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Contracts Settled

Child & Family Charities Team Focuses on Raises

The Child & Family Charities (CFC) contract has been settled after seven (7) long months of negotiations. CFC has continued to have a revolving door of employees due, in part, to low wages for the professional and direct care worker (DCW) staff members. The Union negotiating team decided to focus on wages.

Management also has a vested interest in increasing wages in order to retain employees, however, management felt that the best manner to do so was to fund the increases by making major changes to the benefits package. In particular, management wanted to 1) force employees' spouses to take their employer's health insurance if it was available, 2) increase the employee's cost share to 30%, 3) increase the deductible, and other potential changes. The bargaining team explained that these changes would be expensive for employees that already have low wages.

The team pushed back and was able to avoid all the potential concessions while agreeing to move the employee cost share from 17% to 27% by 2023.

This insurance change allowed for employees to receive a 3% raise in 2019 and a 2% raise for years 2020 and 2021. In addition to this raise, the DCWs were moved from \$10 to \$11/hour and any employees over \$10.50 received a 50-cent raise. This was substantial movement as the DCWs often only receive mere cents when percentage-based raises are added to their hourly rate. These raises will allow employees to cover both the increase in insurance cost share and still have more money in their paychecks as well as their retirement accounts. Lastly, CFC typically only applies the raises to current employees and not the salary ranges that dictate what new employees are paid. However, CFC agreed to raise the salary ranges of incoming employees in order to truly put more money into wages and become more competitive as an employer.

The bargaining team was also able to regain their previous mileage policy. During the 2008 recession in which gas prices came close to \$5/gallon, the bargaining unit allowed CFC to change mileage from the IRS rate to the IRS rate minus 10 cents. The team has attempted to renegotiate this change during every open contract since without success. This year, the team was able to regain the IRS rate for their mileage. This was a big win for these employees as many are expected to drive daily for their jobs.

The agreement was ratified by a vote of 37 – 1. The bargaining team members were Chief Steward **Pam Harry**, **Gail Henry**, **Kierra Hughey**, **Sue Hurlburt** and **Jan Look**. They were assisted by Union Representative **Naudia Fisher**.



Chief Steward Pam Harry

Informational Picket

Local 459 MGL Nurses Conduct Informational Picket

On Wednesday, June 26th over 100 MGL RNs and supporters conducted an informational picket in front of both MGL Greenlawn and Pennsylvania campuses.



The picket was to help make the community aware of the issues facing nurses at McLaren Greater Lansing daily and during the current contract negotiations.



Joining the MGL nurses were staff from the POST and Technical Units, Visiting Nurses, CEI Community Mental Health and LAFCU 459 members.

The action was covered by local television news stations and in the Lansing City Pulse. For additional information read the article on the history of the MGL nurses at the top of the next page.



Local 459 • On the Web: www.local459.org



459 Update

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MGL RN Highlight

It is always helpful to know the history of Union organizing. The many people that went before us and got us weekends, holidays and many of the other benefits we enjoy today.

At MGL the RNs have a rich history as well. The Penn Campus RNs were a part of the former Lansing General Hospital. They had their own OPEIU local. In 1987 after going through a difficult strike, they merged with Local 459. The Greenlawn RNs joined Local 459 in 1995 seeking protection from the changes proposed by the merger of Lansing General Hospital and Ingham Medical Center. At that time Ingham Medical Center was considering a sale of its hospital to the for profit health care giant Columbia. The Greenlawn RNs were looking for job security and wanted a voice in the workplace like their counterparts at Penn Campus.

In an effort to thwart the RNs in their organizing efforts, management argued to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) that each Greenlawn RN was actually a "supervisor". This would make them exempt from being able to join a Union. The issue went to a prolonged hearing in front of the NLRB who ruled that not a single one of the nurses in the petition was a supervisor.

Negotiations were on a fast track for both Local 459 and the hospital because of the pending sale to Columbia Health Care. The sale never happened but the nurses were able to get their first contract in only four months of negotiations. With the help of Local 459 MGL RNs continued to bargain increasingly good contracts and even went on strike in 2005 over staffing ratios. While we continue to negotiate our next contract, we are taking the time to make sure we get the best contract we can get.

