



LOCAL 237

NEWSLINE

Vol. 55, No. 3

Fall 2021

Saluting Public Workers: You Don't Give Up, You Get Up!

Former President Barack Obama said: "When times are tough, we don't give up. We get up." That's precisely what public employees did. At a time of unimaginable grief, when a sudden, highly contagious virus rocked the entire world and our own personal world, union members—



Former President Barack Obama

and especially public sector workers didn't give up, they got up and went to work. During a time that drenched us in dread and paralyzed so many with fear — an unnerving time that, for some, meant there would be no final hug, goodbye or sacraments to meet our maker—these essential municipal workers were on the job. And many of them, regrettably, including many Local 237 members, were lost too. They were our friends. Our co-workers. Our mentors. Our "students". Together, we shared family good times and bad, complained about the job—and often, each other. We hung Christmas decorations in the lunchroom and blew out birthday candles. And although it may be a worn-out phrase, "gone but not forgotten" is true. We will always remember the heated debates about why the Knicks blew their lead. We'll always remember somebody's special style and flair for fashion. Or their favorite phrase — used repeatedly — that drove you crazy. Then there were the recipes for the best-ever chili... and the samples brought in to share.

In the years to come, there will be countless books written — movies produced, college courses and TV "talking heads" galore, all trying to explain this horrific time in the history of the world, which resulted in so much loss, not just in terms of people and their livelihoods, but in terms of loss of confidence in government and our leaders too. Confidence is shattered in so many ways — in the quality and equality of our healthcare system as well as in our nation's ability to achieve true racial justice. We'll also remember and wonder how something so devastating could creep up on us and catch us off-guard. How could this nation have lost more lives in just three months than in 10 years of fighting the Vietnam War, Gulf War, Afghanistan War, and Iraq War combined? And the racial inequality of the lives lost!

The pandemic crisis was like a movie. A bad movie. But, who would ever have thought that a 2-hour movie you could have enjoyed with buttered popcorn and M&Ms — a movie that scared you silly the whole time it was on the big screen—but didn't stop you from enjoying your burger and fries at McDonald's after the Hollywood mayhem had ended—who would ever have thought that the movie would be coming to us in real life and in real time? The actors in this flick don't take off their pancake makeup at the end of the day's filming and head over to their favorite pub to throw back a few. No backlot here. The "actors", unfortunately, are all of us! In the beginning, we may have been hopeful for a happy, Hollywood-style ending, but the problem and the pain didn't quickly subside and seems never-ending. But in all this darkness, there are many examples of the best of people on display. Healthcare professionals, first responders, transit workers — to name just a few — are among those who risk their lives to save the life of another person. And how about the 22,000 volunteers from other states who rushed to New York to help a place they don't know, and people they never met. All they knew was that there are people in need. But we also don't need to look beyond our own public workers to see the best examples of the best of people. Our members are defined as essential workers whose work is vital in helping keep New York functioning and safeguarding our most vulnerable populations. Local 237 members — who work throughout the five boroughs and on Long Island — and all municipal workers, are true to former President Obama's words. They did "get up" and continue to do so.

On behalf of all New Yorkers, let's give them a much deserved

THANK YOU!



Due to the pandemic, there were no Labor Day Parades this year or last. We look forward to marching in next year's Parade. Photos on pages 1, 8 and 9 are from previous years of enjoying the march.

Local 237 Member Services

UNION HEADQUARTERS

212-924-2000
216 West 14th Street
New York, NY 10011-7296

LOCAL 237 DIVISIONS

CITYWIDE, 2nd Fl.
212-924-2000
Donald Arnold, Director

LAW ENFORCEMENT, 2nd Fl.
212-924-2000
Derek Jackson, Director

HOUSING, 2nd Fl.

212-924-2000
Carl Giles, Housing Director

SPECIAL PROJECTS, 2nd Fl.
212-924-2000
Debbie Coleman, Esq., Special Projects Director

LONG ISLAND

631-851-9800
100 West Main Street, Babylon,
New York 11702
Benedict Carenza, Director
Long Island Welfare Fund:
For information on the various
funds call 800-962-1145

RETIREE

8th Fl.
212-807-0555
Provides a variety of pre- and post-retirement services, including pension and health insurance counseling to members. (Pension counseling by appointment, Thursdays only). General retirement counseling and retirement planning series during spring and fall. Julie Kobi & Susan Militsis, Co-Directors

LOCAL 237 DEPARTMENTS (Citywide and Housing)

SKILLED TRADES, 2nd Fl.
212-924-2000
Donald Arnold, Director

HEALTH AND SAFETY, 2nd Fl.
212-924-2000
Donald Arnold, Director
Susan McQuade, Coordinator

MEMBERS HEALTH, 2nd Fl.
212-924-2000
Susan McQuade, Director
smcquade@local237.org

MEMBERSHIP, 3rd Fl.
212-924-2000
Jean Stokes, Director
Provides membership services and records, including address changes.

WELFARE FUND

3rd Fl.
212-924-7220
The Fund administers the eligibility, enrollment, disability, optical and death benefits directly by the Fund's in-house staff, as well as prescription and dental programs indirectly. Mitchell Goldberg, Director
Jean Stokes, Director of Collections

SOCIAL SERVICES, 3rd Fl.
212-924-7220 ext. 7562

The Local 237 Social Services Department features free social work services that are available to all members. Social workers connect people to much needed assistance and resources. The union knows that its members have tough jobs and that when encountering tough personal challenges, learning about possible solutions to those challenges would make things that much easier. Contact us to learn about the many service we can provide. Ayana Ali, Director

LEGAL SERVICES

4th Fl.
212-924-1220
Lawyers advise and represent members on covered personal legal problems, including domestic relations (family court proceedings, divorce and separation), purchase and sale of a primary residence, wills, adoptions, credit and consumer problems, tenant rights and bankruptcies.

Mary Sheridan, Esq., Director
Kenneth Perry, Esq., Deputy Director

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

5th Fl.
212-924-2000
Gregory Floyd, President
Ruben Torres,
Vice President
Donald Arnold,
Secretary-Treasurer

PERSONNEL

5th Fl.
212-924-2000
Donald Arnold, Director and Chief Negotiator

POLITICAL ACTION & LEGISLATION

5th Fl.
646-638-8501
Local 237 protects members' rights by helping to sponsor legislation that is important to members, and by communicating with and supporting elected officials serving our best interests. Phyllis S. Shafran, Coordinator

GRIEVANCES/DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS

7th Fl.
212-924-2000
For grievances and job related problems, first contact your shop steward and/or grievance representative. If they can't resolve the issue, contact your business agent.

Mal Patterson, Director of Grievances and Hearings

Diana Doss, Esq.
Grievance Coordinator

CIVIL SERVICE BAR ASSOC.

