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## Charles Terry

It was with great sadness that Local 459 recently said goodbye to Service Representative **Charles Terry**. **Charles** passed away suddenly right after Christmas.

**Charles** was born in Detroit and graduated from Cooley High School. **Charles**, was also known as "Magic" in school. He kept close ties to his high school friends and many of them attended his funeral in Lansing.

While in junior high, **Charles** met the love of his life, **Carolyn Richmond**. They married in the fall of 1980 and moved to Lansing. He worked for McLaren Hospital for twenty-seven (27) years. **Charles** and **Carolyn** had a love story that lasted thirty-nine (39) years. They were blessed with two (2) beautiful children, **Charles Edward IV** and **Tressha Naomi**, and two grandchildren, **Janaya** and **Justin**.

**Charles'** second love was helping others by his service in the Union. **Charles** was Chief Steward and on the negotiating team for the POST unit. He served as a Service Representative for Local 459 for the last ten (10) years. For a decade **Charles** traveled Michigan's Lower Peninsula organizing and representing Local 459 members. He had a

special fondness and talent for representing entry level employees who often needed help the most.

We are grateful that **Charles** chose to serve Local 459 and its members and we will miss him greatly.



Jeff Fleming, Sharon Taylor, Charles and Lance Rhines

# Contracts Settled

## City of Muskegon Heights employees get two-year deal

Local 459 represents two (2) groups of employees at the City of Muskegon Heights. They are the Technical group and the Supervisors unit. The members of both groups recently ratified a two (2) year agreement.

Although they work for the same employer, they each had different issues at the bargaining table. The Supervisors were under the market in pay. The Technical employees were mostly part-time with no benefits, especially a pension.

The Supervisors received a three-thousand dollar (\$3,000) pay adjustment, a three-percent (3%) raise the first year and a two-percent (2%) raise the second year. They also received an increase on their Life Insurance from \$20,000 to \$50,000 as well as increases to the stipend they get for having higher education and licensures. The bargaining team was **Carolyn Cook** and **Karey Morrow**.

The Technical group received a three-percent (3%) raise the first year and a two-percent (2%) raise the second year. They also received an additional five (5) vacation days. Most importantly, part-time employees will now receive a defined contribution pension plan that matches up to eight-percent (8%) of their salary. In addition, there was an increase on their life insurance from \$20,000 to \$50,000.

The bargaining team was **Julie Aaron-Shyne**, **Erran Briggs** and **Jessie Shelton**.

Both groups were assisted by Service Representative **Lance A. Rhines**.

## Michigan State AFL-CIO members sign one-year agreement

Local 459 represents a lot of employees who work for other Labor Unions. This is true for the employees at the Michigan State AFL-CIO as well. Recently, the Local 459 members at the Michigan AFL-CIO agreed to a one (1) year contract.

The agreement included a three-percent (3%) general wage increase as well as a two-percent (2%) increase to their defined contribution supplemental pension plan. There were no reductions in the other benefits.

The bargaining team was **Meg Chandler**, **Bill Elliott** and **Stephanie Hills**. They were assisted by Service Representative **Lance A. Rhines**.



City of Muskegon  
**Jessie Shelton, Julie Aaron-Shyne, Carolyn Cook, Erran Briggs, Bridgett Cook and Karey Morrow**

### Local 459 • On the Web: [www.local459.org](http://www.local459.org)



#### 459 Update

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## From the President's Desk



*By Sharon Taylor, Local 459 President*

### Unionism = Social Justice

The recent death of my friend and Union brother, **Charles Terry**, really got me thinking about our local and why it feels like so much more than a Union to me. Local 459 and its staff have always had strong roots in the social justice movement. Many of us come from professions that serve or help others. Most of us believe that unionism is about social justice, keeping things fair and putting the needs of the group first.

**Charles** had this quote from **Martin Luther King Jr.** on his office door for many years...“The labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress. Out of its bold struggles, economic and social reform gave birth to unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, government relief for the destitute and, above all, new wage levels that meant not mere survival but a tolerable life. The captains of industry did not lead this transformation; they resisted it until they were overcome. When in the thirties the wave of Union organization crested over the nation, it carried to secure shores not only itself but the whole of society.” I think this was something **Charles** strived to remember every day. He was a true believer in social justice.