Even when the government throws us road blocks like right to work and the recent federal reductions in employee rights, OPEIU Local 459 nurses remain strong. We have over 95% membership and after the great turnout for our recent informational picket management can see our members still know how to carry a picket sign! Our nurses remain the best in town and give the best care in spite of the continuous short staffing and long mandated overtime shifts. Trust that your negotiating team is working hard for you and appreciate all of the support you give them. Remember what author **Alice Walker** says, "The most common way people give up their power is by believing they don't have any." As long as we stand together in solidarity, we can achieve our goals of fair compensation and safe working conditions. If you are not currently a member and would like to be one, contact **Julie Murray** at jmurray@local459.org and she can show you how.

OPEIU Scholarship

India Hudson awarded OPEIU Scholarship

Local 459's own **India Hudson** was recently awarded an OPEIU Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship for full-time students. This scholarship is awarded annually to six (6) OPEIU members or their children. **Hudson** will receive \$1,625 per year up to \$6,500.

Hudson serves on the Local 459 Executive Board as Member at Large for CEI CMH Residential Services and is the Residential Unit Chief Steward. She has been a Local 459 member since March 2009 and has served in various capacities including multiple negotiating teams, convention delegate, and member of various joint labor management committees at CEI CMH. **Hudson** is currently studying at Spring Arbor University to become a social worker. **Hudson** was presented her scholarship certificate at the August Executive Board Meeting.

Hudson says she is thankful that OPEIU is able to provide scholarship awards. Education is expensive and she is grateful for not having to go further into debt. **Hudson** says it is great to be supported and encouraged by the Union. "Thank you OPEIU!"



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 May to July 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 CEI CMH Large and Residential Units, Hurley and TIC where only one (1) member expressed an interest in the position.

The Executive Board approved appointing Kristen Silvers, MGL RN to the vacant Trustee position.

The Executive Board approved upgrading of the Local 459 email system at a cost of \$4500.

The Executive Board reviewed and approved the Local 459 IRS form 990.

No Grievances were brought before the Executive Board for review for arbitration during the past quarter.

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 2,880 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.

From the President's Desk



By Sharon Taylor, Local 459 President

While we watch the Circus Worker's Rights are Eroding?

Part of Local 459's job is to stay on top of all of the legal changes that affect the work lives of our members. The average member has a busy life and multiple priorities and can't track this information. We represent both private and public sector workplaces and they are not bound by the same rules and regulations.

Private Sector (non-governmental) Employees

There are many ways that our members work lives have been affected by recent court rulings and decisions by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). The NLRB covers private sector employment and is appointed by the President of the United States.

A recent NLRB decision makes it easier for employers to oust a Union. In some cases, an employer can withdraw its recognition up to ninety (90) days before a contract ends. The employer says it won't bargain with the Union anymore. If an employer decides to make such an "anticipatory withdrawal" the Union remains ousted until it wins a new election to "prove" that it still has support of the workers.

The current NLRB has also allowed some employers to misclassify

many workers as "independent contractors" versus employees even though they have an economic dependency on the employer. Employers do this to avoid many employment-related obligations, such as paying for health care, unemployment insurance and workers' compensation and even paying a minimum wage. Workers wrongly classified as independent contractors are also deprived of the right to unionize under U.S. law.

The current NLRB has also eliminated requirements that employers bargain before changing some working conditions. This reduces Union bargaining power.

Loopholes in federal labor laws allow employers to delay contract negotiations for years after employees form a Union. Thirty seven percent (37%) of newly formed private-sector Unions still had no labor agreement after a year.

All Employees

Protected concerted activity is defined as activities that workers may participate in without fear of retaliation by their employer. These have been limited in numerous ways in recent years. One limit was in the way certain issues are presented to employers and having proof that they are group, not individual concerns.

The Supreme Court recently paved the way for employers to **require** employees to sign class action waivers, thus limiting their ability to band together.

Worker protection laws have been rolled back and OSHA funding has been slashed eliminating many

inspector positions. In addition, reporting standards have been weakened regarding what records employers must submit to the federal government regarding workplace injuries. This makes it difficult to tell how many workers are being injured or if trends are increasing.

We have all read articles about worker retirement cuts. Workers have always expected their retirements to be secure but that is not always the case anymore. The current administration abandoned a rule that protected retirees from being cheated by financial advisors. The rule stated that financial advisors had a fiduciary responsibility to the client, but that rule was dropped.