7th Fl., 212-675-0519
Saul Fishman, President
Aldona Vaiciunas,
Office Administrator and Grievance Coordinator

Abbott Gorin, Esq.,
Business Representative
CSBA Welfare Fund
Alicare 866-647-4617

COMMUNICATIONS

5th Fl.
646-638-8501
Phyllis S. Shafran, Director
Local 237 Newsline and Retiree News & Views, Editor
Website: www.local237.org

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

8th Fl.
212-807-0550
Provides a variety of training and educational advancement opportunities for members.

Bertha Aiken, Director

USEFUL NUMBERS FOR PRE-RETIREES

NYCERS (New York City Employees Retirement System)

By Mail:
335 Adams St., Suite 2300,
Brooklyn, NY 11201-3751

In Person:
340 Jay Street, Mezzanine,
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Gen'l Information:
347-643-3000

Outside NYC toll-free:
877-6NYCERS

NYCERS Internet www.nycklink.org/html/nycers

NYC Department of Education Retirement System

65 Court St., Brooklyn, NY 11201
718-935-5400

Social Security Administration

800-772-1213

NY State and Local Retirement Systems

518-474-7736



A message from the President

Solidarity Must Be Forever

By Gregory Floyd

President, Teamsters Local 237 and Vice President-at-Large on the General Board of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters

the right to join the union of their choice."

But we know that, in these times, with the November elections looming, the impact of climate change being felt coast to coast, and a pandemic that still has us in its deadly grasp, parades and other fanfare are simply not enough. I recall telling members at an annual Teamster's Black Caucus conference that today, in America, with union membership on the decline, the risk of becoming an endangered species is very real. But, unlike pandas or dolphins, union members still have opportunity and resources to fight back. For example, labor leaders in New York have made it crystal clear to our elected officials and candidates that unions built the middle class in America and just want to make sure that there will be a place in it for our own children. You can't fault us for that! And we should use every opportunity to remind our government leaders and those who wish to become one, that labor still has a powerful voice and millions of votes. That always gets their attention. And one more thing: In New York, there is a sense that whether you're in a public or private union, it doesn't matter, we're all in the same family. An assault on one is an assault on all of us. That same spirit was seen during a push to convene a New York State Constitutional Convention. It would have had a devastating effect on public sector pensions and other benefits the Constitution guaranteed. But the proposal was overwhelmingly defeated because all unions got together to defeat it. We also sought and received the help of non-union groups who saw the push to lessen the role of labor unions for what it really was: An assault on democracy perpetrated by the special interests of the well-funded corporate 1%."

So, in the aftermath of the Labor Day and any commemorations that took place, the message for all of us remains clear: Walking and talking on behalf of our union brothers and sisters is essential but must be on-going and not confined to one special day to fight off extinction, or we may suffer the fate of the once powerful T-Rex. And extinction is forever, but so is solidarity. ▀



You're not in Newsline? Why not?

YOU ARE NEWSWORTHY!

We want to hear from you!

Send us your photos, stories and ideas.

We're interested in you: On the job,
special accomplishments, family news, etc.

Email pshafran@local237.org or call Phyllis Shafran at 646-638-8501

During this time of national crisis, our members served Above and Beyond the Call of Duty

So many of our members go above and beyond the call of duty, performing acts of heroism, ingenuity, kindness and generosity that demonstrate their professionalism and heart. They were willing to go that extra mile, and by so doing, made a difference in someone's life. Here are some of the pictures and stories they want to share:

HOUSING DIVISION



Truck drivers at Mitchell House, George Oyola and Daniel Dividu



Aminata Sawadogo, Caretaker X



Shamel Reed, Caretaker J of Butler Houses



Jennifer Lewis, Caretaker I of Material Management Department



Emily Diaz, Caretaker I of Material Management Department



Heating Plant Technicians and Maintenance Heating Plant Technicians of the Bronx

Local 237 NEWSLINE

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Executive Board

Gregory Floyd President	Ruben Torres Vice President	Donald Arnold Secretary-Treasurer	Jeanette Taveras Recording Secretary
Curtis Scott Trustee	Benedict Carenza, Jr. Trustee	Catherine Rice Trustee	

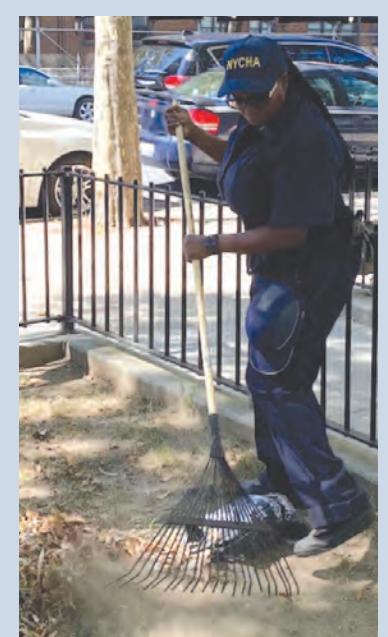
Phyllis S. Shafran
Editor

Special thanks in the preparation of Newsline to:
Gisela (GiGi) Reyes, Executive Administrative Assistant

IF YOU MOVE – Please send your change of address in writing to **Membership** to insure that you continue receiving your newspaper.



Shop Steward, Clay Perry (left) and Supervisors of Housing Groundskeeper (right) Muhammed Issaka of Butler Houses.



Shaquanda Bell, Caretaker C Woodson Houses, raking leaves. She has worked turning these difficult times and put her best foot forward to work and service residents.

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DHS PO HAYNES MAKES AN ARREST



DHS PO Haynes made an arrest on August 12, 2021. Her report reads as follows: Deft (defendant) entered the access control area and upon a routine search, Deft had a noticeable bulge inside of his sweat pants, Deft was advised that the bulge has to be removed in compliance with DHS search procedure. Deft became combative and attempted to push an officer in order to gain access. Deft was then informed that his behavior will not be tolerated. He then resisted being detained and was escorted to DHSPD command for a further search which produced a large ziplock bag containing alleged K-2. A locker search was conducted and Deft had in his assigned locker a book bag containing 6 bags of marijuana, 49 bags of synthetic cannabinoids and 3 large ziplock bags containing additional synthetic cannabinoids, a small scale and 4 large ziplock bags containing synthetic cannabinoids and \$1522 in cash in several bundles wrapped in rubber bands.

STATEN ISLAND STEPS UP

Amazing day at the JCC Community Center in Stapleton to set up an Explorer Recruitment Table for their City Hall Resource Fair. Post Advisor, Agent Perez with the help of Agent Kelly spread the word of the NYPD Explorer Program to various agencies and community members including the offices of the Mayor, Emergency Management, NYPD Recruitment and the Parks Department.



Staten Island SSA David Perez (r) and Crime Analysis School Safety Agent level three Nicole Kelly (l) at the JCC on Staten Island for an Explorer recruitment drive.

