Waukegan Professional Support Staff Give to Those In Need

by Deborah Phelps, WPSS President

Waukegan Professional Support Staff provided their Fourth Annual Thanksgiving Dinner to the Staben House on Wednesday, November 15. Many WPSS staff volunteered, donated funds, cooked and/or purchased food to support this event and the meal was amazing! Crafts are created for the children and the mother’s. This year coloring books and crayons were available for all and the children decorated picture frames for the upcoming holidays while the mothers were able to build their own personal planners. Additionally, our Knitting Angels provided hats and gloves for each member of the family. Thank you everyone for your kindness and dedication to this annual event!

The Staben House is a Transitional Housing Facility for Homeless Women with Children, many of whom are our very own Waukegan Public School Students. The services provided to these families include Housing, Comprehensive Case Management, Transportation Assistance, Employment Assistance, Child Care Assistance, Education Assistance, Life Skills Education, One on One Counseling, Parent Training, Anger Management Classes, Daily Children’s Activities, Rent Assistance, Permanent Housing Assistance and Follow-up services.

Federal Funding Cuts have drastically affected the Staben House this past year. If you are interested in a most worthy cause during this season of giving, I strongly encourage you to consider donating to the Staben House. Donations should be made payable to: The Staben House, 149 South Genesee Street, Waukegan, IL 60085. I am also happy to assist if you need assistance with donating and I can be reached at dphelps@wps60.org.

Thank you Waukegan Professional Support Staff for your amazing dedication and giving toward this annual event at the Staben House. Happy Holidays everyone!
Unity in Adversity

One of the biggest reasons we Unionize is to face adversity together. The usual motivation comes from within. An employer may have taken punitive action against several employees or perhaps a pattern of disrespect has developed. In some cases, wages and working conditions have deteriorated to a point that the only action that can correct these ills is through organizing into a larger group to take collective action. Our Union, over its history, has developed tools to oppose these forces and allow us to work together democratically to find better solutions and provide empowerment to overcome these adversities.

This spring, an effort to thwart our abilities to fight back collectively may come to fruition. The United States Supreme Court has agreed to hear the case of Janus vs. AFSCME. This case can be summed up by the plaintiff’s position which argues that individuals should be exempt from paying fair-share fees. Their claim takes roots in an earlier court ruling that excludes bargaining unit members from having to fund political activity. Janus seeks to take the argument further by making the case that all Union activities are political in nature, so by extension, any fees they are required to pay go towards activity they would rather not support. It’s a clever extrapolation in that Janus argues that our Union’s outside political activity is inseparable from our internal governance. The very nature in which we democratically elect our Union spokespeople and conduct our internal business is political and they should therefore be exempt from funding any Union activity. Although I don’t know Janus, I’m willing to bet that there has been plenty of help and support in this case from business leaders who adamantly object to an environment where they have to listen to the will of employees and especially when the majority has voiced a democratic opinion that may be contrary to their own. After all, how many times have you heard a successful business leader claim that the reason for their success was listening to the ideas and opinions of their employees?

Regardless of the argument, President Trump with his nomination of Neil Gorsuch, has made sure that the Supreme Court is now stacked in favor of pro-business forces (read anti-Union), and it seems more than likely that Janus will prevail and we will lose the ability to require non-members to pay their fair share. Quite likely, we will be forced to share our hard-fought victories at the bargaining table with these freeloaders and cover the costs of defending them when they are picked on by their District.

What can we do about this obvious case of freeloading? GROW STRONGER. There are many cliches which may apply but the reality is that Janus has caused us to reexamine the way in which our folks

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--LCFT President Michael T. McGue

See PRESIDENT, pg. 4
REGISTRATION FORM
LCFT LOCAL 504 – 2018 WINTER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES

(Please Print Clearly)
Name: ___________________________________  Home Phone: _____________________

Home Address: _______________________________________________________________

City: _________________________________________  State: _____  Zip: ______________

Personal E-mail: _______________________________ (School District): ________________
(NOT DISTRICT EMAIL)

IEIN Number: ________________

Select courses you will attend:

- **STRATEGIES FOR STUDENT SUCCESS: PART 2**
  Tuesdays and Thursdays (4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.)  30 PDU’s 30 hours
  January 9 through February 8

- **MIDDLE SCHOOL MATH – 6-8:**
  Tuesdays and Thursdays (4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.)  30 PDU’s 30 hours
  February 13 through March 15

- **MANAGING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR:**
  Tuesdays and Thursdays (4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.)  30 PDU’s 30 hours
  March 20 through April 26 (one week off for Spring Break)

- **FOUNDATIONS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING:**
  Tuesdays and Thursdays (4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.)  30 PDU’s 30 hours
  May 1 through May 31

Number of courses selected:  x Cost per course: $50 = $ ___________

CHECKS AND REGISTRATION FORM MUST BE IN THE UNION HALL TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE START OF THE CLASS. PLEASE DON’T JEOPARDIZE THE CLASS BY REGISTERING LATE. ALL CLASSES ARE HELD IN THE UNION HALL.

Enclose check or money order (no cash) made payable to:  AFT Local 504

Return form with non-refundable payment to:  Lake County Federation of Teachers, Local 504
248 Ambrogio Drive
Gurnee, IL  60031
stay motivated to remain embracing, supportive members. Rationalizations such as, “you may as well join the Union because you have to pay dues anyway” have never been more exposed as erroneous. Times as they are, there has never been a more urgent call for all of us to Unionize. Allowing the current wave of shameless greed to succeed in diminishing, or worse yet, extinguishing our flame would signal the demise of the working, middle class as we know it.

Fortunately for our Union, we have a tremendous level of member involvement that, I believe, will parlay into continued, steadfast membership. As we find ourselves facing, perhaps the biggest threat to our way of life as we have come to know and appreciate over the many decades of Union activism, we must be vigilant to these attacks. Our Council and Local leaders have been working to inform all of you of the pending Janus decision and the impact it may have on the feeling of unity within your Council. I believe that the potential of an adverse Janus decision has revealed a silver lining: we have rededicated our need to reassure each other of our unity. This is not the time to take our Union activity for granted. The gains we have made over the last 80 plus years can too easily be taken away by these misguided, outside forces. We can learn from our fellow educators in Wisconsin where Union benefits have fallen by over twenty percent for teachers since Governor Walker began his spiteful assault on public sector Unions. In addition, wages have been dealt a staggering blow all in the name of a Walker’s “pro-business” agenda; one very nasty conspiratorial blueprint which was maliciously designed to intentionally bring the working, middle class to its knees.

As this year comes to an end and we celebrate the beginning of a new one, let’s all reflect on the intrinsic value of Unionism in our lives and reaffirm our commitment to our Union and each other. While the plotters and contrivers throw mean-spirited legislation our way, let it not break our spirit. After all, we know this fundamental truth: we can only grow stronger and prosper when we unite and work to overcome our adversities together!

Enjoy a great holiday season in unity and solidarity!

In Unity,

Michael T. McGue, LCFT President