We must continue this push for social justice. We must continue to work towards a true living wage for each and every person; whether they serve the food we eat or provide our healthcare. At Local 459 we represent workers of all kinds in forty two (42) different bargaining units. We strive to work in Union with each other to raise up each of us. It's not about one group but about all of us working together to accomplish something. All of us deserve to have access to affordable healthcare. We must support each other, whether that is an individual who works in a group home caring for our most vulnerable or the teller assisting us at our credit union. Every group has its struggle and we must stand beside each other. We must stay engaged every day. We all have a stake in making sure things get better.

Unions are the only way working people have ever found the voice—and power—they need to fight and win against giant corporations, and the billionaires who control them. Despite the efforts of the rich and powerful to redefine us, to eradicate Unions and pit us against each other, Unions continue to fight for what we need most dignity, security, justice, and fairness. These are the values by working people that have come to represent American values. We can't turn a blind eye to discrimination and problems. We must confront them.

There is much more that unites us than divides us. We can't wait for others to lead, we must be the leaders. We must stand together and force those who would devalue us to see our worth. In a telegram to **Cesar Chavez, Dr. King** wrote, “As brothers in the fight for equality, I extend the hand of fellowship and good will and wish continuing success to you and your members. The fight for equality must be found on many fronts... Our separate struggles are really one – a struggle for freedom, for dignity and for humanity.”

Please actively join in the fight for a better tomorrow like those who did so before us and for those who will come after us. Attend more Union meetings, join or start a Political Action Committee in your area, attend a rally for a cause that you believe in, picket with our Union brothers and sisters, join your contract action team, learn more about being a steward, write a letter to your county commissioner, state legislator, congressperson or senator. Let your voice be heard!

# Executive Board Action

The Local 459 Executive Board is made up of members elected by the membership. The Board meets at least monthly. It is at these meetings that many of the decisions regarding Local 459 members are presented, discussed, and decided.

Executive Board decisions made during the period of December 2018 to January 2019 of possible interest to the membership are outlined below. Decisions which have been discussed elsewhere in this newsletter are not included.

## ARBITRATIONS

Arbitration is the final step in the grievance process. The vast majority of grievances are settled prior to reaching arbitration. Both the Union and management present their case before a neutral arbitrator who makes a binding decision based on the merits of the case. Arbitration is an expensive and time consuming procedure. Local 459 has limited funds and cannot afford to arbitrate every grievance. Therefore, all unresolved grievances are presented to the Executive Board for review.

During this period no grievances were brought before the Executive Board for review.

## BUSINESS

The Executive Board appointed Stewards and Alternates at the American Red Cross Collections Unit where only one (1) member expressed an interest in the position.

The Executive Board approved the 2019 budget.

The Executive Board approved the calendar of Executive Board meetings for 2019 cancelling the June 11th, 2019 meeting due to conflict with the OPEIU Triennial Convention.

The Executive Board confirmed the approved Membership Meeting for Tuesday, March 12, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. at the Local 459 office in order to elect Convention Delegates and Alternates for the 2019 OPEIU International Triennial Convention.

## APPEAL PROCESS

The Local 459 Constitution allows the membership to modify or overturn any action of the Executive Board but any such decision must be done at a membership meeting in which a quorum is present and which is held or properly requested within one (1) calendar month of the Executive Board action.

A special membership meeting may be called upon a request submitted to the President by not less than three percent (3%) of the members in good standing. Currently, there are 2,860 members so a petition would require approximately eighty-six (86) signatures. Petitions are available from the Local 459 office.

For reviewing a decision to arbitrate or not to arbitrate a grievance, a special meeting may also be called by three quarters of the members in the bargaining unit in which the grievance arose. For some bargaining units this is less than three percent (3%) of all Local 459 members in good standing.

