all municipal, public authority, higher education and state employees. It took effect Feb. 1.

"The law is a great step forward for public workers," said Local 888 President **Brenda Rodrigues**. "Without the OSHA standards, public employees have lacked protections."

Rabin said employers must:

- Make sure workers have and use safe tools and equipment and properly maintain this equipment.
- Use posters, labels or signs to warn workers of potential hazards.
- Establish or update operating procedures and communicate them so that workers follow safety and health requirements.

The new law will be administered by the Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards. Although the state agency has the authority to fine employers, its enforcement approach is to issue an order for corrective action to employers for a first-time offense.

If an employer will not fix a health and safety hazard, a worker may contact a union leader or official and make sure the problem is known. Calling in the labor standards department to perform an inspection could be the next step. It is unlawful to retaliate against a worker for contacting union officials or the state agency.

For more info, <https://www.mass.gov/workplace-safety-and-health-program-wshp>.

DPW chapter OK's pact

Local 888 Department of Public Works members in Ashburnham kicked off the new year by unanimously ratifying a new contract. The 3-year agreement includes retroactive pay back to the old agreement's expiration last July.

"A big plus" to the contract is that DPW workers can now rely on getting step raises, said **Stephen Pickard**, chapter chair. "And getting our general wage increases squared away was, of course, important, too."

The wage scales have been readjusted so that members averaged raises just under 3 percent for the first year, with 2 percent increases in years two and three. Members also got a \$200 signing bonus and the addition of a fifth step for \$1 at 10 years, which adds about another 5 percent for members who had capped out on step increases.

Also increased: the weekly "on call" rate from \$275 to \$300 in the first year of the contract, \$325 in the second and \$350 the third year.

Holyoke meets up by phone

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at the Holyoke Soldiers Home and work on bringing about needed changes."

Local 888 members at the Holyoke and Chelsea Soldiers Homes are campaigning to improve working conditions and maintain excellent care for the veterans.

In particular, members at the Holyoke Home blame management for the high staff turnover. The causes include: understaffing, poor use of existing staff, excessive forced overtime and a hostile and retaliatory work environment generating a pileup of grievances.

In December, SEIU Local 888 and 509 members from the veterans facilities took their grievances to a whole new level. They met with Marylou Sudders, the state's secretary of health and human services. Sudders said she would look into understaffing and other issues and meet regularly with Local 888 leaders.

Previously, union leaders had met with Francisco Urena, the head of the state's veterans services.

Scituate schools net contracts

Local 888 members who work for the Scituate Public Schools have approved contracts with a new "split COLA increase" in pay. The more senior members will receive a higher percentage cost-of-living increase during the first two years of the contracts, as other workers get step raises as well. Everyone will get 2 percent cost-of-living raises in the last year of the contracts.

Local 888 unites about 150 paraprofessionals, secretaries and cafeteria workers in the Scituate Public Schools. *For more on the new Scituate contracts, see www.seiu888.org.*

Aiding member devastated by fire

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happen to anyone." Due to the fire, she said, "all my things are gone."

Fortunately, with the help of a son, her photos are backed up to "the cloud." Johnson, who owns the home, has four grown children; her husband is deceased. She has worked as a daycare teacher at BCYF for about 20 years.

For info on the Local 888 Housing Trust and Benevolent Fund, see Members Portal at www.seiu888.org. To aid the New Year's Day fire victims, see www.seiu888.org/gofundme

Coming Attractions



'TRAINING OF TRAINERS' WORKSHOPS FOR WOMEN:

"Popular Education for Social Change" workshops set for Sat., Feb. 9, 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., SEIU Local 509

Headquarters, 293 Boston Post

Road West, Marlborough. Sponsored by WILD, the Women's Institute for Leadership Development. Two levels of training: Introductory and Advanced. Cost: \$25 for breakfast, lunch and all materials (Free to WILD women volunteers and facilitators). *For more info, go to <http://wildlabor.org/data/documents/training-of-Trainers-outreach-2019.pdf>*

ORGANIZING YOUNG WORKERS: Mon., Feb. 11, 5 to 7 p.m. Part of a Labor Guild Young Workers Workshop Series. *For tickets, which are free: <https://laborguild.com/2019/01/04/winter-2019-young-workers-workshop/>*