2020 Election

The above are just a drop in the bucket of eroding workers' rights. We have also seen Supreme Court decisions like Janus (allowing free loaders nationwide in the public sector) and cuts in funding for programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the weakening of ACA rules.

As we have already begun the election cycle for the 2020 elections, I thought it would be helpful to talk about some of the ways things have gotten harder for working people. These things are important to think about when we vote. Make sure you are voting for someone who has your best interest in mind when you get to the ballot box next year.

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.



Hurley Getting Disability, Can't Require PTO

When Hurley Physician's Assistant **Melissa Hauswirth-Miller** was planning her leave for the upcoming birth of her child, the hospital's policy required her to use her sick, vacation and personal time while she was off. This would have nearly exhausted her vacation time because she had used most of her sick leave to care for her other child. She discovered a court case that banned employers from making employees use their paid leave while they are receiving income from any source even one the employee paid for and arranged on their own. The Physician's Assistants' receive employer paid long-term disability, but not short-term disability. **Hauswirth-Miller** had purchased her own short-term disability policy.

After getting additional research provided by Local 459, **Hauswirth-Miller** shared the documentation with HR and argued she should not have use any of her paid leave time while she was receiving income from her short-term disability policy. HR eventually agreed with her interpretation of the law.

This is important information for other Local 459 members. If your

employer tries to make you use your paid time off while you're receiving income from short-term disability, long-term disability, workers compensation or other sources, contact your Steward or Local 459.



MGL RN All Premiums Apply

The RN contract at McLaren Greater Lansing (MGL) allows nurses to work a temporary assignment on another shift. The employer has to seek volunteers first and compensate them for the inconvenience of working a shift different from their regular shift by giving them an additional \$10 per hour for all hours worked on that shift. The temporary assignment is considered regular scheduled work in place of the employee's normal schedule.

Jodie Watts, from SICU, volunteered to work nights while new employees were getting trained on days. When **Watts** realized she was not also receiving on call pay and mandation pay while doing this temporary assignment, she called MGL RN Chief Steward **Julie Murray**. **Murray** pointed out that the language clearly states this is considered her regular schedule and thus she should be getting any premiums on top of her pay.

The grievance was settled at HR. She was awarded the pay and assured it would be paid going forward.

MGL RN Perfect Attendance, Imperfect Bureaucracy

As an incentive and a reward for RNs not calling in sick for six (6) months, MGL RNs are entitled to a perfect attendance bonus. This allows them to receive an amount equal to one (1) shift of pay at the employees straight time hourly rate of pay for full time employees and one half shift of pay for part time employees. They can elect to receive the bonus as pay or bank it in their PTO bank. When **Candy Higbee** had no results going through her manager to receive this, after four months she contacted MGL RN Chief Steward **Julie Murray** for help. **Murray** was able to find out the manager had put an incorrect date on the form so it was rejected by Payroll. Then it was not resubmitted in a timely manner by her manager.

Once HR agreed to intervene it was paid. HR did try to say it was the employee that put the incorrect date on the form causing the hold up, **Murray** also set the record straight on that.

MGL RN FMLA Leave Doesn't Count

Samantha Jo Varner is a nurse at MGL. She put in for some time off within the timeframe allowed by the RN contract. The scheduling office denied it because someone else had already requested that day off. **Varner** contacted MGL RN Chief Steward **Julie Murray** because she knew the only one off that day was a nurse on an approved FMLA leave which does not count as someone else being off.

Murray was able to get the director to advise the scheduling office and **Varner** was granted the day off.

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MGL POST Not in OT Get Shift First

Paige Buchholz is an employee of MGL that works as a Registrar on Penn campus in the Patient Access Department. **Buchholz** signed up to work an extra shift in the department. **Buchholz** was denied the shift and she discovered that it was given to a higher senior already in overtime. According to the POST contract with MGL, the hours shall be awarded first to the most senior bargaining unit employee on the volunteer list for which the hours do not result in overtime. **Buchholz** contacted MGL POST Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas** who had a meeting with the Patient Access Supervisor and the HR Director. They agreed that the extra shift should have been awarded to **Buchholz**. The grievance was settled and **Buchholz** was paid as if she had worked.