The regular meetings of the Executive Board are held the second Tuesday of each month. Draft minutes of the meeting are available no later than two (2) weeks following the meeting.

Please see the Constitution for specific details. Copies of the Constitution are available from the Local 459 office and on the Local 459 website.

## QUESTIONS?

If there are any questions or concerns about these decisions, please feel free to contact President Sharon Taylor by phone at (517) 887-8844 or by email at [staylor@local459.org](mailto:staylor@local459.org).



# Dr. King Events



MGL Technical Chief Steward Kerry Miller and former Chief Steward Pat Miller



Tressa Terry-Brown and Carolyn Terry



MGL POST Chief Steward Lois Davis-Thomas with sister Louella Rivers and Local 459 Bookkeeper Ronda Ackerson



Local 459 President Sharon Taylor and Bridgett Fox



MGL POST Chief Steward Lois Davis-Thomas, MGL Technical Chief Steward Kerry Miller, MGL RN Tamilikia Foster, Tressa Terry-Brown and Carolyn Terry

Lansing holds the largest luncheon in the nation each year to honor **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.** Each year this group brings in renowned speakers and artists, like Grammy winning gospel singer **Donnie McClurkin**, to celebrate **Dr. King**. The guest speaker was **Governor L. Douglas Wilder**, the first African American to be elected Governor in 1989 in Virginia. A number of Local 459 members and staff attended this year's event.

# Grievances Settled

*The members, stewards and staff of Local 459 settle many grievances each quarter. There is insufficient space to publish all of them. Grievances which are unique or affect a large number of members are more likely to be published. If you would like to publicize a grievance you have settled, contact your Service Representative.*



## MGL Technical Future Suspensions May Void Perfect Attendance Bonus

The contract between McLaren Greater Lansing (MGL) and Local 459 for the Technical Unit allows for a perfect attendance bonus equal to either a full shift pay or a shift worth of paid time off (PTO).

**Tony Grabarek**, a Respiratory Therapist, applied for his bonus in March of 2018 for his six (6) months absent free record. **Grabarek** was denied his bonus because back in October 2017 as part of a discipline he was "sent home" during his shift.

**Grabarek** contacted his Steward, **Mary Berlin**, who contacted Chief Steward **Kerry Miller**. **Miller** conducted an investigation and came to the conclusion that HR was putting **Grabarek** in "double jeopardy" by both disciplining him and taking away his Perfect Attendance Bonus. He was in essence being punished twice for the same infraction.

Management argued that even though they were the ones who sent **Grabarek** home, it was still an

absence. The grievance procedure did not produce an acceptable outcome. The Local 459 Executive Board then voted to take the grievance to arbitration.

While awaiting arbitration, management offered to settle the grievance by paying **Grabarek** all that he was owed. Investigation showed that this situation rarely if ever happened. The Union agreed that in the future, employees who were suspended would not be eligible for the Perfect Attendance Bonus for that period of time.



## CEI CMH FSA Enrollments Honored

The Community Mental Health Authority of Clinton, Eaton and Ingham counties (CMHA-CEI) holds insurance open enrollment one week during November each year. During this week, employees are able to enroll in health insurance, flex spending accounts (FSA), dependent care accounts (DCA), increase their life insurance coverage, and enroll in various Aflac products. FSAs are accounts in which an employee can pay for medical, dental, and vision costs not covered by insurance. Employees are able to elect an annual amount of money that they would like to have placed in this account. CMHA-CEI loads the whole amount on a debit card effective January 1 and the employee is able to repay the money over the year from each paycheck. Employees must enroll in FSA accounts each year during the open enrollment.

Chief Steward **Naudia Fisher** received numerous calls regarding members' FSAs. Members were told by Payroll & Benefits Manager **April Poyer** that CMH would not load these funds if they did not also complete a paper enrollment form in addition to completing the online enrollment in Employee Access Center (EAC). Some members stated that they have never had to complete a paper form while other employees stated that former Payroll & Benefits Assistant **Aimee Eisen** would email employees to remind them to complete paper forms after open enrollment. **Fisher** argued these points with Chief Human Resources Officer **Sharon Blizzard** and explained that a practice has been set. **Blizzard** met with **Poyer** and after further discussions, **Poyer** agreed to load each employee's FSA as long as he/she enrolled in EAC without a formal class action grievance needing to be filed.