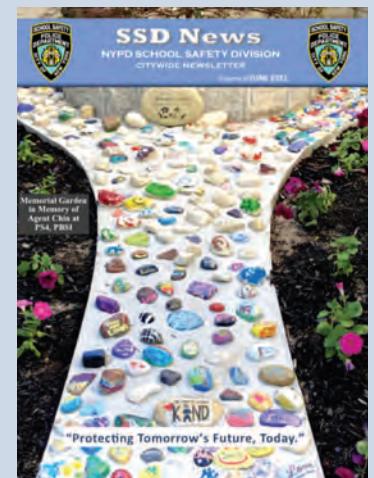


HONORS FOR SSA MALDONADO



Staten Island's SSA Maldonado (r) officially retired and was honored at Concord HS graduation and at SI command.

SSD NEWS



SSD citywide newsletter front page: PS 4 memorial garden for Staten Island SSA Chin (4/23/2020) gone too soon.

HOSPITALS POS SAVE A LIFE

On August 8, 2021, Sgt. Cosenzo (r) (Tour3) and responding Officers PO Monroe, PO Mills, PO Rivera responded to a call of a suicidal individual on the ledge of a roof. The professionalism and verbal judo of everyone who responded resulting in bringing this very dangerous incident to a successful end by getting the patient, medical staff and HP staff off the roof without injuries to anyone. This is another courageous act of Hospital Police. Kudos for a job well done. (l-r) Maurice Monroe, Troy Mills, Jose Rivera, and Sgt. Christine Cosenzo.



STATEN ISLAND BOOK BAG GIVEAWAY



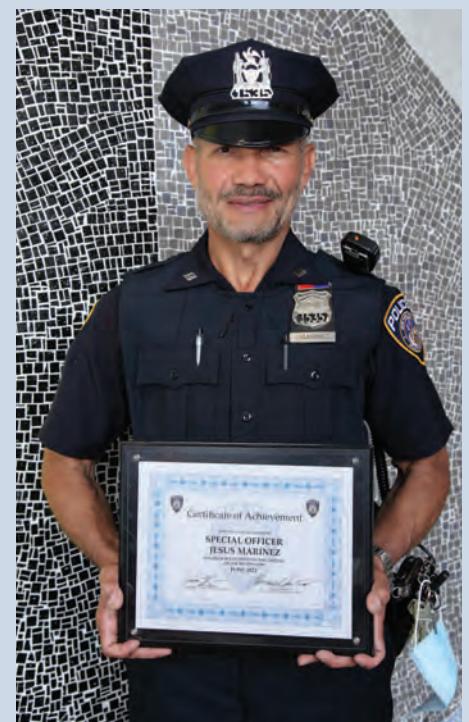
PBSI Book Bag Giveaway. SCA Moran, Agents Forcina & Pasag at PS 16 collecting book bags for the students in need. Way to go to keep up the excellent work for and support of students.

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LINCOLN HOSPITAL PEACE OFFICERS' AWARD CEREMONY

Photos by Linda Morales, photographer, Community Public Affairs



OFFICER OF THE MONTH

- January – Officer Shawn Cole
- February – Officer Juan Carlos Lopez
- March – Officer Fanay Sandoval-Aleman
- April – Officer Ivory McKnight
- May – Officer Naomie Dufresne
- June – Jesus Martinez
- July – Officer Rene Laurent

GOOD CATCH

- Officer Sean McKelvin
- Officer Marcia Ellis

PERFECT ATTENDANCE

- Officer Dwaina Moore

EXCEPTIONAL POLICE DUTY

- Officer Joseph Lopez
- Officer Guiassou Alfa-Toga
- Officer Marvin Daniels II

EXCEPTIONAL WATCH PERSON DUTY

- Watch Person Bomasio Kinard

RETIREMENT

- Sergeant Jack Lazzerini

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SAFETY IS A TOP PRIORITY

After a DEP water treatment plant in Harlem experienced a fuel leak, Local 237's Safety Coordinator **Susan McQuade**, along with Business Agents **Curtis Scott** and **George Wade**, made a safety visit and met with the Shop Steward, stores Stock workers, Supervisors and the Plant Chief.



PICNIC DAY SMILES



BA Charlie Cotto at the Bronx East and West picnic days, at Lehman HS and Bronx HS of Science.

During this time of national crisis, our members served heroically Personal Lives During The Pandemic

So many of our members go above and beyond the call of duty, performing acts of heroism, ingenuity, kindness and generosity that demonstrate their professionalism and heart. They also had to deal with their own lives, concerning family, friends and personal decisions such as retirement. Here are some of their stories and pictures they want to share.

MIRACLE AT LEGOLAND VISION RESTORED TO DAUGHTER OF SSA

A legally blind girl can now see clearly after visiting LEGOLAND New York in Goshen. The Hudson Valley's brand-new theme park is quickly becoming the hottest destination on the East Coast. And while it's getting rave reviews from visitors, one girl's recent trip to LEGOLAND New York has been truly life-changing.

11-year-old Arianna Rivera has keratoconus, an eye condition that causes distorted vision. Rivera, who is legally blind, had no idea that her recent trip to LEGOLAND would result in her being able to finally see clearly for the first time in her life.

Rivera traveled to the Hudson Valley with her mother, father and two brothers. The trip was a much-needed lift after a rough couple of years. Arianna's father, Staten Island School Safety Agent, **Joshua Rivera**, was hospitalized with COVID-19 in March of last year. The Riveras also lost family members during the pandemic.

The fun day at LEGOLAND was supposed to be the beginning of a new chapter for the family, but little did Arianna know that a truly life-changing present was waiting for her inside the gates of the park. LEGOLAND officials and eSight secretly teamed up to surprise the 11-year-old with a gift that allows her to finally see clearly.

At a surprise ceremony, Arianna was given an eSight device. The head-mounted glasses instantly allowed Arianna to see with 20/20 vision from seven feet away for the first time in her life. After putting on the eSight, the young girl couldn't contain her excitement, exclaiming "I can't stop looking at everything!"



The Riveras were treated to a VIP experience at the park that included priority access on all of the rides, a private session with a LEGOLAND New York Master Model Builder and lunch at Smokey's Brick-B-Que.

HOME RUN HITTERS



Photos of the Local 237 sponsored baseball team called the Astros.

Carl Giles, Director of Public Housing (r) presented coach **Steve Perez** with a plaque commemorating his retirement after 38 years of service with NYCHA.



School Safety Sergeant **Ronald Foster** has completed 42 years of service. He is awarded a plaque by Business Agent **Derek Short**.



HAPPY RETIREMENT



BA **Bianca Jones** presented a retirement plaque to **Mark Jones** after more than 33 years of service at NYCHA.

