LCFT Awards Joe Hutton Scholarship to Samantha Hilldale

by Deborah Phelps, Scholarship Chair

Joe Hutten was a long-time Union leader in both Waukegan and Zion. He taught Business Education and was a member of the LCFT Executive Board, as was his wife Angie.

Please join me in thanking the Scholarship Committee members, Lynne Jeffries and Pat Termini for all their hard work and assistance during this process.

It is truly an honor to present to you, the LCFT Membership our 2017 Recipient: Samantha Hilldale of Libertyville, Illinois. Samantha is currently a senior at Libertyville High School and will be attending either Illinois State University or the University of Illinois to pursue a degree in Elementary Education.

Samantha’s essay and resume along with her academic achievements, included in her application process, provided the Scholarship Committee with a view of a very well rounded young lady. She has sought a variety of courses and activities in her youth which have led her to pursue a career in Teaching.

Samantha’s Community Service projects include but are not limited to: Junior Counselor at Sunshine Kidz in Libertyville, Assistant Softball Coach with Libertyville Girls Softball Association, Feed My Starving Children Volunteer, in addition to many other volunteer hours for various worthwhile causes.

She also has received numerous Athletic Honors during her High School career and represented Libertyville High School at the NSC Athletic Leadership Conference, NSC All-Conference, NSC All-Academic, Chicago Tribune All-Area Honorable Mention and Daily Herald All-Area Honorable Mention.

On behalf of the Lake County Federation of Teachers please congratulate Samantha on her accomplishments and wish her the very best in the future. Congratulations Samantha!
Footsteps on the sidewalk...

You may have read in this column about the number of ways in which our Union is under assault. Yes, the forces from outside of our Union seem to be burning the midnight oil trying to devise new ways to thwart our efforts. These attacks are intended to make organizing new members more difficult, create legal roadblocks to our rights to dues deduction from paychecks and aim to ban fair share through unscrupulously labeled “right to work” laws. The list goes on. Legislators, answering to the siren call of contributions from big corporate interests, just seem to try and find ways to complicate and encumber our professional lives with detritus obstructing our goals of improving public education for both the worker and the student.

One crucial commodity that these forces conspiring against us can’t deny is our unity. If based solely on the recent settlements reached at the bargaining tables of our Councils throughout Lake County, the strength of Local 504 solidarity has never been more evident. Lake Villa, Emmons, Grant, Diamond Lake, Zion-Benton, Waukegan, Waukegan Paras and Prairie Crossing Councils have all inked new contracts or extensions since the school year began. In many of these contracts we have seen significant, impressive gains which are more than one would expect through typical negotiations. Many Councils have undergone big changes in administration and school boards during this very same time and yet still have come out winners in bargaining.

The hard work put in by our negotiating teams, field staff and business agents is self-evident, but the extra bounce in our “collective step” comes from both our organizing efforts and our willingness to stand for our rights.

Make no mistake, the strikes that have come in recent years have helped lay the groundwork for an environment where management desires labor harmony and has learned firsthand that to take a valuable workforce for granted is to do so in folly. Avoiding strife with the added benefit of cultivating good working conditions for all have left many of our employers looking to pick a fight elsewhere. As a colleague once told me during a break in negotiations, “it’s amazing how they still hear the footsteps on the sidewalk from our last strike...”

No matter how hard politicians, judges and ideologues may try to coerce and intimidate us, it is our spirit of unity that will win the day.

--LCFT President Michael T. McGue

“No matter how hard politicians, judges and ideologues may try to coerce and intimidate us, it is our spirit of unity that will win the day.”

--LCFT President Michael T. McGue

The resolve of our members witnessed in the solidarity of our past strikes lives on in our continued successful contract negotiations. Congratulations to each and every one of you for carrying on for all of us through your recent, winning contracts!

In Unity,

Michael T. McGue, LCFT President
Retirees Corner

by Carolyn Scaccia,
Retirees Council President

On Monday, April 3 the Retirees’ Council had a presentation on Computer Security. Professor Sanjay Kumar from the College of Lake County gave some excellent advice on how to keep our computers, tablets and phones safe. He also answered many questions.

By the time you are reading this, we will have had a presentation on “Starting a Vegetable Garden.” On May 4 a presenter from the U of I Extension program in Grayslake will give us gardening tips and discuss how to become a Master Gardener.

Please let our Council know of other programs or activities you’d like to attend.

Have a great summer!

