

insight

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS & FRIENDS

OF PROTEC17

Autumn
2022
Vol 27
No. 4



Seattle negotiations begin!



On the Cover:

On Sept. 7, PROTEC17 members at the City of Seattle joined together with their Coalition of City Unions (CCU) siblings to kick-off negotiations for the next contract. Read more on page 6. ■



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PLUS!
It's Chapter
Election
Time!

Visit protec17.org/news to find out which positions are open on your Chapter leadership team and submit your *nominations* by Nov. 14!

insight

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Karen Estevenin
Executive Director

Change is Brewing

As the sun began to rise on a recent crisp September morning, hundreds of supporters, including a colorful tapestry of the Seattle labor community, gathered at Starbucks' headquarters to demonstrate the power of unions. Starbucks workers are fighting for a first contract after organizing hundreds of stores, including nine in Seattle. I made my sign late the night before—a pizza box transformed into a latte cup message of solidarity. It read 'Change is brewing.'

And it is. Starbucks workers created a literal buzz in the air as they shared their stories. Their desire for fairness, dignity, and respect resonated with the crowd instantly because that is what we all fight for. And we know intimately that being union and our collective power is how we get there. Their fight for a contract is connected to each and every time we renegotiate one of ours. And each of our struggles is connected to theirs.

The energy of these workers is inspiring and also a reminder of the energy right now in our union, which this issue of *Insight* highlights. The front cover offers a glimpse of the exciting vibe that was felt at the City of Seattle negotiations kick-off event (p. 6). Additionally, State Transportation, Licensing, and Patrol members won hard-fought-for wage increases and other improvements in their new contract (p. 5).

We continue to welcome new members into PROTEC17, such as the amazing people who recently organized their workplace – Portland Street Response (p. 10). I invite you to read about the work they do to provide direct human services and deep personal care to some of our communities' most vulnerable members; and why they wanted the rights, benefits, and voice on the job that a strong union can provide.

These kinds of changes do not just happen. They take effort, skills, and dedication from committed people! The front cover shows an amazing group of these leaders who demonstrate these qualities, followed by stories and photos of others radiating true union leadership to bring our work into the present moment. The energy is contagious. We recently trained over 50 new union Stewards, and will offer more training in the coming months. The people you see on these pages are PROTEC17. I am honored and inspired to be side-by-side in these struggles and wins – I hope you are too. And, I invite you to connect and get involved.... change is brewing, after all.



In compassion and solidarity,

Karen

53 Stewards trained in new program this summer



Congratulations to the 53 PROTEC17 members who completed our new Steward training series this summer!

The two-part virtual series was offered on several dates and times throughout the months of August and September and included brand new member leaders and long-time Stewards who wanted to brush up on their skills.

More Steward training will be offered this fall for members interested in learning how best to advocate for their coworkers in the workplace, including several deep dives on topics like grievances and Weingarten rights. See the events calendar to find all of our upcoming trainings and events: protec17.org/events.

These 53 Stewards - some of whom are pictured below -- join our team of 100s of leaders across Washington and Oregon who help build our union and make us stronger! Thank you for all you do to support your fellow members. ■



Meet new PROTEC17 staff in organizing and communications!



This summer, PROTEC17 welcomed two new staff members to our team – Union Organizer Brenna Stroup

(above) and Digital Communications Manager Jacky Nakamura (above, right).

As an Internal Organizer, Stroup will be working with members and the staff organizing team to help strengthen PROTEC17's collective power. Most recently, she served as the Executive Director of the Resident and Fellow Physician Union - Northwest (RFPN-NW), an independent, public-sector union representing the 1,400 resident and fellow physicians employed by the University of Washington. She began her journey in eastern Washington, organizing around reproductive justice and student political engagement. Stroup also worked in Washington, D.C., both on Capitol Hill and in government relations for a D.C.-based national non-profit. During this time, she also worked with her co-workers to organize a union at the non-profit where they worked.