LABOR DAY 2021

No Parade

Skip the greeting card. No presents needed. Labor Day is a time to appreciate each other. But just like that brain-teaser: *"If a tree falls in the forest and no one is around to hear it, does it still make a sound?"* We can wonder how many Labor Days there are now – and how many more will come. There are no parades...no traditional displays of labor strength for all to see. There is no public recognition of the hard work and accomplishments of the worker – at least during these pandemic years. Why? Is it because the workers are not considered essential? In this case the "sounds" that boom are the soundwaves of appreciation of the worker – at least during these pandemic years. Are the accomplishments of the workers not noticed? In this case the "sounds" that boom are the soundwaves of appreciation of the worker – at least during these pandemic years. During this pandemic crisis, union workers, especially those who were considered essential workers, were called upon to do their job and help the City and its terrified residents going. They gave – and continue to give – their best to keep normalcy to people's lives at a time that is anything but normal. And while the workers' contributions may not have been noticed by the public, our union members may not have been able to officially and literally "ring in the day" with the usual "parade stuff" on their own special day this year or last year, just like that. But the existence of the workers did not go unnoticed. From having more American flags flying than ever before to countless newspapers reprinting the opening line of the classic Labor Day poem, "The Union Workingman," by Freeman Edwin Miller. **"God bless the brawny noble hearts and royal hands..."** a sense of camaraderie and a spirit of "we can do it" was front and center, worthy of a national holiday.

In fact, Labor Day is very unique. It's not so easy to find a holiday that crosses all religious, racial, ethnic and gender lines. You don't have to be a member of a political party, favorite color and years of education matter little. For sure, it's not easy to find a holiday which most Americans celebrate in similar ways, parade or not – usually involving a hot dog or two. Yes, Labor Day is a rarity: A holiday we can all agree upon.

Congress created Labor Day in 1894 by making the first Monday in September a national holiday. But it only did so in response to the tragic events of the Pullman Strike of 1894, where the death of 34 striking Pullman workers from the American Railway Union at the hands of U.S. Army soldiers and Marshals.

What came after is a rich and storied history, and tradition has burned into the American culture: The traditional Labor Day Parade is not actually held on Labor Day, when so many of us are sad about the summer's end and trying to get in those last rays of summer sun, a swim at the beach, flipping burgers on the BBQ, or hunting for "Back to School" sales. Instead, the parade is held a week later.

New York City hosted the nation's first parade by labor – organized by the New York City Central Labor Council – in 1882, when 10,000 took off from their jobs in celebration of workers and their families. The marchers marched from Union Square to City Hall. Through the years, Labor Day and the parade have come to symbolize the long-lasting presence and indestructible power of the labor movement despite the efforts of those who would seek to weaken it. The challenges which today are ever-increasing – to do us in. Currently, unions



des, But Plenty of Labor

holiday like no
t, and no one is
here too, if there
to see, does the
rs – go unrecog-
of union accom-
cially municipal
to keep a troubled
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rally, “strut their
fallen tree, their
ngs on display, to
abor poem, The
arms of toil, the
spirit of “we make

membership is at an all-time low of only 10.7% nationwide (equaling one in 10 workers) as compared with peak years of the mid-1950s when membership was 40% of all American workers (or four out of every ten workers). New York State leads the nation with the highest percentage of union workers, at roughly 24%. Of that number, nearly 70% are public sector workers, with African-Americans making up the largest component of that group.

At Teamsters Local 237, we understand the value of unity. And our commitment to it is both practical and moral. We know, for example, that non-union workers earn, on average, 20% less than union members. We know too that the 40-hour workweek, health benefits, paid vacation and family leave, and the \$15-an-hour minimum wage are just some of the hard fought – and won – battles. We also know that workers’ rights and civil rights are unquestionably intertwined. Let’s not forget that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was assassinated in 1968 in Memphis, when he joined striking sanitation workers – men who made \$1.65-an-hour and were treated by their bosses like the garbage they collected. Dr. King believed that: *“The labor movement did not diminish the strength of the nation but enlarged it. By raising the living standard of millions, labor miraculously created a market*

for industry and lifted the whole nation to undreamed levels of production. Those who attack labor forget these simple truths, but history remembers.”

It seems that many Americans are starting to agree – again. In fact, the approval rating of labor unions has recently increased to 68% – up 16% from 2009 – including 77% of young people. And, not surprisingly, a recent MIT study found that 46% of non-union workers would like to join a union. This increase may have a link to the elusive quest to achieve the “American Dream”. The phrase, coined by historian James Truslow Adams during the Great Depression, symbolizes the desire for a better future that could be obtained in this country through hard work. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his 1933 inaugural address, famously described the greatest challenge of troubling times: *“The only thing we have to fear is fear itself”*; and continued to emphasize the spiritual qualities underlying the “American Dream”, by saying: *“Happiness lies not in the mere possession of money; it lies in the joy of achievement.”*

However it is defined, for some, the “American Dream” remains a dream; for others, especially many new immigrants, the “Dream” has become a nightmare. In 1997, 72% of Americans thought the “American Dream” was possible. In 2017, and with a new administration in Washington, only 48% still held onto the possibility.

And, here’s where labor unions shine their brightest. Just like our role in helping to build the middle class in America, we are both the ramrod and equalizer... and the bridge to the “American Dream”. We fight for the rights of workers while helping to create a level playing field where the “American Dream” is not the sole property of the corporate 1%.

Unfortunately, the horrors of the pandemic added yet another line to the job description of many union members. With government leadership lacking or disappointing on so many fronts, unions helped a panicked nation to hang-on and hang-in. We helped to save lives – often risking our own. We helped give hope where there was none.

That’s why Labor Day is important – parade or not. For most, it is a respite from labor, to acknowledge our labor. It sends a strong message to our elected leaders, political wannabes, big business and to the public at-large: *“You can bash us. You can try to bust us. But you need us, and we are not going away.”* We know, and we want everyone else to know that the words usually seen on parade banners and floats: *“Union Made”* and *“Union Strong”*, are not just bumper sticker slogans but meaningful words that encapsulate our spirit as a movement not just a moment. And like that tree, we don’t need crowds to attest to that “roaring sound”. ■