MGL POST Two Holiday Shifts Okay

Bruce Hedglen is a Maintenance Mechanic who works in the MGL Engineering Department on Penn Campus. In **Hedglen's** department they voted to use an alternative method for deciding who works the holidays. According to their alternative method the employer shall solicit volunteers to work the holiday hours based on the employees normal scheduled shift. The hours shall be awarded by seniority, highest to lowest, among those that volunteer. If not enough people volunteer from within the shift then volunteers will be solicited from all shifts, awarded from the highest to lowest senior. **Hedglen** signed up for his first shift and also volunteered for the second shift. **Hedglen's** manager denied him the first shift because he had signed up for the second shift as well and wanted to offer him to work only the second shift.

Hedglen was not happy with this decision and contacted MGL POST Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas** who initiated the first step process in the grievance procedure. The grievance was settled by agreeing that **Hedglen** should not only be awarded the first shift but the second shift as well.

MGL POST Page Paid

Mistoria Page, a Laboratory Tech Assistant at MGL, signed up to work extra hours in her department. **Page** discovered that a day she signed up for extra hours was given to a lower senior employee. MGL POST Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas** initiated the first step in the grievance procedure.

The supervisor agreed that **Page** should have been offered the extra hours and the grievance was settled by agreeing to pay **Page** for four (4) hours as if she had worked.

MGL POST Another Time You Can't Be Forced to Use PTO

Joelle Cohoon works in the Patient Access Department at MGL Penn Campus. **Cohoon** contacted her Supervisor to inform her that she would not be using PTO for the 4th of July holiday. **Cohoon** was told by her supervisor that she had to use PTO for the holiday, even though **Cohoon** had already reached her budget hours for the pay period. **Cohoon** contacted MGL POST Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas**.

Davis-Thomas contacted the HR manager as part of the initial step in grievance process. **Davis-Thomas** explained that **Cohoon** shouldn't have to use PTO for the holiday because she exceeded her budget hours for the pay period and

according to the POST contract with MGL you can choose not to use PTO for the holiday that falls in the same pay period if you have met your budgeted hours. The HR consultant agreed and **Cohoon's** hours were returned to her PTO bank.

MGL Tech Disparate Treatment

Shannon Carl is a Surgical Technician at MGL. **Carl** cut her hand outside of work. She came to work and let her manager know what she had done. Her manager immediately sent **Carl** to Employee Health, who then attempted to send her home.

Carl knew she would be unable to scrub in but she and others had had similar injuries and were always given other non-scrub work to do. When **Carl** questioned this, she was told that there was a new rule that does not allow anyone to work if they can't function in their primary role. She accepted this fact and went home.

A few months later, another Surgical Tech came into work with a cut on her hand. The manager allowed this employee to work. **Carl** filed a grievance for disparate treatment. **Carl's** grievance was settled and she was given twelve (12) hours of PTO that she was forced to use.



Touchpoint at Macomb Attendance Termination Unfair

Raymond Kennedy is an Environmental Services Worker at Touchpoint. **Kennedy** recently transferred from the Moross hospital to the Macomb hospital. He had a "no call, no show" and an absence,

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which equaled two (2) occurrences. The contract between Local 459 and Touchpoint allows for eight (8) occurrences before termination. **Kennedy** was fired for excessive absences. Touchpoint Chief Steward **Blenda Coward** filed a grievance.

Coward argued that the Director did not and could not have done a fair and thorough investigation because **Kennedy** was obviously not supposed to be terminated. The grievance was granted once the Director of Labor Relations reviewed the termination. **Kennedy** was brought back to work with full back-pay.

Touchpoint at Macomb That's Not Even My Area

Breanna Lewis is an Environmental Services Worker at Touchpoint. She works midnights at the Macomb hospital. The Director of EVS and the CEO of the hospital noticed dust in the Emergency Room (ER). The ER was split up between two (2) different Housekeepers. **Lewis** was not assigned to the area with the dust, but was written up nonetheless.

Touchpoint Chief Steward **Blenda Coward** filed a grievance. **Coward** argued that there was no way that management did a fair and thorough investigation because they had written up the wrong person. The Director removed the discipline.