"I'm most excited to work with PROTEC17 leaders to help hone your organizing skills," said Stroup. "Deep worker organizing leads to not only big wins in the workplace, but also in our communities. I'm looking forward to



seeing what you as union members are willing to do to build collective power amongst your co-workers!"

Nakamura is helping to grow and expand our communications department, with a primary focus on digital platforms like our website, social media channels, text messaging, and our new member-exclusive portal (see p. 12). They join us most recently from the non-profit sector, and bring a variety of experiences in community engagement, program coordination, community-centered facilitation, volunteer recruitment, and communication and design in diverse mediums. They deeply value equity, justice, accessibility, dignified empowerment, accountability, technical effectiveness, centering the most historically excluded communities, and "celebrating the beauty of the multitudes that we collectively embody."

"I'm excited to join a team that finds it unacceptable that folks don't receive the resources and care that they need and instead fights for rights that allow individuals and families the foundation to be not only be safe, but thrive as well," said Nakamura.

You can reach Stroup at brenna@protec17.org and Nakamura at jacky@protec17.org. ■

Find more news on our website: www.protec17.org/news

State contract ratified; members to receive 4% general wage increase in 2023, 3% in 2024, among other wins

After votes were tallied on Sept. 29, PROTEC17 State members overwhelmingly voted to ratify the 2023-2025 contract, which will now go to the Governor's office and the State Legislature for the final approval processes.

This contract includes a four percent general wage increase starting July 1, 2023, along with a \$1,000 retention bonus for those hired as of July 1, 2022 and still employed at the time of payment. There will also be a three percent increase in the second year of the contract starting on July 1, 2024.

Other wins in this contract include targeted increases for chronically understaffed Communications Officers at the Washington State Patrol (WSP) and Licensing Services Representatives at the Department of Licensing (DOL). For Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) members, the Professional Engineer (PE) incentive was permanently memorialized. This contract also

includes significant increases for those who work at night, the ability to leave work early without using leave during inclement weather, and the removal of language that allowed WSDOT to circumvent the payment of overtime.

Since the start of negotiations in early summer, the bargaining team worked hard to secure these wins. The hard-working team members are: Paul Austin (WSP), Brian Brannies (WSDOT), Brendan Byron (WSDOT), Bonnie Caress (DOL), Chanel Johnson (DOL), Mindi Mezek (WSP), Steve Morgans (WSDOT), Bennett Olsson (WSP), Mike Roy (WSDOT), and Faith Shuler (WSDOT), along with PROTEC17 staff Sarah Lorenzini, Suzie Saunders, Brent Wagar, and Alexis Young.

Despite the many positive gains in the contract, the team had hoped for a larger increase to help members keep up with inflation. And again, the State was resistant to targeted increases for WSDOT members despite the data showing that many of those classifications are far

below market wages. The team plans on working with allies in the State legislature this coming session to revise the statute that governs how targeted increases are addressed to allow for consideration of diversity, equity, and inclusion factors, as well as other objective data, like the State's own salary survey, plus more accurate recruitment and retention data.

While the team was disappointed in the State's response to many topics, this contract provided PROTEC17 State members with the largest general wage increase in one contract in a very long time, and will bring many of our WSP and DOL members much closer to market-rate wages.

Thank you to everyone who served on the bargaining team and to all members for voting. Please reach out to a bargaining team member or to your Union Representative with any questions you have. You can find the contract on the WSDOT, DOL and WSP pages on our website: protec17.org/member. ■

The PROTEC17 State bargaining team at the negotiation table this summer.



Seattle kicks off negotiations for the next contract

Meet the bargaining team and the contract action team



n Sept. 7, PROTEC17 Seattle members met with fellow union members from the Coalition of City Unions

(CCU) at City Hall in downtown Seattle to kick off negotiations for the next contract. The event brought together hundreds of City workers to celebrate and also to let Mayor Bruce Harrell know what some of the main hopes and priorities are for these negotiations.