## MGL RN Corrective or Punitive

Sometimes a nurse makes an unintentional error that results in a discipline. When that happens the Steward may try show a better way than discipline to make sure the employees recognizes it as an error and change their practice in the future. As McLaren Greater Lansing's (MGL) discipline policy calls for a discipline to be corrective rather than punitive, it would seem

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to support this as well. To make discipline for these types of mistakes more corrective, often the Steward will show the employee intends to change their practice and try to get the step reduced. Sometimes management just plain refuses to reduce the step and the Steward can ask that the amount of time the discipline remains active be reduced. Normally a discipline is active for nine (9) months and any other incident could add another step which may be termination.

In one such case recently MGL RN Chief Steward **Julie Murray** represented a nurse who made such an unintentional error. **Murray** could see this employee understood how she could improve in this area. The discipline was serious because the next step would be termination. **Murray** was able to get a reduction in the length of the discipline period and she will only be on the step for six (6) months.

### MGL RN Picking up a Holiday Counts

During critical staffing times MGL and OPEIU Local 459 will often agree to do a temporary staffing incentive in order to get people to cover open shifts. The most recent one gave the RNs more per hour plus, if they picked up eight (8) extra shifts, they would also receive a bonus. MGL RN **Ashley Krupp** diligently picked up the required eight (8) shifts to get that bonus money.

**Krupp** was denied the bonus because one of the shifts she picked up was Thanksgiving. She was told she did not qualify because it was a holiday. **Ashley** contacted Chief Steward **Julie Murray** who agreed this shift should count and called the director who also agreed and **Krupp** was paid the bonus.

It was discovered this also happened to **Heather Jones** and she too was given the bonus.

### MGL RN Retention Bonus Paid

**Samantha Serbus-Harris** recently took a job in a non-union position at MGL. When she agreed to take the position she discussed with the HR recruiter whether she would still qualify for the RN Union retention bonus. That bonus is based on years of service and to qualify an employee must be employed on the 21<sup>st</sup> pay period of the year (which happened in October in 2018). The HR recruiter assured **Serbus-Harris** she would as she start the non-Union position after that date in October.

**Serbus-Harris** did not get the bonus and called Chief Steward **Murray** to see if she could help. Once she contacted the HR department they were able to quickly determine that she did indeed qualify and **Serbus-Harris** was paid.

### MGL POST Award that Position

In the Local 459 POST contract with MGL there is clear language on awarding jobs. It states that the position shall be awarded to the employee within fourteen (14) calendar days after the end of the posting period. It was brought to Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas'** attention that a position in the Patient Access Department had not been awarded to an employee yet. **Davis-Thomas** contacted the HR department to acquire the status and was told that the manager of the department hadn't made a decision yet. **Davis-Thomas** informed them that it was past the fourteen (14) days and it needed to be awarded immediately. When it was still not filled, **Davis-Thomas** filed a Class Action grievance against Patient Access Department for not following contract language. A meeting was conducted with the Human Resource Manager and Patient Access management. The grievance was

settled and the employee who was awarded the position received retro pay.

### MGL POST Family Emergency Doesn't Void Holiday Pay

**Barbara Rodriquez**, a steward for the POST unit and a Perioperative Orderly at MGL, had to call in for a family emergency the day before Thanksgiving. Her supervisor told her she wasn't entitled to holiday pay because she called in the day before the holiday.

**Rodriquez** contacted Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas** who initiated a step one (1) grievance with the manager of the department. After investigation the manager agreed that **Rodriquez** circumstances were an emergency and agreed that she should receive her Thanksgiving Holiday pay.

### MGL POST 2 Attendance Points

**Daniel Vermeersch**, a Nurse Assistant II at MGL, was given a notice that he was at zero (0) attendance points. This means he would be terminated. According to the contract with McLaren, POST employees have sixteen (16) points and once an employee reaches zero (0) they are terminated. It is a "no fault" policy so the hospital doesn't care why you are absent, you always lose a point.