Woodland Council Holds School Board Candidate Forum

by Matt Beverly,
IFT Field Service Director

On February 16, here at our Union Hall Woodland Council hosted a board of education candidates forum. This council has about 800 members, approximately 90 attended, and 10 of the 11 candidates running for 5 open Board of Education seats appeared, gave brief speeches, and answered questions as part of our Questions and Answers. The event ran just under two hours, snacks and coffee/water were served, and it was truly a great and successful example of member engagement, etc. The council president, middle school science teacher Sharon Anday, organized the event.

2017 Summer Hours
June 12 - August 11
the LCFT Office will be open
7:00 am - 3:00 pm

Happy Summer
Waukegan Paraprofessionals Ratify Three-Year Agreement

by Michelle Standridge, IFT Field Service Director

The Waukegan Paraprofessionals held a meeting on St. Patrick’s Day and subsequently ratified a new three-year agreement (2016-2019). This contract brings many new and positive changes in the salary schedule structure for Paraprofessionals, which include raising the starting wage for Paraprofessionals and raising the overall compensation for many categories of Paraprofessionals over the course of the contract to be more competitive with surrounding districts. The percentage of new money to fund this structure and the included salary increases is 5.15% in year 1, 8.03% in year 2, and 5.17% in year 3 which affords significant increases for the majority of Paraprofessionals who moved categories in the salary schedule restructure. All three years of the contract include step movement which averages a little over 2% on top of cell increases of 2.75% in year 2 of the contract and 2.5% in year 3. Lastly, Paraprofessionals saw an increase to their Career Paraprofessional Stipend (CPS) in each of the years of the contract for those who have reached the top of the salary schedule.

A very important benefit to members is their Board-paid single health insurance coverage which the unit was able to maintain through the life of this agreement. In addition, any increases for family(dependent) coverage are shared equally between the Board and the Paraprofessional who takes the family(dependent) care coverage.

Some of the many language changes include an improved process for voluntary transfers and promotions from one school year to the next, benefits for safety officers, the establishment of an itinerant pool of substitute Paraprofessionals who are part of the bargaining unit to fill the need when Paraprofessionals are absent, the addition of language clarifying that lunch/recess duty is voluntary and compensated, and language that guarantees that Paraprofessionals who coach sports or sponsor extracurricular activities receive the same stipend as the teachers.

Congratulations to the Waukegan Paraprofessionals on this exciting new agreement! On the Union’s bargaining team were Council President Shari Nuetzmann, Vice-President Ami Montalbano, Secretary-Treasurer Jean Ann Nelson, and IFT Field Service Director Michelle Standridge.

Waukegan Teachers Reach Four Year Deal

by Michelle Standridge, IFT Field Service Director

It’s been three years since the twenty-one-school-day strike that rocked the district and made national news, but things were different this time around with the Waukegan Teachers’ Council negotiations. Both parties were committed to starting early and reaching a speedy resolution to ensure stability for members moving forward. Up front, the parties agreed to limit the negotiations to wages and a limited number of items in Article V, Working Conditions, and this strategy will allow the Council to finish out this year, knowing they have a contract in place for the next four years (2017-2021).

A few highlights of the new agreement include a records day for teachers on the last day of school, improved Social Work Caseload language, more time for PLCs (Professional Learning Communities), and...
language related to legislation surrounding student behavior/discipline.

The Council pay structure provides teachers in Tier 1 (Levels 1-22) with raises of 4.5% in years 1 and 3 of the agreement and 4% in years 2 and 4. Those who are due to receive the longevity bump will receive 6% in the year they reach level 23. Individuals in Tier 3 (Level 24 and beyond) will receive 3.5% in years 1 and 3 and 3% in years 2 and 4. Starting salaries increase will in all four years of the agreement as well. Teachers maintain full single Board paid health insurance coverage and a previously negotiated retirement incentive.

On the Union’s bargaining team were Council President Kathy Schwarz, Elementary School Representatives Juli Kowalski and Rachelle Mendez, Middle School Representatives Greg Freels and Anissa Hamilton, High School Representatives Andy Friedlieb and Jackie Roche, Grievance Chairs Joanne Hathorn, Ted Injasulian, and Mark Boumstein, and IFT Field Service Director Michelle Standridge.

Zion-Benton Agrees to Two Year Extension

by Kelly Regnier,
ZBFT President

The District 126 Board of Education approached the Zion-Benton Federation of Teachers early in the 2016-2017 school year regarding an extension. The ZBFT represents both certified and classified staff members. After months of discussion, a two-year extension was reached between the parties, with the Union voting in mid-April to approve the deal. The extension will cover school years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019.

