

A Tie at Suffolk Univ.

Suffolk University administrative and clerical staff have been fighting to win a union with Local 888 since August 2016. The workers have been organizing to win what they deserve—a voice in their workplace, good benefits, and job security. Because a good job and a lasting career is worth fighting for!



While dedicated Suffolk staff volunteered their time to help build an organization that can help them fight for improvements in their workplace, Suffolk management hired an infamous Chicago union-busting law firm, Seyfarth Shaw to dissuade workers from supporting the union. The law firm, which typically charges over \$600 an hour, conducted "one-on-one" anti-union meetings with workers, and used weakness in our labor laws to delay the union vote.

After the March 2 NLRB election and the decision on the challenged votes, the final tally was 96 votes in favor of a union to 96 votes against. "The vote count was evenly divided, but our conversations during the campaign showed that a majority of staff want greater security in our jobs and our benefits, a voice on the job and regular raises," said **Meri Power-Ayer**, a Senior Program Coordinator in the Political Research Department. "The only way to make these improvements is through a union and a collective bargaining agreement."

Hockey Night Social



UMass Lowell members held their fifth annual Local 888 Hockey Night on October 14 at the Tsongas Arena. Pictured above are Local 888 President **Mark DelloRusso**, UMass Lowell Chancellor **Jacqueline Moloney**, and chapter chair **Nicholas Piscitello**.

"Together We Rise" Chapter Chair Trainings

Building a strong organization in your workplace is based on our collective power, what individual members do together with a shared mission. In the coming months, it is likely that a Supreme Court decision (*Janus vs Illinois*) will make public sector union membership voluntary.

In states where laws like this have already passed, it can result in less bargaining power with management because the union is weaker with fewer members.

In anticipation of the Supreme Court decision, Local 888 leaders will be preparing members for the impact of the decision and discussing with all members ways to keep our union strong in the face of this attack.



Western Mass Leadership Training participants: Kwesi Ablordeppey (Holyoke Soldiers Home), Chris Gouin (Barnes Air National Guard), Teresa King (Soldiers Home), Willie Mathieson (Barnes), Angela Dickinson (Soldiers Home), Josh Kusnierz (Veteran's Cemetery), Paul Moriarty (Berkshire Reg. of Deeds), Pedro Ortega (Amherst Housing Authority), Local 888 Sec.-Tres. **Brenda Rodrigues**, and **Lance Bedford (DCAM)**

In early October, Local 888 staff held the first of many upcoming Chapter Chair Regional Leadership Trainings to prepare for the Supreme Court Decision.

One benefit of the training was that participants got to meet other chapter leaders to share experiences. They talked about the roles and responsibilities of chapter chairs, how to get members to commit to the union, and worked in break-out groups to make plans and goals for their chapter.

Petition campaign underway to Raise Up workers

Local 888 is a member of Raise Up Massachusetts, a coalition of grassroots, religious, and community groups working to win a new \$15 minimum wage and a Paid Family and Medical Leave benefit. We are collecting signatures to put both measures on the ballot in November 2018



"The agency I work for just released its strategic plan," said Local 888 member **Jonathan Dudley** who is collecting signatures in Central Mass. "With high poverty rates and income inequality in North Central Mass, the plan cited reducing barriers to living wage jobs as a major goal. But what if we reduce barriers and none of the jobs in the area pay a living wage? I work with families that are struggling. I know the difference \$15 an hour would make in their lives. Heck, many of my co-workers make less than \$15 an hour. It would make a big difference in our lives!"

As union members with these benefits, we know that raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2022 as the legislation calls for, will make it easier for people who work full time to earn enough money to make ends meet. Paid Family and Medical Leave will ensure that MA workers are not forced to choose between work and their own health needs or the well-being of their family members.

Community groups and unions across the state are collecting signatures to get these initiatives on the ballot. All together they need 250,000 to do this!

Would you like to sign the petition and get your coworkers to sign too? Anyone can succeed at collecting signatures! Contact Joe Lazzerini at 617 241-3369.

888 members participate in Labor Guild Fall session

Three Local 888 members participated in the fall season of the Labor Guild. The spring season will begin after the holidays. Local 888 offers special scholarships for labor education.



Jorge Vargas (BPS), Kathleen Pizzaro (Quincy Housing Authority), and former Executive Board member Mike Kelly are all learning how to build stronger unions at the Labor Guild.

Want to get better acquainted with your union leaders and staff? **Schedule a work-site meeting!**

These meetings are an opportunity for you and your coworkers to sit down with your union leadership and staff to talk about how to build a stronger union.

Contact myunion@seiu888.org if you are interested in setting up a meeting with your coworkers at your workplace.

Make your voice heard! Write a letter to the editor of The Spark.

Is there something you want to say? Send letters to rwilson@seiu888.org. Make a comment, write an article or make a suggestion. *We want to hear from Local 888 members.*

"Moment of Silence" in memory of Local 888 members



If a Local 888 member (or family) passes away, and you would like to have a notice included in the Spark, please send information to Brenda Rodrigues at brodrigues@seiu888.org

BERTA CADENA RAMIREZ

Local 888 officers and staff extend our deepest sympathies to Leti Ramirez whose mother passed away on October 2.

Paul Feeney wins senate!