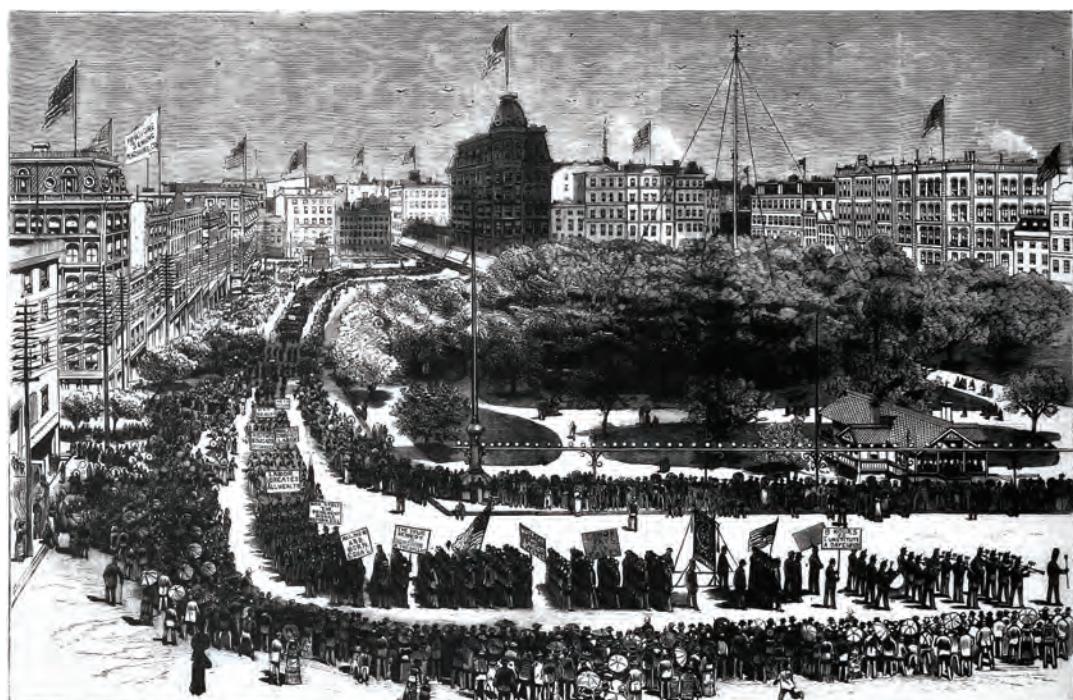


Illustration of the first American Labor parade held in New York City on September 5, 1882.
More than 10,000 marched in solidarity.





LONG ISLAND REPORT



Brightwaters Village members doing great work as always.



Half Hollow Hills members proud of their work at Signal Hill School.



Half Hollow Hills, High School East members **Steve, Joe and Greg** getting everything waxed up for the upcoming school year.



Half Hollow Hills schools member **Vincent Casucci** stump grinding.



Under the supervision of Shop Steward **Edwin Jimenez**, Brentwood School District members getting their building ready.

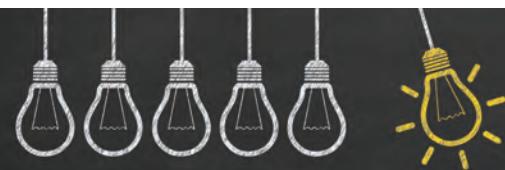


Christian Haack from Elwood School District doing great work to get all ready for the students and staff.

AWSOME ANNUAL BRENTWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT BBQ

Special thanks to all who cooked, prepped and helped get this off the ground this year. Great job.





Keeping you in the know

Council For Unity Saves Lives

Who We Are

The Council for Unity is a not-for-profit corporation founded in 1975 that has a history of success in applying its innovative strategies to make schools safer, to foster integration within communities, to improve relationships between police and youth and to restore the humanity to those incarcerated and prepare them for re-entry. Our mission is to empower individuals and groups with the skills necessary to promote unity, safety and achievement in all the applications of our program. Our network consists of schools, community-based organizations, police departments and correctional facilities in all 5 boroughs in New York City and continuing through out Nassau and Suffolk Counties in Long Island, New York. Membership in Council is for life and participants are mentored and supported by both our alumni and board members.

What We Do

Our unique curriculum and methodologies are used in school systems on all grade levels to allow the educational community to meet the deepest needs in children while still emphasizing academic performance. The Council's 4 guiding Pillars of Family, Unity, Self-Esteem and Empowerment, which are the focus of all lesson plans within our syllabus, enable teachers to engage children at their core needs for meaningful relationships, safety through unity, and self-esteem through an emphasis on engaging the innate talents students already possess and then utilizing those skills in the program. Our emphasis on synergy between and among Council participants and administrators, faculty and non-pedagogical personnel not only fosters democratic principles within the system but also promotes collegiality in decision making and problem solving. In our schools students are partners with staff in creating positive learning environments, and they assume responsibility for the issues that affect them.

The same holds true for our community, law enforcement and correctional models. By conjoining schools, communities, police departments and correctional facilities into a unifying strategy to promote the common good, the Council offers the greatest opportunity for constructive change for concerned stakeholders on every level.

What Are Our Outcomes

The graduation rate for Council for Unity High School participants has never gone below 90% with youth who otherwise graduate at much lower levels. In 2019 the Council achieved its highest graduation benchmark of 99.3% in New York City High Schools (Source: NYC Department of Education). Evaluations by the New York City School System and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention reveal increases in participant attendance, reduced suspensions, reduced incidents of bullyism and gang involvement and improvement in academic performance. And our methodologies also focus on the Social/ Emotional Learning components in a child's development. Using algorithms from Youth Inc., our membership has scored 75% or better on the social/ emotional learning scale using empirical metrics to determine outcome.

Of equal significance our participants learn values and develop character. They are on probation for an entire year before gaining membership into the pro-

gram. They must demonstrate their ability to function in a diverse group by accepting differences, by learning listening skills, by being able to speak constructively in their dealings with others and by modifying their behavior to become more effective in interacting with their peers. They are also required to put in hours of community service and work within their schools on projects that meet the Council's mission.

What We Offer

The Council for Unity provides the following customized curricula and services to address a multiplicity of problems confronting school systems, community based organizations, law enforcement agencies and correctional facilities:

The Comprehensive and Dragon Slayer Syllabus for Schools on all Grade Levels: Both these curricula meet the deepest needs of children and provide skill building opportunities that enable participants to make the relationships in their lives work, bring them to partnerships with faculty, administrators and other school personnel to create a family environment within their buildings, empower them to create annual plans to enhance the learning environment with input from all stakeholders and sustain their desired outcomes by forming on going networks that are inclusive and collegial. The Dragon Slayer curriculum adds another dimension to this dynamic by utilizing fairy tale motifs that enable students to identify and confront the "dragons" in their lives that impede their growth and development.

The Partnerships for the Prevention of Bullyism Curriculum addresses the issues confronting victims, bullies and bystanders by creating a positive peer pressure model that provides safe haven for victims, converts bullies into guardians and engages general school populations to become upstanders involved in creating a safe, familial environment in their schools.

The Public Safety Curriculum was born out of a collaboration with the New York City Police Department, the Department of Education, The Division of School Safety and the Council for Unity. It brings law enforcement personnel into CFU classrooms to improve the quality of behavior between our youth and the police that serve them. Permanent, ongoing relationships are desired outcomes to this model thus eliminating anonymity and potential conflict between police and the youth within the school and outside community.

The Adult and Family Partnership Curriculum provides for adults what our school based curriculum provides for children. It fosters integration by bringing together diverse constituencies within a community and organizing them into a unified force to advocate for resources and support that promote the common good of all.

The Correctional Facility Curriculum, like our other models, brings together inmates from different gangs or belief systems and empowers them to create initiatives that promote their safety, which is a paramount concern in all correctional institutions. Inmates undergo a 6 month immersion into the Council culture and curriculum where a once hostile environment is now replaced by one that eliminates conflict, provides for growth and development, restores the humanity of participants and generates new behaviors and attitudes to insure successful re-entry into society upon an inmates release.

COUNCIL FOR UNITY
REACH MINDS • CHANGE LIVES



CFU Founder, Bob DeSena (center).

