

# The Spark

March 2016

Local 888  
SEIU  
Stronger Together

## "In-Sourcing" School Renovations Saves City of Boston Money

The Planning and Engineering team from the Boston Public Schools did a mechanical upgrade at the Washington Irving School at a cost of \$1,605,517. The scope of the work included new fan coils, air handling units, carpentry, DDC controls, electrical, insulation, valves, and steam traps. Attention to detail was paid to every aspect of the job. For example, century old chandeliers were modified, restored and upgraded with new lenses and energy efficient lighting components that maintained the architectural character of a bygone era on a budget.

Every dollar on the project went towards labor and materials since the BPS Planning and Engineering team did not hire an outside consulting firm. Contracting out could have increased the cost of the job by at least ten percent. In addition to the financial savings, all intellectual property of the job documentation, plans and specifications stay in the public domain.

The Irving School project members were:

- **Anthony Pomella**, Mechanical Engineer (Manager, a former SEIU member), BPS
- **Steve Griffin**, HVAC Chief for the Planning and Engineering Department, BPS, SEIU Local 888
- **Jorge Vargas**, HVAC Supervisor, Project Manager, BPS, SEIU Local 888 Executive Board
- **Kerri Thibeau**, Electrical Supervisor, BPS, SEIU Local 888
- **Robert Ridlon**, Alterations and Repairs Supervisor, BPS, SEIU Local 888 Chapter Chair
- **Matthew R. Alberti**, Mechanical Contractor, Enterprise Equipment



Jorge Vargas and other members of the P&E team inspect new vents installed on the roof of the Washington Irving School.

In addition to construction projects, 32 Local 888 members in the Planning and Engineering department are engaged in the maintenance and operation of 125 BPS school buildings doing Alteration and Repairs, Architectural, Electrical, Environmental, Fire Alarm, HVAC, Plumbing and Roofing Divisions.

"We are an impressive group of individuals, yet given the nature of our work we pull together not as individuals but as graceful oars driving a powerful vessel in a straight path towards a beautiful port!"



Restored chandeliers with upgraded lenses and energy efficient lighting components.

Save the Date:

## Fight for \$15 Rally

(Followed by a social hour for Local 888 members!)

**Thurs, April 14**

**March and rally: 4:00 – 5:30pm**

**Social hour: 5:30 – 6:30pm**

*More details to follow as plans develop!*

## Message to U.S. Senators: *Do Your Job!*

Let's say tomorrow, you stroll into work around noon, watch some YouTube videos, maybe take a long lunch, followed by a short nap and head out a bit early to beat the traffic. How do you think that'd go over with your boss?

Probably not too well.

But that's exactly what Senate Republicans are doing. There is a vacancy on the Supreme Court and President Obama is preparing to do what our Constitution mandates: forwarding a Supreme Court nominee to the Senate for consideration. Yet Senate Republicans would rather play political games than do their job by refusing to even hold hearings on his nominee!

*This has never been done in HISTORY and it is not what the American people need.*

[This is ultimately an insult to the American people. That's why Local 888 is asking members to sign a petition](#) -- joining with many other organizations to be delivered with your signature to Senators with one message:

***Do Your Job.***

Ironically, working people are working harder and longer than ever, as it gets more and more difficult to make ends meet for our families. Wealthy special interests want to pollute our justice system all the way up to the Supreme Court -- and are asking the Senate GOP leadership to help them -- so they can push their well-funded extremist agenda.

And while we're working harder than ever, Senate Republicans have decided not to do any work at all? And why? Because that's what the wealthy special interests are demanding.

**[You can fight back! Sign this petition now: https://action.seiu.org/DoYourJob](https://action.seiu.org/DoYourJob)**

Then forward this message to 5 friends. We need to show the Senate that we will not back down from this fight.

## More Boston Univ. librarians unite in Local 888

A strong majority of Boston University librarians voted to form a union with SEIU Local 888 in February. The vote was supervised by the National Labor Relations Board.

"Everyone took time to educate themselves about the issues and vote in the election," said **Steven Alexandre da Costa**, a librarian at the Fineman and

Pappas Law Library. "We are pleased to join the vast majority of our colleagues at Boston University who are already union-represented.

"We hope to move quickly into negotiations with management for our contract and gain a voice in the decisions that are so important in our professional lives. As a previous member of the Association of Professional Flight Attendants, I've learned the value of having a voice at the proverbial table."

The workers will be joining librarians at Mugar library who are already united in Local 888 and recently achieved a new agreement with BU.



Law librarian Steven Alexandre da Costa celebrates union win with Local 888 organizer Colleen Fitzpatrick

"It's exciting that the other librarians will be joining us!" said **Susan Wishinsky**, a Local 888 member at Mugar Library for 35 years. "Simply put, collective bargaining gives us a seat at the table. Management can't ignore us, and our concerns are heard beyond the library walls. Bringing all of us together will give us an even stronger voice in our future."

In addition to the librarians, adjuncts and part-time faculty at BU have recently organized, and workers in building services, food service, clerical and technical occupations already participate in collective bargaining.

