Millburn PSRP Ratify First Contract

by Michelle Standridge,
IFT Field Service Director

Local 504’s newest Council, the Millburn PSRP, ratified its first agreement on February 12, 2018. The group organized through Illinois’ “card check” procedure a year earlier in February 2017 and began bargaining in June 2017. The Council includes fifty Paraprofessionals and Maintenance/Custodial workers split between two buildings. After much diligence, unanimous support from their 100% membership, and 11 formal bargaining sessions, the group reached an agreement they felt they could bring back for a vote.

The negotiating team heard loud and clear from their members from the very beginning that while employees love working at Millburn, compensation for long-term, dedicated employees was dismally low, and likewise, new employees didn’t feel they could make their home at Millburn because they were destined for the same fate. So, the bargaining team, armed with a unique understanding of their members’ needs, took to the table, remained philosophically consistent and focused throughout the process, and ultimately prevailed in crafting their first Agreement as a unit recognized by the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board (IELRB) which is enforceable through the grievance and arbitration procedure. Highlights of the three-year contract include a first-year base increase for all members of 3% plus an additional market adjustment for Paraprofessionals of 2.75% and the implementation of a longevity program to recognize service to the District; so all told, the raises in year 1 range from 3.99% to 8.22%, bringing in the average at 6.41% for all returning employees. The starting salary for new Paraprofessionals increased by 3.85%. In years 2 and 3, the contract calls for an increase tied to the CPI (Consumer Price Index) with a floor of 3% and a ceiling of 4.25%. Since the Agreement was not reached until February, members received retroactive pay increases from the beginning of the school year. Full, single, Board-paid insurance which includes medical, dental, prescription, and vision as well as other currently enjoyed benefits and working conditions were contractualized. In addition, the team secured new benefits such as an additional paid holiday, a snow gear/uniform shirts provision, and a clear overtime procedure for Maintenance/Custodial employees. They added notification of assignment language for Paraprofessionals. Also included in the Agreement are seniority and reduction in force language, fair share, and tuition reimbursement to name a few other new provisions.

While the team didn’t get everything they wanted in this first contract, they are very proud of the work they accomplished which brings significant gains for the whole unit on a variety of fronts. Most of all, this experience brought out a solidarity amongst
From the Desk of

Michael T. McGue

Your vote makes the difference.

Our Union is run by you. An organizational structure would illustrate that you, the member, are in charge of our destiny. Unions are truly member “owned” to borrow a business term. More specifically they are member directed.

A saying around the Union Hall goes, “what we do has the importance but not the urgency of an emergency.” While our functions are vitally important, the nature of the problems we tackle allow us the time to thoroughly analyze an approach toward finding the best solution. Unlike the captain of a ship or airliner, where split second decisions may be the difference between life and death, the job of your Union President is to represent you and bring collective solutions to the members needs. In stark contrast, for-profit corporate models as well as many other organizations such as schools, which are more akin to business, function in the “top-down” model.

These “authority” driven organizational models rely on a speedy decision-making process for greater haste in implementation of solutions, however right or wrong those solutions may be. Consequently, school administrators and corporate managers don’t always feel a need to answer to those below them. Their worth and ability is often evaluated only by their superiors. Consequently, we have all witnessed the untethered cloud of “administrative self righteousness” that permeates an authoritative, top-down management style.

Elected Union leaders don’t have the same responsibility. Answering to the members takes a skill-set far different than that employed in both corporate or school models. Members’ needs and wishes evolve over time and elected leaders must be willing and adapt to their concerns and wishes. This adaptability does not come intuitively to everyone but can be finely honed if the Union leader answers to the membership through regular elections which serve to ensure the sensitivity to and representation of the members needs. This “vote check” system often keeps this process squarely where it needs to be: holding leaders responsible to their membership.

The staff employees we rely on are exempted from this democratic model and should not be subjected to the politics in any direct sense. Since they are often following directions from those held accountable, they should be protected from any reprisals from any individual member, similar to the tenure rights of teachers. Additionally, these same Union employees should never be put into a position of being the final authority or decision-maker with regards to those members they serve.

“Your elected leaders require your voice to continue to make our Union thrive. Without it, we become just another autocratic, top-down organization which can easily lose it’s way.”

--LOFT President Michael T. McGue

See PRESIDENT, pg. 3
Union leaders who make unilateral decisions based on their perception of complete authority do so at their own peril. They may discover at their next election the support, or lack thereof, from the members they represent. The same is true for Union administrative staff who follow the corporate mode following through on what they believe the leadership prefers. Their fate can become inextricably linked to their leader’s fate thereby surrendering their own compass for right and wrong. As in schools where employees feel the pressure from middle-management, the same can easily occur in a Union where the member’s role is diminished.