Touchpoint at Oakland Temporary Can't Work

Lytic Herron is a Touchpoint Food Service Worker working in the Dietary Department at the Oakland hospital. **Herron** works in different positions and capacities including in the Call Center. Instead of scheduling her in the Call Center position, management scheduled a temporary worker.

A grievance was filed by Dietary Steward **John Ivinson**. **Ivinson** argued that **Herron** was available to work but was never called. The grievance was

granted and **Herron** was paid three (3) hours for the lost opportunity to work.

Touchpoint at Oakland Temporary Still Can't Work

Dargisha Carter is a Touchpoint Food Service Worker working in the Dietary Department at Oakland hospital. **Carter** was scheduled for the Call Center. Management realized they were overstaffed and sent **Carter** home. They allowed a temporary worker to stay.

Dietary Steward **John Ivinson** filed a grievance. **Ivinson** argued that the contract requires the employer to send non-union staff home first. Management agreed. The grievance was granted and **Carter** was paid for the eight (8) hours lost.

Touchpoint at Oakland Again With the Temporary Workers

Milia Kiezer is a Touchpoint Food Service Worker working in the Dietary Department at Oakland hospital. **Kiezer** asked to be trained to work in the Call Center. She was denied training. However, management then trained a temporary worker in the Call Center. Dietary Steward **John Ivinson** filed a grievance. Once management received the grievance, they set up a time to train **Kiezer**.

Touchpoint at Oakland No Supervisor Doesn't = No Show

April Vanner is a Touchpoint Food Service Worker working in the Dietary Department at Oakland hospital. **Vanner** was written up for a no call, no show.

She reached out to Dietary Steward **John Ivinson** who filed a grievance. **Ivinson** found that **Vanner** had called in to the manager, but there was no answer. **Vanner** then called a co-worker who reported the absence to management. **Ivinson** argued that this is not a no call, no show. The grievance was granted and the discipline was removed.

Editor's note: The above Touchpoint Dietary at Oakland hospital grievances happened when Dietary Director **Andrew Cousins** was out assisting Touchpoint at a different location. When **Cousins** came back, he granted them all and fixed the issues.

Holiday Baskets

Local 459 is accepting names of members who may be in need of extra support around the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Names of Union members in need must be submitted by a steward on a Recommendation for Holiday Basket form. The forms will be sent to stewards and are available from the Local 459 office. Names will be accepted for Thanksgiving baskets October 28th through November 20th; and through December 17th for Christmas.

Members are also encouraged to donate non-perishable food items to the basket program. Donations can be dropped off at the Local 459 office or we can arrange for a pick up.

Contact **Ronda Ackerson** at (517) 887-8844 or rackerson@local459.org for more information about the program.



OPEIU Convention Report

Local 459 sent five (5) delegates to the OPEIU convention in June. They were **Courtney Ariganello, Lois Davis-Thomas, Julie Murray, Kristen Silvers** and **Sharon Taylor**. **Julie Murray** and **Kristen Silvers** also attended the OPEIU Nurses Council meeting which was held during the convention. Each of the delegates was assigned to work with a committee in addition to attending educational workshops. The total cost to the Local (after subtracting the convention fund



money) was approximately \$3,200. Local 459 had budgeted \$7,750.



Convention Delegates Julie Murray, Courtney Ariganello, President Sharon Taylor, Kristen Silvers and Lois Davis-Thomas

Richard Lanigan and **Mary Mahoney** were re-elected as President and Secretary Treasurer. **Aaron Sanders** and **Sharon Taylor** were reelected as Region VII Vice Presidents.

The amount of money (per caps) Local 459 is required to pay OPEIU was increased. The rate of pay for the International President and Secretary Treasurer was increased. Strike pay given to eligible members was increased each year up to \$350 per week beginning in October 2022. Yearly subsidies given to Locals to send delegates to educational conferences was also increased.

Here's what a couple of the Local 459 delegates had to say about the convention:

Courtney Ariganello, LAFCU wrote "First of all, I would like to thank the Local for the opportunity to attend my first convention! It was an unforgettable learning experience, and also a great time. We got to hear from multiple speakers about the importance of not only OPEIU, but the entire union movement. My favorite speaker was **Mark M. McDermott** (www.markmcdermott.com). His workshop, "Fighting for Our Democracy and Our Future in the Age of Trump" was inspirational and powerful. He went over historical lessons from the early 1900s that were scarily a lot like what we are seeing in today's world. Now more than ever we need to come together as brothers and sisters and find unity! Our future truly depends on it."