The two parties dealt with very few language changes while negotiating this extension. With the sunset of ERO, contract language for the certified class regarding this issue was addressed. In terms of the classified staff, a change to the way that work hours are tracked was dealt with, and an agreement regarding summer working hours was added to the contract.

The members of the ZBFT will see raises between 3% and 5% percent in school year 2017-2018, depending on their salary tier. Raises for members in the 2018-2019 school year will vary between 2.75% and 4.75%. Extra-curricular stipends were also increased, as were items on the miscellaneous salary schedule. Starting salaries will also increase in each year. Insurance benefits for the membership were not changed.

According to ZBFT president Kelly Regnier, this extension is a start, but doesn’t go far enough. Regnier said, “We are happy that this deal affords our members a small raise and that it protects their insurance benefits, but we want to see our district recognize that our classified and certified staff are some of the lowest paid in the county. We hope to rectify this in future negotiations.”

On the Union’s bargaining team were Council President Kelly Regnier, Council Vice-Presidents Mark Rakher (classified) and Scott Martensen (certified), Michael Isaacs, Jasey Kolarik, Colleen Valentine, Colleen Newton, and IFT Field Service Director Michelle Standridge.
REGISTRATION FORM
LCFT LOCAL 504 – 2017 SUMMER
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES

(Please Print Clearly)
NAME: ____________________________________  Home Phone: _____________________

Home Address: ____________________________________________________________________

City: _________________________________________  State: _____  Zip: ______________

PERSONAL E-mail(Home): __________________________ School District: ___________________

EIN NO.: ___________________________________

PLEASE SIGN UP EARLY TO HELP ENSURE THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF 10 FOR THE CLASS.

Select courses you will attend:

ER&D CLASSES OFFERED

☐ BEGINNING READING INSTRUCTION
  June 19 - June 23, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

☐ ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (15 HR)
  July 10 - July 12, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
  Class ends at noon on July 12th.

☐ ENGLISH LANGUAGE LARNERS 101 (15 HR)
  July 12 - July 14, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
  Class starts on July 12th at 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

☐ THINKING MATHEMATICS 6-8
  July 31 - August 4, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

☐ STRATEGIES FOR STUDENT SUCCESS part 1
  June 26 - June 30, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

☐ STRATEGIES FOR STUDENT SUCCESS part 2
  August 7 - August 11, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

☐ SCHOOL, FAMILY & COMMUNITY SUPPORTING STUDENT LEARNING
  August 14 - August 18, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

DAILY ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED

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. 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
Once again ER&D classes have been extremely successful ending the winter as well as this spring. The classes have filled up very quickly and ran at capacity. The spring classes are going well and are all filled with waiting lists. Our success is so amazing that there will be seven classes scheduled for the summer. They will begin on June 19th and end on August 18th. Check the sign-up pages to see what is being offered and when. Sign up as early as possible to be assured that you will have a place in the class.

Things to remember about our classes:

1] sign up for the class as early as possible;
2] fees (of $50 per class) are non-refundable if you change your mind at the last minute;
3] if the class is cancelled for lack of participants, your fee will be refunded;
4] classes earn you 30 credits for recertification;
5] if you are in the Waukegan, Gurnee, North Chicago or SEDOL Councils, you are entitled to two hours of graduate credit for lane movement; (if your council is interested in getting in-district credits, see Andrea).

6] for others, graduate credits are available from Governor’s State for an additional fee; undergraduate credits are available from Prairie State Community College for an additional fee.

Questions can be answered by the Union office staff or contact me through the union office. Take advantage of these opportunities to take reasonably priced classes that provide you with the opportunity to boost your salary and your educational needs.
by Matthew LaPierre, LCFT Business Agent

On April 27th, approximately 58 former and current SEDOL Teachers Union members, administration and their families gathered at the Libertyville Feed My Starving Children facility to share an experience of a lifetime. During the 90 minutes that they spent together, they embarked on a journey that will impact and change the lives of children in a third world country. Together they packed 105 boxes of food that contained 22,680 meals. Those meals will feed 62 children for an entire year.

The work this facility does is deeply personal to the volunteers, donors, food distribution partners and meal recipients. Their mission is that no one deserves to go hungry, especially when we can do something about it. Feed My Starving Children has worked tirelessly to create nutritious meal formulas that really meet the need of starving people, and this food makes a real impact in their lives.

The event was organized by SEDOL Union President, Rebecca Slye in an effort to foster solidarity and to share a common bond in providing those less fortunate than ourselves with the very basic of needs.