Technical Assistance Services include weekly site coordination by highly trained CFU staff who provide support and guidance for clients utilizing our methods and strategies. Training for teachers and advisors is also provided to ensure that the maximum benefits of the Council's curricula are achieved. Our Speakers Bureau component provides clients with a variety of workshops that range from full assembly programs or small group experiences specific to a particular issue or problem.

For more information about the Council for Unity, go to the website: www.councilforunity.org

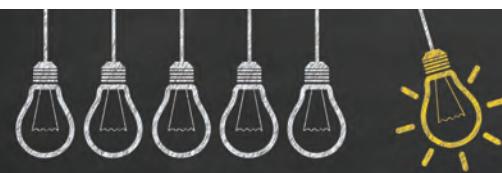
A Former Gang Member Speaks Out

This letter is from an MS 13 member named Omar who dropped his flag to join Council for Unity:

"During the months in Council for Unity, I have realized that I have dragons inside me, and Council for Unity is a light at the end of the tunnel for me. Council has shown me how beautiful life is and that there is an opportunity for change. It is not easy for a member of MS 13, but it is possible. People might think that a person like me will never change but let me tell you Council is offering me that change, and I won't let it go. I want to start a new chapter in my life where I can be a productive member of society.

"I have repeatedly seen that an appeal to continue life to survive under the most unfavorable conditions can be made only when such survival appears to have a meaning; that meaning must be specific and personal, a meaning which can be realized by this one person alone, and bring him peace of mind, for we must never forget that every person is unique in the universe. I think man should not ask what he may expect from life but should rather understand that life expects something from him. It may also be put this way. In the last resort man should not ask "what is the meaning of life?" He should realize he is being questioned. Life is putting its problems to him, and it is up to him to respond to these questions by being responsible. He can only answer to life by answering for his life. Life provides us with a wonderful purpose to make the fullest use of it by serving others.

"To all the young boys and girls out there that might read this letter, I got a message for you. Don't join gangs. Gangs take away your freedom, your family and friends. Say no to gangs, and your life will shine. Take me as an example. I had everything a man can dream of, a beautiful family, a good job, and now I have lost all of that. Now Council is giving me an opportunity to change my life and defeat my dragons. People can really change. Don't matter who you are or who you were.... God bless you."



Keeping you in the know



Big Changes to FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program

By Mary E. Sheridan, Esq.

Director of Local 237 Legal Services Plan

The Federal Government created the National Flood Insurance Program in 1968. Private insurers were either not providing flood insurance or charging exorbitant prices forcing the Federal Government to step in to provide protection for millions of Americans. If a homeowner has a federally insured mortgage, they are required to have flood insurance if the property is located in the Special Flood Hazard area. Approximately 5 million homes across the United States are covered by National Flood Insurance.

The cost of flood insurance can be quite expensive and the Federal program was designed to provide affordable coverage for homeowners. One criticism of the pricing, however, has been that the insurance rates on million dollar homes are the same as those worth far less.

How will the first big revision in FEMA pricing affect homeowners? Well, it depends. Although many will see price increases on their insurance premiums, plenty will see lower prices. The overhaul of the Program is supposed to provide greater equity by accurately assessing a property's unique flood risk. The Program will now take into consideration not only the replacement value of the property, but also the type of flood risk – ie, from rainfall or coastal flooding – and

how close the property is to the flooding source. Probably the biggest change in the program is how the Program will look at climate change models to assess future risks from natural disasters.

Reliance on flood zone mapping alone to show risk does not allow for each property's unique risks. Considering unique risks of a home will result in a more equitable outcome, according to FEMA. Yet looking at climate change models could change flood risks that certainly might result in higher premiums for some but lower for others. If your policy is set to renew in October, you will have the new rates. If later, then you won't see any changes until next year. Additionally, there are limits on annual rate increases which should prevent a huge surge in pricing. Call your flood insurer and request information on rate changes.

The FEMA flood zone maps are also going to be updated and currently are set to be released in 2024. If you want to check on your property's current flood zone, you can go to msc.fema.gov and input your address. You do not need to be in a flood hazard zone to purchase flood insurance and you can always check on rates with private insurers too.

Feel free to call your Legal Services Plan at (212) 924-1220 ■



By Mitch Goldberg

Director of the Welfare Fund

The Importance of Naming a Life Insurance Beneficiary

There are certain important topics that people feel uncomfortable discussing. At the top of this list is Life Insurance. The Welfare Fund provides for a Group Term Policy with Met Life. This benefit is paid to your designated beneficiary at the time of your death. The beneficiary may be any person of your choice. You can name a beneficiary by registering on the MetLife website at www.metlife.com/mybenefits or by contacting the Fund office (212) 924-7220 and requesting a new enrollment form and completing the beneficiary designation portion of the enrollment form. To be in effect, your designation must be on file in the Fund office or with Met Life. If there is no designated beneficiary living at the time of your death, the Death Benefit will be paid to your estate. This creates a delay in payment and can be time consuming for the executor of your estate who must go to Surrogates Court to obtain the proper papers needed by Met Life before payment can be made. Life sometimes brings unexpected changes. Your personal situation may have changed due to divorce, death of your original beneficiary or you may simply want to name a new beneficiary. If you are unsure of who is listed as your beneficiary, we suggest you complete a new enrollment form or register on the Met Life website.

The current benefit provided under our Group Term Policy is \$15,000 should you the member die. The spousal benefit is \$5,000 if your spouse passes before you. The dependent benefit is \$5,000.

Met Life also offers Voluntary Benefits by payroll deduction. If you are interested in any of these Voluntary benefits please register on the Met Life website at www.metlife.com/mybenefits.

If you require further information or clarification regarding this article, please call the Fund at (212) 924-7220. We are here to help. ■



Mindfulness in 2021

By Ayana Ali

Director of Local 237 Social Services

In the last few years, you may have heard the term "mindfulness" and wondered what exactly it is. Health blogs, magazines and coaches sing the praises of mindfulness. Therapists and mental health experts also report its usefulness. Yet, these same sources never seem to explain what mindfulness is.

Simply put: According to Mindful.org, mindfulness is the ability to be fully present, aware of our surroundings and actions, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what is going on around us. It could be observing a thought or a sensation such as noting that you're worrying or that your hand is tingling. It could be drawing awareness to your breathing pattern, monitoring the rising and falling of your chest or abdomen. It might also be focusing in on the feeling of water running through your fingers as you swim. In other words, mindfulness is being of aware of what you're doing while you are doing it.

Now that you have a better sense of what mindfulness is, you may be wondering what the benefits of it are, and I can tell you, there are many. According

to the American Psychological Association, mindfulness can result in reduced rumination, stress reduction, boosts to working memory, focus, less emotional reactivity, more cognitive flexibility, and increased relationship satisfaction. And even though the benefits of mindfulness are amazing and can lead to overall well-being, the good news is that it is not complicated to practice.

Here are three ways that you can incorporate mindfulness into your day that are not complicated and don't require much effort.