The PROTEC17 Seattle bargaining team was in attendance, as were the member-leaders on the Contract Action Team (CAT). The bargaining team is: Maxwell Branham (SDCI), Rachael Brooks (SCL), Joey Bullock (SDOT), Belinda Chin (Parks), Arabella Corcoro (FAS), Walker Dodson (SCL), Shawn Flue (HSD), Ashley Harrison (OLS), Ulysses Hillard (SPU), Jessica Ray (SPD), Rob Svetz (SDCI), Ariska Thompson (SPU), and Gretchen Waschke (HSD). Members of the CAT are:

Belinda Chin, Jamie Fackler, Alexis Izor, Chris Lee, Yun Pitre, Sundar Sharma, Lisa Uemoto, and Gretchen Waschke.

While PROTEC17 represents the largest number of City employees – nearly 3,000 -- we work together with unions across the City to secure important benefits and protections that lift up all City workers. Some of the high-priority issues that the CCU wants to see addressed are issues of racial equity, affordability, safety, work-life balance, and climate justice. At the event, Mayor Harrell expressed his interest in a collaborative process with the CCU, and stressed that he is attuned to the issues that City workers are facing.

In late September, PROTEC17, along with three other City unions, wrapped up negotiations with the Mayor's office on his return to office policy. Initially, Harrell had implemented a mandatory, two-day, in-office minimum that he hoped would start in September. After demanding to negotiate

these changes, our member-led negotiations team was able to delay implementation to November, secure some flexibility language, and protect members who have an accommodation. You can find the details of this agreement on the PROTEC17 website: protec17.org/members/seattle.

Over the next several months, the CCU and the PROTEC17 team will be diving into big issues and contract language that impacts wages, benefits, and working conditions, meeting twice per month with Labor Relations until we reach a tentative agreement. While the current contract expires on Dec. 31, 2022, the terms of that contract will be upheld should negotiations continue into the new year.

Please reach out to the bargaining team, CAT, or your Union Representative if you have questions about contract negotiations. Also, make sure your contact information is up-to-date so that you'll receive regular updates via personal email. ■



"It's always a pleasure to work with the other unions of the Coalition, and I'm excited to see what we can accomplish for our members this year."

Ariska Thompson, PROTEC17 Seattle Bargaining Team Member



Above: the PROTEC17 Seattle bargaining team poses for a photo at the contract kick-off event. Above, left: Seattle members volunteered for a phone bank at the PROTEC17 office to call their fellow members and invite them to the kick-off event.

Congratulations to our PROTEC17 scholarship winners



Now in its eleventh year, the PROTEC17 scholarship program has awarded over \$60,000 in scholarships to

members' dependents to help in their pursuit of a higher education. We are proud to announce that our 2022 scholarship winners are Sofia Tosoni and Nalani Young.

Each year, the PROTEC17 scholarship is open to the children, grandchildren or dependents of members as they enter or continue their studies in college or technical school. There are two \$3,000 awards – one for an incoming freshman, and one for a continuing college student. Scholarship applications were accepted through July 31. In the application, students are asked to demonstrate their academic achievements, educational goals, and extracurricular activities. In addition, applicants submit letters of recommendation, and a labor-related essay that is judged by two external labor educators.

Nalani Young is the daughter of City of Seattle member Danny Young, and is our graduating high school student winner. She began her studies in Applied Human Physiology at Chapman University in California this fall, and is taking courses in Biology, Chemistry and Math. Her ultimate goal is to become a pediatric nurse practitioner.

"As an active person I've been injured and have gone to the hospital many times in my life," Young said in her application. "Every time, I am surrounded by such comforting, educated, and dedicated nurses and staff. Whether it's going to the hospital for my annual checkup or for my ACL reconstruction surgery, nurses have been by my side, making me feel supported every step of the way. Inspired by their stories and kind words, I realized that I want to make an impact on others' lives like they have on mine."