Both your involvement and your vote make all the difference. Our Union is strong because of the sum of its parts. Your elected leaders require your voice to continue to make our Union thrive. Without it, we become just another autocratic, top-down organization which can easily lose its way. I’m so very proud to be a part of our Lake County Federation of Teachers and to have the opportunity to serve each of you through all of the various challenges we have faced together!

In Unity,

Michael T. McGue,
LCFT President

Grayslake PSRP Ratify
Four Year CBA
by Jim Pergander,
LCFT Business Agent

Beginning early November 2016, the Grayslake PSRP began formal negotiations with the Board of Education for their Collective Bargaining Agreement. The process was completed in November 2017 with a unanimous ratification vote of the members. As Council President Cheryl Tednes stated, “It took a full year of hard work by our team to come to an agreement, but with the way the state has impacted education, we are very pleased with what we were able to negotiate for our members.”

Substantial changes made to the four year CBA included changes to the District Emergency Sick Leave Bank Plan to make the sick leave bank more viable going forward, increasing the district’s Term-Life Insurance from $20,000 to $50,000, increasing Professional Growth reimbursement by 3% in year one, instituting a Health Clerk Certified Hearing/Vision stipend of $1050 for time spent training, and modifying the Uniform language to make custodial and maintenance uniforms gender specific and to require steel-toed shoes. Additionally, the custodial and maintenance shoe reimbursement was increased from $60 to $125 per year.

All current members will receive a wage/salary increase of 3.75% for the 2017-2018 school year and an increase of 2.75% for the 2018-2019 school year. The Negotiating Committee and Administration/Board will reconvene in 2019 to continue negotiations to determine the increases for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years.

The negotiating team consisted of PSRP President Cheryl Tednes, Former President Betsy Perry (at the start), Vice President Leah Brown, Lori Isaacs (Nurse), AJ McKillip (Custodial/Maintenance), Norma Prenta (Program Assistant), Cecelia Secor (Program Assistant), and Matt Wenner (District Technician). The team was assisted by Jim Pergander, Business Agent, Lake County Federation of Teachers.

The Millburn PSRP’s recent victory reminds us of the values that our 28 Councils of Local 504 hold dear: that strength in numbers and a grassroots Union movement in the workplace and in Lake County is the way for a brighter future with a unified voice that advances our collective efforts and goals.

On the Union’s bargaining team were Council President Alma Maynez, Vice-President Cindy Sodt, Secretary Jacqueline Gross, Treasurer Steve Novak, Linda Smith, and IFT Field Service Director Michelle Standridge.
February 24 may have been a cold and windy day, but that did not stop many members of LCFT from joining working people from around the state at a rally and march that was held in Daley Plaza.

While it was estimated that more than 5000 people joined this effort in Chicago, similar rallies were held around the country to remind people that our strong middle class was largely built by the Union movement.

Here in Illinois, we were celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Memphis sanitation strike, lead by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and demanding an end to the attacks on labor and the unfair economic policies perpetrated by Governor Bruce Rauner and corporate special interests. The rally also honored James Riley, a Memphis sanitation worker who went on strike with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, and who has been a tireless champion for working people everywhere.

“Our freedom is under attack. Governor Bruce Rauner and his wealthy CEO friends have been leading an all-out assault on working men and women for years,” said AFL-CIO President Michael Carrigan when speaking in front of the crowd. “Today we stand here to say to Governor Rauner that we will not stand idly by. Whether you’re in a union or not, working people are here to fight back. We are here to unrig the system.”

The speakers at the rally consisted primarily of working people from around the state, including many teachers.

“The attacks on unions are fought under many different disguises. The truth is, our opponents are after money. Public education is the last great frontier for big corporations to make more money by taking over our public schools,” said Springfield teacher Crysta
Summer hours will be variable this year due to retirement and extended leaves. Please check with your Business Agent or Field Service Director for office hours. Thanks in advance.

Regular office hours will resume in August.

Do you have an interest in working part time for a political campaign this summer?

Please call the Union Hall for more information!