Start the Day with Purpose

On waking, sit in your bed or a chair in a relaxed posture, take several deep breaths—breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Pay close attention to the rising and falling of your chest and abdomen. Think about what you want to accomplish during the day and throughout the day, check in with yourself. Are you honoring your intention for the day? If not, how can you get back on course? Try to put it into practice.

Mindful Eating

Choose your foods carefully. Think about what you're eating, not necessarily in terms of calories or if it is a fat or a carbohydrate, but in terms of whether you really want it, if it will be healthy for you or whether you're eating it because you are hungry, out of habit or anxiety. Will it be nourishing to your body or make you feel badly afterwards?

Move Your Body

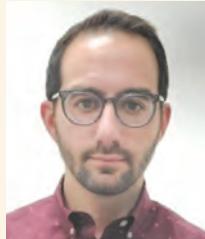
Don't like to exercise? That's fine, but do you like to dance? Do you like to roller skate? Is there a way that you can move your body that feels good to you and doesn't feel like work or torture? If so, do that. Ride a bike, swim, or just wiggle in your chair. Whatever it is, if it brings you enjoyment do that as opposed to worrying so much about pounds or clothing sizes.

These are just three examples of mindfulness. If you want to try mindfulness, you are not sure how to go about it or the aforementioned ways of mindfulness practice don't appeal to you, give the office a call to gather more ideas. If you need help or resources in relation to this subject, you have other mental health treatment concerns, or have other social services needs, please do not hesitate to contact Ayana Ali, LCSW at 212-924-7220 or aali@local237.org for further assistance. ■



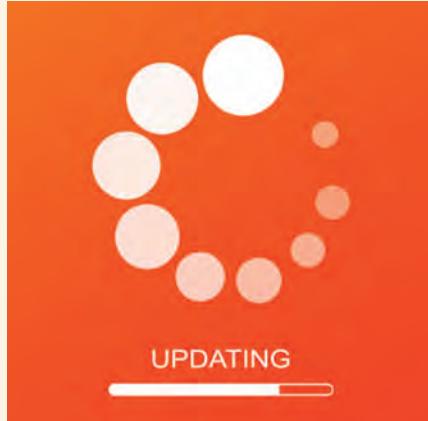
Keeping you in the know

Windows 11 is Available October 5th. Should You Upgrade?



By Anthony Morano

Chief Information Officer



Windows 11 will be available for download, for free, starting on October 5th. The allure of being “free” entices everyone to go out and upgrade their computers because there is no cost, but is it worth it? Anytime new software comes out, there are always a multitude of bugs and glitches that come along with it and Windows is no exception. Many of the early beta testers have indicated issues related to drivers and various programs where the software vendor indicated it was compatible with Windows 11. Microsoft offers a tool that will allow you to scan your computer to see if it is compatible for a Windows 11 upgrade, but even that tool has proven to be buggy.

In understanding what is being upgraded, there are three main areas of improvement: security, cross platform compatibility, and the user interface.

1. From a security perspective, Microsoft has increased their requirements on hardware manufacturers as well as limiting the version of Intel chip that your computer has, before you can upgrade. This enhanced security is aimed at deterring ransomware and the ability for brute force takeovers. Although most of these requirements/enhancements are invisible to the end-user, they do provide overall better security.
2. Cross platform functionality is something that is rarely heard in the Microsoft world. Seldom has there been any indication of being able to use an Apple or Android based program on a Windows machine, but with Windows 11, that will change. Android apps can be downloaded to a Windows 11 machine by using the Amazon App Store-applications like TikTok and can now be accessed from your computer. With this new functionality, Microsoft has opened the door for other applications like Apple’s iMessage to also be installed on the new Windows machines but no official announcement has been made of when that will be available.
3. Everyone likes working on a shiny new desktop. The new colors, icons, sounds, and backgrounds makes everyone feel like they just bought a brand-new car. A Windows 11 upgrade will still give you that feeling. Moving to a more icon-based interface, with icons being centered on the bottom taskbar, the overall interface is akin to a Mac or even a Linux distribution like Ubuntu. One handy feature that will come out of this is the ability to rearrange multiple programs on your screen. In Windows 10, you can drag a program to the left and right side to create a split screen environment, but on Windows 11, you will be able to create customized program columns and layouts. Microsoft has realized that more and more people are using large widescreen or multi-screen setups. These new enhancements are tailored to provide a better experience in those scenarios.

With that, is it worth the upgrade? If you are someone who needs the latest and greatest operating system, then Windows 11 will provide a new and diverse experience. For many of the everyday users, jumping to the upgrade is not worth it yet. I would recommend giving it at least 4+ months of being out so that the early adopters can report back on the bugs, allowing Microsoft to push out updates and make the transition easier for most people. The last thing you want to do is complete the upgrade to find out it is making your computer very slow and now the “free” upgrade is going to cost you money. ■



THINKING ABOUT RETIREMENT

By Julie Kobi

Director of Local 237 Retiree Division



Setting your target date for retirement is a good start. It helps to set priorities. Making the decision to retire is personal decision and only you know what's best for you and your family. Here are a few things to consider before retirement:

- **FINANCIAL SECURITY** – This is always a concern for all of us, especially pre-retirees. Review your monthly expenses, not only rent/mortgage and other monthly bills such as food, clothing, utilities, outstanding loans etc. but also include “fun” outings, dining, trips, and recreational activities. A good way to track your expenditure is to jot down all your expenses. Sometimes a visual will put spending into perspective. It may even surprise you.
- **REVIEW YOUR ASSETS** – (savings, investments) Start developing a retirement budget. Keep in mind retirement is not for a short time, a few days or a week. Be realistic about whether you can afford to retire at this time or defer plans until a later time if needed.
- **ADVANCED CARE PLAN** – Do you have a will? Health Care Proxy? Is a durable power of attorney appropriate? - It's important to think about this when you are able and in good health.
- **REVIEW YOUR HEALTH COVERAGE** – Learn about the health insurance coverage available to you in retirement. Will you be Medicare age when you retire?

Planning for retirement can be very exciting and complex but ultimately rewarding. The good news is that Local 237's Retiree Division staff are available to assist you with this process. There are many retirement planning resources available to members. Please check the Local 237 website for our pre-retirement series at <https://local237.org/retirees>

Or feel free to contact the retiree division via telephone at 212-807-0555 or via email at retirees@local237.org. ■



Veterans Message

By Lynn Johnson

Marine Corps Veteran, VA Outreach
Specialist-Minority Veteran Coordinator

Veterans and their families are still dealing with COVID, the variants and its effects. VA is here for IBT Local 237 Veterans and families to offer guidance.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is available with resources to assist with quality of life issues-housing, health, home health aide, mental health, unemployment, and burial benefits, etc.

If you served in the United States Military in wartime or in peacetime and possess an honorable or general under honorable DD-214 or DD-215 Discharge papers, let the US Department of Veteran Affairs recognize your service by offering you consultation at VA, either in-person or via virtual platform, to help you apply for benefits and services.