**Vermeersch** contacted Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas** because his record keeping didn't show the same as MGL. **Vermeersch** and **Davis-Thomas** figured that he should be at two (2) points not zero (0). **Davis-Thomas** initiated step one (1) of the grievance process with the supervisor of his department but no agreement was reached.

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**Davis-Thomas** proceeded to the next step of the grievance process with the HR department. **Davis-Thomas** presented the case to the HR Manager and the grievance was settled. **Vermeersch** was given back two (2) points to his attendance bank.

### MGL POST Paid as if Worked the Shift

**Joelle Cohoon**, a Patient Access employee at MGL signed up to work extra shifts. **Cohoon** discovered that one of the shifts she signed up for was given to a lower senior employee. **Cohoon** contacted Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas**, who talked to the supervisor of the department. The supervisor agreed that **Cohoon** should have been granted the shift and **Cohoon** was paid eight (8) hours as if she worked.

### MGL POST Paid as if Worked 2 Shifts

**Heather Campbell** works in the Sterile Processing Department at MGL Penn Campus. **Campbell** was not offered extra shifts in her department and the shifts were given to a lower senior employee instead. **Campbell** contacted Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas** to have her check to see if the supervisor of the department awarded the shifts properly. The POST contract language for Hours of Work is clear and since the supervisor failed to post a sign-up sheet he needed to offer hours which would not result in overtime accordingly from high to low senior. This did not happen. **Campbell**, a high senior employee not in overtime, should have been awarded the shifts.

**Davis-Thomas** tried to resolve this matter with the supervisor in the first step of the grievance process, but could not get an agreement. **Davis-Thomas** proceeded to the next step of the process with a written grievance to the HR department. A meeting was held and **Campbell** was paid for the two (2) shifts as if she worked.

### MGL POST Relief Means Relief

The POST contract with MGL states that McLaren will not “regularly schedule” a temporary relief employee. Relief are supposed to be treated like relief. Recently they were found to be regularly scheduling relief employees in two (2) departments.

The first one was in Same Day Surgery Greenlawn Campus, where a relief employee was performing bargaining unit work at least sixty-four (64) hours per pay for four (4) pay periods.

The second incident was in OR Surgery Department at Greenlawn campus, where a temporary relief employee was working thirty-two (32) hours per pay for at least four (4) pay periods also doing bargaining unit work. Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas** was informed of this by employees in both departments asking if per diems were allowed to hold a regular schedule. **Davis-Thomas** answer was absolutely not and then requested payroll information from the HR Department for each of the temporary relief employees.

After reviewing the information request, **Davis-Thomas** discovered that they were actually working as regular scheduled employees. **Davis-Thomas** filed class action grievances against both of the departments and the grievances were settled by both positions being posted.

### MGL POST Job Awarded Wrong

**Macie Ramey**, a Unit Assistant at MGL, applied for an Emergency Department Tech position and was told that another employee with higher seniority received the position. **Ramey** questioned that the other employee did not have higher seniority so she called Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas**. **Davis-Thomas** discovered there was a mistake and **Ramey** was

the higher senior employee. **Davis-Thomas** contacted the HR recruiter and **Ramey** was offered the position.

### MGL Clinics Train First

In December 2018 **Chanecia Thomas** a Medical Assistant who works at Okemos Community Medical Center of MGL was told she was being investigated for not properly completing a task that was assigned to her. **Thomas** assumed that she was performing the task accurately, since it was assigned to her back in July of 2018.

**Thomas** immediately called Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas** to represent her. After the investigation meeting, MGL issued **Thomas** a step 2 discipline for not performing the task correctly. If a supervisor wants an employee to do a job assignment according to certain standards they must be trained and there should be documentation that proper training has taken place.

**Davis-Thomas** filed a grievance and schedule a meeting with McLaren’s Human Resource Manager. Service Representative **Lance Rhines**, **Davis-Thomas** and **Thomas** had a meeting with the Manager of Okemos Community Medical Center and the HR consultant. After much discussion, they agreed that MGL can’t show that **Thomas** was properly trained and they agreed to remove the discipline.