Sofia Tosoni, daughter of City of Portland member Anne Marie Tosoni, is



"As a student, it is easy to feel stretched thin when it comes to time commitments. Being able to invest more of myself into my academic and extracurricular interests is an amazing privilege."

Sofia Tosoni, PROTEC17 Scholarship Winner, Continuing College Student

entering her sophomore year at Stanford University this fall, where she's studying Bioengineering and Science Communication. For the last two summers, Tosoni has volunteered at the Children's Cancer Therapy Development Institute, where she's been fascinated by the world of genetic research and how best to communicate new findings to the public. She hopes to attend medical school after graduation.

In her scholarship essay, she reflected on the recent movement of graduate students unionizing for better working conditions in her hometown of Portland,



"Education is very important to my future, and this scholarship means so much to me. Tuition can be expensive, so helping my parents in any way possible is very beneficial."

Nalani Young, PROTEC17 Scholarship Winner, Graduating High School Senior

Oregon, and on the benefits she's received for having grown up in a union family.

"Graduate students everywhere are fighting back through union activism," said Tosoni. "I plan to join the movement, upholding union values of justice, growth, respect, and pride throughout my academic career and beyond."

Both students expressed their extreme gratitude to PROTEC17 members for supporting this award and for helping them and their families to ease the financial burden of a college education. Thank you to all of our applicants, and best of luck this school year! ■

To learn about other member benefits, visit: protec17.org/benefits

PROTEC17 at the WSLC Convention and the Portland Summer Celebration



PROTEC17 staff and members attended the Washington State Labor Council's (WSLC) annual convention this summer in Wenatchee. The event was full of engaging panels, presentations, and action items to strengthen the Labor Movement, and support our broader communities. Pictured, at left: WSLC's April Simms, WSLC's Cherika Carter, PROTEC17 Executive Director Karen Estevenin, PROTEC17 President Rachael Brooks, and PROTEC17 Political Director Brandon Hersey. ■



Portland members gathered this summer in Mt. Tabor Park to celebrate the season (with ice cream!) and the end of contract negotiations. ■



PROTEC17 supports teachers, Starbucks workers



PROTEC17 staff and members showed up on the picket lines to support the Seattle Education Association (SEA) at the beginning of September. SEA teachers were striking for safety, equity, fair wages - especially for the lowest paid paraeducators, a counselor at every school, among many other items to help them better support students. PROTEC17 also supported teachers strikes in other districts throughout Washington state. ■



On Sept. 13, PROTEC17 members and staff rallied at Starbucks headquarters in Seattle alongside Starbucks Workers United (SWU) and many other unions to call out the union busting that's been happening as new stores look to organize. The rally coincided with the corporate giant's annual shareholders' meeting, and drew over 500 union members to SODO in the early morning hours to disrupt business as usual. ■



Portland Street Response employees join PROTEC17

PROTEC17 continues to grow! In late September, we officially welcomed our newest members from Portland Street Response (PSR) to our union! Peer Support Specialists and Mental Health Crisis Responders voted unanimously to join PROTEC17, with the City of Portland voluntarily recognizing the group.

Portland Street Response (PSR) was created in February 2021 as a way to provide an additional, compassionate, and un-armed first response option when 911 is called for people suffering with mental health and behavioral health challenges. The program initially started in the Lents neighborhood, which at the time, was not widely supported by other resources and services, and experienced a high call volume. After its initial success there -- which included a 4.6% reduction in calls traditionally dispatched to police, as well as a 22.5%

“Everyday, we go to bat for our clients who are some of the most vulnerable members of the community. It’s an honor to do this work, and it’s only fair that we have a seat at the table when it comes to how we get things done and how we are treated in return.”

Zeke Martin-Brunkhart, PROTEC17 member and Peer Support Specialist
Portland Street Response



Some members of the Portland Street Response team. Photo credit: Portland Street Response.

reduction in police response on non-emergency welfare checks -- the program expanded to surrounding areas, and then went citywide in March 2022.