Kristen Silvers, MGL RN wrote, "The 2019 OPEIU International convention was awesome! I learned about how OPEIU is transitioning from a "Service Union" to an "Organizing Union". I learned about how 48% of U.S. workers would join a union if given the opportunity and how our unions can become stronger, especially in Right to Work states. I also learned a lot about how our economy has changed over the last 40 years. Our keynote speaker **Robert Reich**, former U.S. Secretary of Labor, did a wonderful job explaining how corporations are getting richer while U.S. worker's wages remain flat. He discussed how organizing more unions and strengthening our existing unions can change this economic imbalance for workers. I'm excited and look forward to helping local 459 expand and become stronger!"

The OPEIU convention will be held every four (4) years (another change made at the convention). Convention delegates are elected by the Local 459 membership. (The Local 459 President is automatically a delegate.) Local 459 has always strived to ensure that new delegates are able to attend the convention so that as many members as possible can have the opportunity to see our International Union in action.



Steward Spotlight

Calvin Parks – Touchpoint at Moross

In 2016 Local 459 helped some four-hundred (400) Dietary and Environmental Services employees unionize. These employees work for a company called Touchpoint (which is a part of a much bigger company, Compass Group). They are assigned to Ascension Health hospitals in the Detroit metro area. Local 459 currently has a one (1) year contract with Touchpoint for these workers.

Calvin Parks is the Chief Steward for Touchpoint at the Moross hospital. Since Michigan is now a Right to Work (Freeload) state, it takes a lot of work to get people educated about, and signed up for the Union. It is much easier though when you have a Chief Steward like **Parks**.

Parks is a “go-getter” and uses his energy to represent the members at Touchpoint. There is a lot of turnover, which keeps **Parks** on his toes because he has to constantly sign people up for the Union. Thanks to **Parks** and others, we

are now at seventy-percent (70%) unionization, which is good for a newly organized high turnover unit. And, we are signing up new employees every day.

Although **Parks** is new to the Union, he is a fast learner. He has been working with Chief Steward **Blenda Coward** and Local 459 Representatives to give quality representation to his members. He is eager to learn.

Parks was on the last Local 459 Bargaining Team and is on the current team as well.

“I love being able to have the ability to help people by standing up to management when they are wrong, which is often”, said **Parks**. “I am learning so much about helping working people by knowing the contract and labor law. I spend a lot of time reading the contract, *The Legal Rights of Union Stewards* book and other materials to help me be the best Chief Steward I can.”

“I believe that if we work hard at addressing day to day issues, we will ultimately make Touchpoint employee’s quality of work life



better”, said **Parks**. “Communication with the members and management is the key.”

Parks likes to spend time with family when he isn’t working. He has five (5) children and four (4) grandkids that he enjoys hanging out with. He also likes to play checkers and chess and watching old movies. His favorite movie is *Good Fellas*.

Local 459 appreciates all of the efforts by Chief Steward **Calvin Parks** and is proud to feature him in this edition of the Steward Spotlight.

Krista Clark – MGL RN

The role of the Union steward is essential to representing Union members. Each unit at McLaren Greater Lansing (MGL) elects a steward to represent them and is the person that they can go to with contract questions. The steward is the eyes and ears of the Chief Steward and gives the Local a view of any changes or contract violations that may be happening. On 3 Chi we are lucky to have **Krista Clark** as the steward. **Clark** received her BSN at MSU after earning her AD at Lansing Community College.

Clark said she wanted to be a nurse because she enjoys helping people and she loves a challenge. She is in the right profession for that! She admits to being a science nerd and loves to read nursing journals and medical research studies. Way back in kindergarten **Clark** made a time capsule with a note inside saying she wanted to be a nurse so she could make sick people feel better. She still feels that way today.

With the many struggles facing nursing today, **Clark** loves that each day is new and exciting and always has opportunities for learning something new in the nursing field. With problem solving being high

on her list of likes, she can figure out what is going on with patients. Every nurse knows each patient can teach you something.