Longtime IBEW Local 2222 member and Local 888 endorsed state senate candidate Paul Feeney won the general election for the Bristol & Norfolk district.

The election was close! There was only a 700 vote difference between Paul and his opponents. It shows how much **every vote counts.**

Paul ran on a platform of giving a voice to hard-working families, seniors and young people that live in the district.

Paul knows that as traditional economic engines continue to shift, seeking new employment opportunities in emerging fields is imperative. Paul will work to increase employment opportunities by advocating for investment in high-growth fields such as renewable energy and life sciences.

Having an advocate for working people's interests in office is a victory for union members everywhere. We look forward to continuing to work with Paul!

Check out this article in the Foxboro Reporter that covered Paul's positive, value-driven campaign, <http://bit.ly/2grcZgE>.

Do you want to distribute the Spark to your coworkers?

To receive multiple copies of the Spark, indicate how many copies you would like on an online subscription form at: <http://tinyurl.com/z713jdm>

An Interview with member Josh Kusniesz

About Josh: Park Foreman 1 at Veteran Memorial Cemetery. Union member since 2004.



Josh is second from left at the Chapter Chair Training.

Josh is an active Local 888 leader and participated in the first Chapter Chair Regional Leadership Training on October 11. His workweek is always busy -- burying the dead and maintaining the grounds of the Veterans cemetery. Chris answered a few questions about his involvement with the union.

What was your experience with your union when you first started he job?

"Honestly, the union was very absent back when I first started. There was very little of anything. We never heard or saw anybody or anything from the union...People started asking questions. We're paying a union, but where is it? How is it benefitting us? We started to take initiative and reach out. Today we have a much better line of communications."

Why have you decided to become involved in your union, and why is having a strong union important?

"I'm not afraid to say something. I don't really care all that much if what I say it bothers the admin staff. I like to have a voice for my coworkers. Especially the newer people...For me the union's important because the government can do or say as they please. You have to have numbers to stand up against them. If we didn't stand up and speak out, we'd get railroaded."

Like Josh said, the power of a union is in our numbers. Let's keep talking to new members and organizing ourselves to win better wages and respect on the job.

Coming Attractions

Fall Homeownership Fair

Saturday, November 4

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Mildred Ave. Community Center

5 Mildred Ave, Boston

Learn how the Boston Home Center can help you buy, maintain or retain your home!

REGISTER AND RESERVE YOUR SEAT!

HomeCenter.Boston.gov

617.635.HOME (4663)



Upcoming Chapter Chair Regional Leadership Trainings

All chapter chairs and chapter leaders are urged to attend a regional leadership training!

- October 25, Central Mass
- November 1, Merrimack Valley/North Shore
- November 9, South Shore
- November 16, Cape Cod
- November 29, Boston Metro
- December 5, Boston Metro North

If you are interested in attending, please contact your union rep.

Don't forget to vote on November 7!

Deadline for Local 888 Fall scholarship applications

Completed applications for **Fall** scholarship awards are due on **November 13**. Applications will be screened by the Scholarship Committee and the winners will be picked lottery December 11.

Scholarship applications are available at the Local 888 union hall or at seiu888.org

Labor Guild Cushing-Gavin Awards

Friday, December 1, 6pm – 9pm

*** NEW VENUE FOR 2017! ***

IBEW Local 103, 256 Freeport St #1, Dorchester
Cocktails 6 PM | Dinner 7 PM

This unique event gathers the labor-management community together to honor four extraordinary professionals for the competence, vision, and integrity they bring to the furtherance of healthy, dynamic and productive labor-management relations. Come celebrate with us!

For questions about tickets, tables, ad space, or ad/banner combo, contact Dan at the Guild office at 781-340-7887. Find out more online here: <http://laborguild.com/cushing-gavin-awards/>

Committee on Political Action meeting

Tuesday, November 14, from 6:00 – 8:00 pm at Local 888 office, 25 Braintree Hill Office Park, Suite 306.

For more information contact Local 888 Political Organizer Joe Lazzerini at 617-241-3369 or jlazzerini@seiu888.org

COPA Report

The Committee on Political Action met on Oct. 16 to review endorsements and make plans before the Nov. 7 election. Below are important dates for our endorsed campaigns. Members are strongly urged to volunteer on these days. If you can join us, please email Joe at jlazzerini@seiu888.org.

Campaign Days of Action:

October 24, 4:30-8pm

Lydia Edwards Phone Bank

[434 Chelsea St #2](#)

[East Boston, MA 02128](#)

October 25, 4:30-8pm

Steve Winslow for Malden Phone Bank

AFLCIO Malden, 389 Main St, Malden, MA 02148

October 21, 28, November 3, 10am-2pm

Brockton SEIU Community Action Canvass

Saturdays:

For Bob Sullivan and Jean Derenoncourt for City

Council at-large

CSJ office, [721 Belmont street, Brockton, MA 02301](#)

October 28, 10am

Lydia Edwards, Boston State Council Canvass Day,

[434 Chelsea St #2](#)

[East Boston, MA 02128](#)

October 28 from 9:30 AM to 12:30 AM

Labor Canvass for Steve Winslow

Local 22 HQ on 35 Highland Ave, Malden

To see a full list of endorsed candidates in 2017 visit: <http://www.seiu888.org/2017-political-endorsements/>