The PSR program is housed under Portland Fire and Rescue’s new Community Health Division due to its connection to the 911 network. Additionally, PSR has partnered with Portland State University’s Homelessness Research and Action Collaborative for program data and evaluation.

While there are 15 new members on the PSR team, calls are far exceeding initial expectations and the program is looking to hire more responders – potentially up to 25 more by the end of the year. Right now, services are available daily, but during set hours. The program hopes to expand to a 24-hour service once City funding is fully established in the 2023 fiscal year.

As for why the group decided to join PROTEC17, it’s simple: support and solidarity – by sticking together, their

voices will be heard at the bargaining table and beyond.

“Everyday, we go to bat for our clients who are some of the most vulnerable members of the community,” said Zeke Martin-Brunkhart, a Peer Support Specialist. “It’s an honor to do this work, and it’s only fair that we have a seat at the table when it comes to how we get things done and how we are treated in return.”

“We are super excited to be joining other organized workers at PROTEC17 who share our values around equity and share our commitment to service,” Martin-Brunkhart continued.

PROTEC17 is proud to represent PSR employees who work on the frontlines to help the most vulnerable members of the City of Portland community. Please join us in welcoming them to our union!

If you know of employees in your workplace who want to form a union, reach out to Jessica Olivas at jessica@protec17.org or 800-783-0017 ext. 122. ■

Know workers who want to organize? Visit: www.protec17.org/join

Your VOTE is your VOICE! VOTE by Nov. 8!



PROTEC17 2022 Endorsements

For the most up-to-date list, please visit: www.protec17.org/political-action

WASHINGTON STATE INITIATIVES

House Our Neighbors

Initiative 135 (i-135) is seeking to create a Seattle Social Housing Developer. The SSHD would be a public entity charged with the development, ownership, and maintenance of social housing for all the workforce and communities in Seattle. Seattle residents making 0-120% of the area median income will have access to the program which would also create a process for publicly owned lands to undergo a city feasibility study to determine housing need and whether the land should be transferred to the developer before considering the sale of said lands.



YES ON I-135

WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE

18th District, Rep., Position 1
John Zingale

18th District, Rep., Position 2
Duncan Camacho

26th District, Senator
Emily Randall

28th District, Rep., Position 1
Mari Leavitt

30th District, Senator
Claire Wilson

30th District, Rep., Position 1
Jamila Taylor

33rd District, Senator
Karen Keiser

34th District, Senator
Joe Nguyen

35th District, Senator
Julianne Gale

36th District, Rep., Position 1
Julia Reed

37th District, Senator
Rebecca Saldaña

37th District, Rep., Position 1
Sharon Tomiko Santos

37th District, Rep., Position 2
Emijah Smith

46th District, Rep., Position 1
Gerry Pollett

46th District, Senator
Javier Valdez

47th District, Rep., Position 2
Shukri Olow

CITY OF PORTLAND



Commissioner
Jo Ann Hardesty

CLARK COUNTY



Clark Co. Council, District 2
Chartisha Roberts



Clark Co. Council, District 5
Sue Marshall

KING COUNTY



King County Prosecutor
Leesa Manion

WALLA WALLA COUNTY



Walla Walla Co. Council, District 3
Danielle Garbe Reser

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Let us know! 800-783-0017

Have you signed up for the new PROTEC17 member portal yet?

The new and improved PROTEC17 member portal officially launched on Sept. 19! Have you registered yet?

This member-exclusive online space is THE place to find news, information and events, engage in fun activities, and most importantly, connect with your fellow members!

Some cool new features include union-wide discussion forums on topics like Negotiations, Political Action, and Racial Justice, PLUS chapter and group spaces to chat with fellow members about the issues that are important to you in your workplaces and communities!

Register TODAY at:

members.protec17.org