Clark started her career knowing she wanted to work at Ingham Medical Center when she did her clinicals there. After working on the old 4 South when it was a med surg floor she

(Continued on page 11)

Workplace Harassment

Perhaps more than ever, we are seeing accounts of workplace harassment (also known as workplace bullying) in the news. Increased awareness of workplace harassment can lead to confusion and misconceptions about the definition of harassment. In the United States, Employers must investigate harassment and intervene if harassment is substantiated. What most employees do not know is that there is a threshold that must be met in order for the Employer to substantiate harassment. This threshold is defined by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC):

“Harassment is unwelcome conduct that is based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.”

Workplace harassment is something committed by another employee with the intent of making the victim uncomfortable, upset, ridiculed or intimidated based upon their protected class. Harassment is when these actions continue despite repeated requests to stop and interventions from the Employer. The harassment must be so pervasive that the victim reasonably feels unsafe and unable to complete their work.

Employees that feel that they are subject to workplace harassment should:

- Record each incident along with the time, date, and witnesses
- Not engage and/or escalate the situation
- Request that the coworker/supervisor stop and explain that their behavior is unacceptable
- Make a formal complaint to their Human Resources department

The Employer has a responsibility to prevent and address workplace harassment. According to the EEOC, the employer is liable for harassment:

- If supervisory harassment results in negative employment actions such as termination, failure to promote or hire, and losing wages
- If the harassment results in a hostile work environment
- If the Employer knew, or should have known about the harassment and failed to take prompt and appropriate corrective action

Your employer must make the determination if your complaint rises to the threshold of workplace harassment. If your employer

finds that your complaint is valid, they must address and correct the employee’s behavior. This may be in the form of a corrective action plan or discipline up to and including termination. If your employer finds that your complaint is not valid, you also have the option of contacting the EEOC and filing a formal complaint for their review.

Workplace harassment is **NOT** a one-time joke or comment, a mean coworker, or a supervisor enforcing work performance expectations.

While these are not examples of workplace harassment since they are not based upon one’s status as a protected class that does not mean that these behaviors are acceptable. In these situations, employees should immediately address their concerns with their coworker. There is a possibility that the coworker may not realize that he/she has been offensive. If the behavior is addressed with the coworker and the behavior persists, the employee should approach management with their concerns. Management may still be able to intervene and mediate the situation.

Steward Spotlight

(Continued from page 10)

went to 3 South and 6 South and has been part of 3 Chi for the last four years. Her time at MGL totals fourteen years.

When **Clark** signed on as a steward it was in the hopes she could assist her coworkers in knowing and understanding our contract and its guidelines. She is a good advocate when presenting a grievance and fighting for the rights we deserve.

Clark knows the importance of work and home life balance; she enjoys her two German shepherds Zeus and Maverick at her home in Okemos that she shares with the dogs and her husband. She says “every day with an animal is a good day.” Her guilty pleasure is nail polish and believe it or not, she says she has way too many colors! It brings her peace and happiness so we think it’s a great hobby!

We asked **Clark** what advice she would give a new nurse just starting out. She had some very wise advice. “Have confidence in yourself and know your weaknesses. We all excel in different areas. Don’t ever be afraid to ask questions. Find what you love and do it”

**Office and Professional Employees
International Union, Local 459**

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Towing Program

OPEIU’s towing program is popular around the country and especially with Local 459 members. It offers members in good standing twenty-four (24) hour service calls for tows, roadside assistance, battery service, lockout service and tire service. Every OPEIU member is entitled to two (2) tows/service calls valued up to \$80 each per year for themselves and family living in the same household. (For tows over \$80, the member must pay the remainder at the time of service call at the time of the service.)



The service is provided through Nation Safe Drivers (NSD). All calls for service have to go through NSD. Local 459 members are automatically enrolled. You just need to call 1-800-617-2677 and give them your name.

**You must call the above 800 number.
If you arrange your own tow, you will
NOT be reimbursed.**

**If you have changed your name and/or
address it is imperative that you notify
Local 459 (517-887-8844) with the updated
information as NSD may not recognize you
as a member and therefore you may not be
approved for roadside assistance.**

If they ask for a membership number, tell them Local 459 does not issue membership numbers. Be sure and mention OPEIU. If they ask, we are Plan B (used to be “C”) and Producer Code (74046).

You can also download the OPEIU app or go to www.opeiu.org to get a direct link with all the towing information.