### Hurley \$1 per Hour

The new Union contract for the Physician Assistants (PAs) and Nurse Practitioners (NPs) at Hurley Medical Center provided a one dollar (\$1) per hour increase for employees identified as performing

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higher level work in critical care settings. When **Kat Widmark** did not receive her pay increase, she contacted payroll on her own. They partially corrected the error. They agreed to give her the premium only when she was working in an assigned area. **Widmark** requested that Local 459 intervene on her behalf.

The Union provided Human Resources with a copy of the tentative agreement documents that clearly showed **Widmark's** name on the list of employees who should receive the pay increase. Local 459 also pointed out there was no mention in the documents or in discussions at the bargaining table about the pay being tied to specific locations. Hurley granted **Widmark** the increase with full retroactivity without a formal grievance needing to be filed.



### American Red Cross L/C/D Don't Let the Door...

**Godfrey Bwesigye** is a Custodian at the American Red Cross in Lansing. **Bwesigye** received a written warning from his supervisor for absenteeism and tardiness. On top of the discipline, **Bwesigye** and his co-workers were constantly being harassed and yelled at by their boss. He would pick at them constantly about anything and everything. Some managers just think that is how you manage.

**Bwesigye** contacted Laboratory, Clerical and Distribution (L/C/D) Chief Steward **Cin Diné** and filed a grievance. **Diné** filed a grievance for the discipline, and began to confront the supervisor about his behavior. As far as the discipline goes, **Diné** was able to easily prove that **Bwesigye** was not treated

fairly by showing clear disparate treatment. So, the discipline was removed.

But, that didn't stop the yelling down the hall at the employees, the nit picking and the overall bad treatment. **Diné** contacted Service Representative **Lance A. Rhines** to help. **Rhines** set up a meeting with the supervisor's boss and Human Resources. Upper management made it clear that the supervisor's behavior had to change. It didn't. These days that supervisor is spending more time with his family.



### Touchpoint at Macomb FMLA Protects

**Jessica Kinslow** works for Touchpoint in the dietary department at Ascension Health Macomb hospital. She is a mother of two (2) and has been employed by Touchpoint for four (4) years. Recently **Kinslow** was disciplined for exceeding her attendance points. She knew that the days she called in were due to her daughter's health issues which are covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

**Kinslow** contacted Chief Steward **Blenda Coward** and a grievance was filed. **Coward** simply pointed out that the absences were covered by FMLA. Management looked in **Kinslow's** file (which they should have done in the first place) and saw that she was in fact covered by the FMLA.

The grievance was granted and the discipline was removed.

### Touchpoint at Moross Where's the Beef

**Tawan Sampson** works for Touchpoint as a Cook at Ascension Health Moross hospital. They are

always short staffed there. This day was no exception. **Sampson** stepped away from his regular duties to help out on the cook line as well as to help in several other areas. When he did this, he accidentally left out a rack of ground beef overnight and it was ruined.

**Sampson** was given a formal discipline. In the step 1 discipline meeting with Chief Steward **Blenda Coward**, it was discovered that **Sampson** was actually helping in four (4) other areas that evening. Due to the circumstances, management agreed to reduce the discipline to a true verbal warning.

### Touchpoint at Moross Not Completing Duties

**Cheryl Winter** works for Touchpoint in the dietary department at Ascension Health Moross hospital. She was given a Step 2 discipline for not completing her job duties. **Winter** contacted Moross Chief Steward **Calvin Parks** and a grievance was filed. **Parks** argued that **Winter** was never given a verbal warning or a Step 1. She didn't have any other disciplines on her record. **Parks** also filed an extensive information request along with his grievance.

Rather than fulfilling the information request, Touchpoint management approached **Parks** and offered a compromise. Both sides agreed to remove the Step 2 discipline, and reduce it to a verbal warning. It was also agreed that if **Winter's** did not have a similar infraction in the next six (6) months, the discipline would be removed altogether.