(847) 975-8135
REGISTRATION FORM
LCFT LOCAL 504 – 2018 SUMMER
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES

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

Home Address: __________________________________________________________________

City: ______________________________ State: _____ Zip: ______________

PERSONAL E-mail(Home): ____________________ School District: __________________
No District Emails

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

☐ ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (15 HR)
  June 11 - June 13,  9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
  Class ends at noon on July 13th

☐ ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS 101 (15 HR)
  June 13 - June 15, Class starts on June 13th at 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
  14th & 15th 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

☐ STRATEGIES FOR STUDENT SUCCESS part 1
  June 18 – June 22, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

☐ STRATEGIES FOR STUDENT SUCCESS part 2
  June 25 – June 29, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

☐ BEGINNING READING
  July 23 – July 27, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

☐ MAKING STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES WORK FOR YOU:
  July 30 – August 3, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

☐ READING COMPREHENSION
  August 6 – August 10  9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

☐ SCHOOL, FAMILY & COMMUNITY SUPPORTING STUDENT LEARNING
  August 13 - August 17, 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
ER&D 2018 Summer Information

by William Kostomiris,  
LCFT ER&D Coordinator  
kosto911@yahoo.com

I have been a teacher in the Waukegan School District #60 for 25 years and have been involved with ER&D program for over a decade. I have taken classes, taught classes, have been the ER&D Coordinator for the AFT and now I am pleased to accept the nomination to be the new LCFT Coordinator for ER&D. Our ER&D classes have continued to be successful this past winter and spring. Summer of 2018 is vastly approaching and we have scheduled eight classes to meet the needs of our teachers interested in learning or updating strategies to improve teaching and increase student learning.

Classes during the summer months of June, July and August tend to fill up rather quickly. It is important to sign up for classes as early as possible. A fee of $50 is non-refundable should you change your mind at the last minute. However, if a class is cancelled for lack of participation your fee will most definitely be refunded.

Most classes earn you 30 hours of credit for recertification. If you teach in Waukegan, Gurnee, North Chicago or SEDOL Councils, you are entitled to two hours of graduate credit for lane movement. 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. Classes are interactive, informative, and taught by amazing teachers who have been trained in ER&D. Teachers who have taken ER&D classes in the past have found them to be a great way of sharpening their teaching skills, developing new and more effective ways of engaging students, differentiating instruction, and managing negative behaviors while developing effective strategies to use in their classrooms. Summer is the perfect time of year to start planning, thinking, and developing new skills and strategies that you can use in your classroom this upcoming school year. Classes run from 9 am to 3 pm Monday through Friday and are mainly 30 hours for 2 credits, or 15 hour courses for 1 credit.

If you have any questions regarding ER&D classes feel free to contact the union office staff or contact me though the union office. We would be happy to answer your questions and help you get signed up.

Make sure you take advantage of these opportunities so you can boost your salary, while developing skills and knowledge to enhance your teaching and increasing student learning. ER&D is affordable, well worth your time and scheduled to fit your busy needs.

LCFT Retirees Corner

by Carolyn Scaccia,  
Retirees Council President

The Retirees’ Council has had a busy 2018 so far.

In February we had an outstanding presentation by Ty Rohrer from the Waukegan Historical Society. We learned about immigration to Waukegan and how much of the local industry began.

We had a very informative presentation in April by Deputy Buchburger of the Lake County Sheriff’s Department. Topics covered were personal, property, and financial security. We were also informed about the many safety services available from the Sheriff’s office to Lake County residents.

We’re on the road in May, going up to the Potawatommi Casino.

Our council has been approached by a non-profit organization looking for volunteers. You can visit their website at http://www.readingpowerinc.org/. We have invited Kathy McFarland, the chairman and CEO of Reading Power to our September meeting to explain more about the program.

We wish you all a wonderful summer. See you in September...
LCFT Councils Re-Commit to the Union

by Matt Beverly,
IFT Field Service Director

President Jason Jecmen at Warren Township High School Federation of Teachers, along with his council co-leaders, and as part of its 100% Member(ship) campaign, re-carded almost 100% of their membership over the last several months on Local 504’s new membership form (and converting fair share folks along the way).

Other councils that did the same (re-carded just under 100% of their membership): President Christine Berrong at Diamond Lake Teachers’ Association, President Deb Phelps at Waukegan Professional Support Staff, and President Brian Voss at Libertyville/Vernon Hills High School Federation of Teachers.

Like wise, President Sharon Anday, and her co-presidents Karen Barrett and Julie Lucarelli, brought their fair share count down from just over 50 several months ago to around five now.

At Zion-Benton, the re-carding initiative lead to the creation of a Membership Director position, (filled by Shan Kazmi) and while re-carding is still on-going, the council is dedicated to finishing the job before summer.

LCFT Congratulates Betty McCann on Retirement

by Kelly Regnier,
504 Word Editor

Many members know her as one of the friendly voices that they encounter when calling the Union office, but LCFT Membership Specialist Betty McCann has been much more than that.

Betty started working part time for LCFT when she was still a bus driver for Gurnee School District 56. She began in 1985 and has been a big part of our local ever since. As the years went by she became full time and has now worked for our Union for more than thirty years.

In her daily duties, she coordinated the membership program, the ER&D program, the new member packets, as well as the typing of contracts and many other general office duties at the LCFT Union Hall.

Betty will be missed around the LCFT Office, and we wish her well in retirement!