Services you've earned may include VA Healthcare, Home Loan Certificate, GIBILL Educational Benefits, Military Injury-Compensation, Burial Benefits for the Veteran and Spouse, Homeless Services, Mental Health Benefits, Justice-Involved Support, Caregiver Program, and a host of ancillary services.

Interested in finding out if you qualify for VA benefits as a Local 237 Veteran?
Contact your local NYC VA Outreach Specialist Lyn.Johnson2@va.gov or call (212) 686-7500 ext. 4218 to speak directly with Mr. Johnson. ■

Resumen En Español

Saludos a los Trabajadores Pùblicos: ¡No te rindas, Levántate!



El expresidente Barack Obama dijo: "Cuando los tiempos son difíciles, no nos rendimos. Nos levantamos. "Eso es precisamente lo que hicieron los empleados públicos. En un momento de dolor imaginable, cuando un virus repentino y altamente contagioso sacudió al mundo entero y a nuestro pro-

pio mundo personal, los miembros de los sindicatos - y especialmente los trabajadores del sector público no se rindieron, se levantaron y se fueron a trabajar. Durante un tiempo que el temor nos embargó y el miedo paralizó a tantos, un momento desconcertante que, para algunos, significaba que no habría un abrazo final, un adiós o sacramentos para conocer a nuestro Creador, estos trabajadores municipales esenciales estaban trabajando. Y muchos de ellos, lamentablemente, incluidos muchos miembros de Local 237, también fallecieron. Eran nuestros amigos. Nuestros compañeros de trabajo. Nuestros mentores. Nuestros "estudiantes". Juntos, compartimos los buenos y malos momentos de la familia, nos quejamos del trabajo y, a menudo, el uno del otro. Colgamos decoraciones navideñas en el comedor y soplamos velas de cumpleaños. Y aunque puede ser una frase desgastada, "desaparecido pero no olvidado" es cierto. Siempre recordaremos los acalorados debates sobre por qué los Knicks perdieron su ventaja. Siempre recordaremos el estilo especial y la clase de alguien para la moda. O su frase favorita - usada repetidamente - que te volvía loco. Luego estaban las recetas para el mejor chili de la historia... y las muestras traídas para compartir.

En los años venideros, habrá innumerables libros escritos - películas producidas, cursos universitarios y "comentaristas" de televisión en abundancia, todos tratando de explicar este momento horrible en la historia del mundo, que resultó en tantas pérdidas, no solo en términos de personas y sus medios de vida, sino también en términos de pérdida de confianza en el gobierno y nuestros líderes. La confianza se pierde de muchas maneras: en la calidad e igualdad de nuestro sistema de salud, así como en la capacidad de nuestra nación para lograr una verdadera justicia racial. También recordaremos y nos preguntaremos cómo algo tan devastador pudo caer sobre nosotros y tomarnos desprevenidos. ¿Cómo podría esta nación haber perdido más vidas en solo tres

meses que en 10 años de batalla en la Guerra de Vietnam, la Guerra del Golfo, la Guerra de Afganistán y la Guerra de Irak combinadas? ¡Y la desigualdad racial de las vidas perdidas! La crisis de la pandemia fue como una película. Una mala película. Pero, ¿quién hubiera pensado alguna vez que una película de 2 horas que podrías haber disfrutado con palomitas de maíz con mantequilla y M&Ms - una película que te asustó mucho todo el tiempo que estuvo en la pantalla grande - pero que no te impidió disfrutar de tu hamburguesa y papas fritas en McDonald's después de que el caos de Hollywood hubiera terminado? ¿Quién hubiera pensado que la película llegaría hasta nosotros en la vida real y en tiempo real? Los actores de esta película no se quitan el maquillaje de panque al final de la filmación del día y se dirigen a su pub favorito a tomarse unos tragos. No hay un patio trasero aquí. ¡Los "actores", desafortunadamente, somos todos nosotros! Al principio, pudimos haber tenido la esperanza de un final feliz, al estilo de Hollywood, pero el problema y el dolor no disminuyeron rápidamente y parecen interminables. Pero en toda esta oscuridad, podemos ver hay muchos ejemplos de lo mejor de las personas. Los profesionales de la salud, los socorristas, los trabajadores de tránsito - por nombrar sólo a algunos - se encuentran entre los que arriesgan sus vidas para salvar la vida de otros. Y qué decir de los 22,000 voluntarios de otros estados que se apresuraron a viajar a Nueva York para ayudar en un lugar que no conocen, y a personas que nunca conocieron. Todo lo que sabían era que hay personas necesitadas. Pero tampoco necesitamos mirar más allá de nuestros propios trabajadores públicos para ver los mejores ejemplos de lo mejor de las personas. Nuestros miembros se definen como trabajadores esenciales cuyo trabajo es vital para ayudar a mantener a Nueva York funcionando y salvaguardando a nuestras poblaciones más vulnerables. Los miembros del Local 237 - que trabajan en los cinco distritos y en Long Island - y todos los trabajadores municipales, son fieles a las palabras del expresidente Obama. Se "levantaron" y continúan haciéndolo.

En nombre de todos los neoyorquinos, démosles un merecido

¡GRACIAS!





As we commemorate Labor Day,
**MEMBERS OF
 TEAMSTERS LOCAL 237
 DO NOT FORGET.**

Their co-workers and their friends will forever be remembered, and the memory of their loss during the pandemic will be permanently embedded in their hearts and minds.

*On behalf of President Gregory Floyd,
 the Executive Board and Staff,
 we offer sincere condolences
 to the families, and appreciation
 for sharing your loved one with us.*



Take Care of Your Social Security Business Online

By Anny Rosario Diaz

Assistant District Manager, Social Security in Downtown Manhattan

Have you ever thought you might need to visit a Social Security office? Chances are you do not. You can probably conduct your business with us without even leaving your home. Our online services page at www.ssa.gov/onlineservices provides you a wide variety of self-service options you can use on your phone, tablet, or computer. You can even apply for retirement, disability, or Medicare online.

Create a personal *my Social Security* account today at www.ssa.gov/myaccount to take advantage of these easy-to-use features. Also, share our online services page with family and friends who need this important information.

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FALL 2021

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To change your address, fill in the form below, cut it out, and mail it back to Newsline at the above address.

Name _____
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If you have a federal student loan, or are the parent or spouse of someone with a federal student loan, you could **SAVE thousands of dollars per year on your student loans and get thousands more completely forgiven!**

To find out how much you could save, all you need to do is speak to a personal student loan counselor. Student Loan Counseling is a new benefit you receive as a dues-paying member of Local 237.

Learn more about getting your personal student loan counselor through our webinar hosted by the National Student Loan Debt Forgiveness Center (NSDFC).

REGISTER TODAY!

Visit: <https://nationalstudentdebtforgivenesscenter.com>
 or scan the QR code with your smartphone camera.