# Steward Spotlight

## Kristen Silvers MGL RN

**Kristen Silvers** grew up in a "Union family" as both of her parents were Union members. She also has a history of nurses in her family that influenced her to go into the nursing profession. Her mom, late aunt, and her cousin were all nurses. So it isn't any surprise that **Silvers** would want to be a nurse and an active Union member. She has been a Registered Nurse for twenty one (21) years with the last fifteen (15) years at MGL. She is now in the PACU at the Greenlawn Campus.

When asked "Why do you think being a Union member is important?" she quickly responded "as a Union member we are part of an organization that has the power to stand together in solidarity so OUR voice is heard. They hear our voice when we are negotiating for a fair contract for fair wages, benefits, work rules, and a safe work environment. Together Union members can accomplish great things for members,"

**Silvers** has stepped up to be an Alternate Steward and is currently a member of the RN bargaining team. She said she

worked for a non-Union hospital for six (6) years and experienced cuts to benefits, loss of COLA raises and freezing of step increases. She saw elimination of bonuses, and bending of the policies that weren't in favor of the employee. She witnessed favoritism from management many times. She never felt she had any job security in the non-Union hospital and experienced harassment from her manager that the HR department just ignored. This all changed drastically when she came here and because Local 459 negotiated better benefits and wages along with all the other protections that come with a collective bargaining agreement. **Silvers** said "I would never want to work for a non-Union hospital again. If they asked her about joining OPEIU she says "I would tell them that becoming a Union member will help ensure they will be working in a safe work environment without fear of spontaneous cuts in those benefits, that their job has protections provided by our collective bargaining agreement, that they can enjoy the perks available only to OPEIU members (free college, free towing, free identity theft protection and more). They can depend on their Union steward to support and guide them when problems arise and that they would be

joining a great organization whose service reps, stewards and fellow Union members work together in solidarity to improve the lives of ALL its members.



It is always important to balance your work life with your home life and Kristen shares it with her husband **Tim**, daughter **Jessica**, son **Donald**, grands **Jalyn** and **Robbie**. Rounding off the family are two (2) dogs **Emma** and **Toby** and two (2) cats **Bear** and her 3 legged kitty affectionately named **Tripod!** She enjoys knitting, reading, researching her family's genealogy, dome gardening, antique shopping and buying inappropriately large amounts of yarn!

We thank you, for your dedication to the Union and the role you play as an alternate steward and negotiating team member.

## Renee Howell MGL POST

**Renee Howell** is an Environmental Services (EVS) Technician at McLaren Greater Lansing (MGL) hospital. **Howell** worked for twenty (20) years in the Food and Nutrition department until it was outsourced by MGL. She then took a job in EVS. She has been at MGL for twenty-four (24) years total. **Howell** says she likes working for MGL because of the fact that she helps people. She also likes her co-workers a lot.

**Howell** has been the EVS Steward for just over one (1) year. This is the first Union position she has ever held. She plans on running for a position on the upcoming 2019 bargaining committee to gain more insight and experience. Even though she has only been the Steward for a short time, **Howell** caught

on quickly. She zealously represents her members in the EVS department. **Howell** solves most of the issues directly with the EVS management group, making it unnecessary to get the Local involved to file formal grievances.

"I like the protection the Union gives us", said **Howell**. "It is comforting to know that Local 459 and Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas** is only a phone call away and we get the backup we need whenever we call."

**Howell** has two (2) daughters, **Ta' Lia** who is twenty (20) and **Ciera** who is twenty-six (26) and also works for McLaren at Mid-Michigan Physicians (MMP). Her family is very close and she loves spending time with them, especially traveling with them. When **Howell** isn't working on behalf of the patients or representing her co-workers,



she likes going to the movies, watching Lifetime Television and just relaxing at home.

Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas** says she is impressed with **Howell** as a Steward. "She makes my job easier because of the good work that she does for the Local 459 membership", says **Davis-Thomas**.