"It really is a win-win for everyone," added da Costa. "My hope is that our example inspires other professionals in higher education and other fields to consider unionization."

"Local 888 unites workers in both public and private colleges and universities in Massachusetts," said Mark DelloRusso, president of Local 888. "It's exciting to be part of an upsurge of workers in higher education who are demanding a voice in making their schools the best that they can be."

## Home Buyers Workshop Coming Attractions

**S**EIU Local 888 members who work for the City of Boston are eligible to receive benefits from the City of Boston-SEIU Local 888 Housing Trust. The Housing Trust was negotiated through collective bargaining to assist SEIU Local 888 members with the cost of housing in Boston by providing them with grants and interest free loans.



On March 5<sup>th</sup>, members attended an educational workshop that provided a comprehensive overview of the home purchase process to help homebuyers make smart, informed decisions in the path towards homeownership. Participants received a detailed reference manual and lunch.



Union members at the March 5 Home Buyers workshop

Topics covered included:

- *Preparing for the mortgage process*
- *First time homebuyer mortgages*
- *How to find a home*
- *The legal aspects of buying a home*
- *How to work with professionals during the home-buying process*

To find out about future workshops contact [myunion@seiu888.org](mailto:myunion@seiu888.org)

To learn more about the Housing Trust, visit [www.seiu888.org/htf](http://www.seiu888.org/htf)

### Next SEIU Local 888 Executive Board meeting

When: Wed, March 16, 10am – 4pm  
Where: 52 Roland St, Charlestown, MA 02129

Local 888's Executive Board is the union's governing body and is empowered to take action consistent with the local's Constitution and Bylaws.

### Guild School Spring Term

The Labor Guild's Spring Term begins on Monday, March 14, 7:00pm – 9:30pm

66 Brooks Dr., Braintree. Check out the classes being offered at:

<http://laborguild.com/lq-events/events/guild-school-spring-2016/>



### Union Right to Information

Advanced Workshop led by Robert Schwartz, author of *The Legal Rights of Union Stewards*  
When: Wed, March 16, 6pm – 9pm

Where: UMass Lowell, Cumnock Hall, North Campus, 1 University Avenue  
\$20/pp or \$15/pp for 3 or more from the same union

To register contact Sue D'Amore at 978-934-3256, [Susan\\_Damore@uml.edu](mailto:Susan_Damore@uml.edu)

### Northeastern MA LaborCAN! Educational Conference

When: Sat, March 19, 8:30am – 1:30pm

Where: Torigian Community Life Center, 79 Central St, Peabody

This educational conference is about building power for working people. There is no fee but please register at: [www.massflcio.org/LaborEdConference](http://www.massflcio.org/LaborEdConference). Info: contact Katie Hayden [khayden@massflcio.org](mailto:khayden@massflcio.org) or 781.324.8230

### Documentary film: "A Day's Work"

When: Wed, March 30, 12:30 – 2pm and 6–8:30 pm

Where: Lowell National Historical Park–Visiting Center Theater, 246 Market Street, Lowell, MA

This documentary takes a hard look at workplace safety in the temporary staffing industry.

Theater with a discussion to follow by the Producer, David Garcia For more information, please contact Sue D'Amore: 978-934-3256 or [Susan\\_Damore@uml.edu](mailto:Susan_Damore@uml.edu)

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## Coming Attractions

### AFRAM meeting

When: March 26, 10:30am-1pm

Where: SEIU Local 888

RSVP to Lorna Heron heronstravel@gmail.com

### Local 888 recommends Jay Livingston for State Senate

The Committee on Political Action met on February 11 to discuss upcoming special elections in Weymouth and East Boston. We reviewed three questionnaires from candidates in the East Boston race, including, Lydia Edwards, Jay Livingston, and Diana Hwang.

After much deliberation the committee decided to endorse current State Rep. Jay Livingston for the State Senate Special election. Jay stood out for his service and support for SEIU priority campaigns like the Fight for \$15 and the Airport Workers campaign.



COPA members Tom McKeever, Daniel Hoffer, Jorge Vargas, Rosa Matias, David Reno, Mike Kelly, Brenda Rodrigues and Rudy Renaud met on Feb. 11 to review candidate questionnaires and make an endorsement.

**Next COPA meeting will be at 6:30 PM on March 15 at the SEIU Local 888 union hall. Agenda includes SEIU State Council endorsement process and new Local 888 Political Action Committee. Dinner provided. Please RSVP by March 14 to Local 888 Political Organizer Joe Lazzarini (508)418-3370**

## New Rep Joins Local 888 Staff



Please welcome new Local 888 Field Rep. David Nagle. Dave started at Local 888 in late January. He was past president of his local in Arlington. Prior to joining the team at Local 888, Dave also did organizing for AFSCME in Vermont.

## Local 888 Hockey Night

Hundreds of members attended Local 888's annual UMass Lowell hockey night on February 6. Local 888's logo was featured on the score board along with the following statement: "SEIU Local 888 unites public service workers and higher education professionals for the good jobs our communities need."