## Bargaining Unit Spotlight - MGL Post

Local 459 proudly represents some five-hundred Paraprofessional, Office and Skilled Trades (P.O.S.T.) employees at McLaren Greater Lansing (MGL) hospital. These employees have been represented by Local 459 since 1988 when the employees at then Lansing General Hospital formed a Union. In 1995 the P.O.S.T. employees at the Greenlawn campus also voted to unionize. In 1996 a contract was negotiated that covered employees at both campuses.



**Patient Access Kim Bowlin, Robert Keckler, Lisa Shattuck, Bethany Knowlton, Kristina Graham and Kendra Moore**

P.O.S.T. members are the heartbeat of the hospital. They are the Nursing Assistants, Laboratory Technicians, Pharmacy Technicians, Carpenters, Painters, Environmental Service Workers, Schedulers and Switchboard Operators and everything in between. If you need your blood drawn or your hospital room cleaned, look for a P.O.S.T. member. If you have a billing question or need to schedule your surgery, find a P.O.S.T. member.

The MGL P.O.S.T. employees are amongst the strongest Unionists at Local 459.

Over the years they have fought for fair wages and working conditions and have been very successful in achieving them.

P.O.S.T. members often get the brunt of managements attempts at concessions. This makes no sense because they are the lowest paid employees at the organization.

P.O.S.T. has eighteen (18) Stewards as well as a full-time Chief Steward. They all stay busy representing the membership. Usually when the phone rings at Local 459, it is a P.O.S.T. member on the line. They are educated Union Members and know their rights!

The P.O.S.T. collective bargaining agreement expires in the fall of 2019. As always, there will be a big fight in order to continue to improve on wages and working conditions for these members. But, if anyone is up to the task, it's the hard working, strong membership of P.O.S.T.



**Lab - Kathy Lewis and Moses Dangba**

So, if you happen to be at MGL, and you see someone in black, teal, green, burgundy or just a blue uniform, say "Thank-You!" for making the hospital work.



**Skilled Trades Doug Coon, Ryan Osborn, Edward Galbraith, Kevin Wright and Patrick Hanley**



**4 Main UC and NA - Charnell Hester, Cynthia Buycks and Rosa Mushatt**



**EVS - Candy Murray, Tina Olmstead, Darlene Arnett, Jim Snider, Angela McKone and Cheryl VanArsdall**



## Office and Professional Employees International Union, Local 459

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### Remembrances of Charles Terry



**Charles** was a person truly dedicated to social justice. He was a fair minded a person as I have ever known. We shared strong support of Michigan State football and basketball. I was fortunate to have him attend with me several home football games in the last two seasons. His support was strong, but he did not yell and scream like I do. **Neal J. Wilensky**

I never met a vegetarian who was such an awesome grill master! **Charles** was so talented that he was drafted to cook for every Local 459 picnic event. He was the only grill master the staff ever wanted. **Jeff Fleming**

**Charles** was my best friend, my co-worker and my confidant. I am very sad that he is gone, but also very grateful that I was privileged to spend so much time with him over the many years I knew him. I know that he cared deeply about the members that he represented. We will carry on his good work. **Lance Rhines**

**Charles** was someone I could openly and honestly talk about race, religion and politics without fear of being judged. And in the very next breath one of us could crack a non-politically correct joke without either of us being offended. **Ronda Ackerson**

**Charles** was a man with great patience. He was always the person in the room trying to view things from the others point of view and always wanted to give the benefit of the doubt to others. He wanted to make sure everyone had a fair shake. He was always supportive of everyone around him. He made Local 459 a brighter place and we miss him every day. **Sharon Taylor**

It is no exaggeration to say that Charles was truly a great man and words cannot do him justice. Charles approached each person he encountered with empathy and genuine interest. He worked tirelessly to find the best outcome for his family, friends, coworkers, and members. He took great consideration in solving each problem that came to him from deciding which weekend activity his grandchildren would most like to attend all the way to fighting for good, fair contracts for our members. No problem was too small for his attention. He will be truly missed, but he has had an impact on each of us that will allow us to demonstrate his grace, his integrity, and, most importantly, his passion for life. **Naudia Fisher**