# LOCAL 237 NEWSLINE

Vol. 58, No. 1

Spring 2024

## Celebrating Springtime

"A season for the soul to regain its strength."
– Lailah Gifty Akita

"Nature's way of saying Let's Party."
– Robin Williams

## 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,** 6th 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, Director

**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

**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
Len Proctor, Deputy Director

**SOCIAL SERVICES,** 3rd Fl.
646-638-8608
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.
Karla Steinberg,
Membership Social Worker

**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., Chief Attorney
Jennifer Hudson, Esq.,
Assistant Chief Attorney

**EXECUTIVE OFFICES,** 5th Fl.
212-924-2000
Gregory Floyd, President
Ruben Torres,
Vice President
Donald Arnold,
Secretary-Treasurer
Jeanette Taveras,
Recording Secretary

**PERSONNEL,** 5th Fl.
212-924-2000
Donald Arnold,
Director, Citywide Division 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,** 2nd 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.
Diana Doss, Esq.
Grievance Coordinator

**CIVIL SERVICE BAR ASSOC.**
6th Fl., 212-675-0519
Saul Fishman, President
Aldona Vaiciunas,
Office Administrator and
Grievance Coordinator
Lee Gordon, Esq.
Business Agent
CSBA Welfare Fund
Alicare 866-647-4617

**COMMUNICATIONS,** 5th Fl.
646-638-8501
Phyllis S. Shafran, Director & Editor Local 237 Newsline and Editor, Retiree News & Views

**EDUCATION AND TRAINING**
6th Fl., 212-807-0550
Provides a variety of training and educational advancement opportunities for members.
Shanell Grayson, 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
General Information:
347-643-3000
Outside NYC toll-free:
877-6NYCERS

**NYCERS Internet**
www.nyclink.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

# *Thanking the Sisterhood*

## By Gregory Floyd

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

March is Women's History Month and across the nation, there will be special events and tributes to mark the accomplishments of women in America.

In seminars, conferences, TV specials and marathon runs, the accomplishments of women historically and today will be on full display. March is a time when the struggles, wisdom and unique perspective of women are recognized, analyzed and immortalized from the words of Maya Angelou, who once wrote: ***"Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it possibly, without claiming it, she stands up for all women."*** To Rihanna, "There's something special about a woman who dominates in a man's world. It takes a certain grace, strength, intelligence, fearlessness, and the nerve to never take no for an answer." There are so many extraordinary women, past and present, who personify these sentiments from the unsung heroines, like a next-door neighbor who juggles two jobs and three kids to make a house a home, to the unparalleled bravery of Harriet Tubman to Rosy the Riveter, who inspired a generation, to current women of valor—like the young soldier who left her family behind and stands guard in the Middle East, to women who took a sledgehammer to the "glass ceiling" like Vice President Kamala Harris, Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown-Jackson and New York State Attorney General Letitia James, to women who express such tremendous empathy and compassion for people they have never met, like the neonatal nurse tenderly caring for preemies, to Dr. Ruth Gottesman, who just made a historic donation of $1 billion to the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx to provide medical students with free tuition going forward.

In the labor movement, there are many women who have set examples of courage and determination to improve the lives of working women and families. Some did so indirectly and regrettably as in the case of the 146 young immigrant garment working girls killed, and the 78 who sustained injuries, in the notorious Triangle Shirt Waist Factory fire in Greenwich Village on March 25 of 1911. From exit doors chain-locked by their employers to Fire Department ladders too short to reach them on the 8th floor, the findings in the aftermath of that horrendous fire led to our state and the nation to legislate safety and health hazard measures to protect workers on the job. Women have in fact come a long way and played a significant part in building labor unions since those young sweat shop girls perished in a fire largely because they didn't have a union. Today, Elizabeth H. Shuler is president of the national AFL-CIO, a federation of 57 unions and 12.5 million working people across all sectors of the US economy. She is the first woman to hold that position.

At Local 237, we don't have to look very far for fearless women with an extraordinary strength of character who exemplify "never take no for an answer". They are the sisterhood, working with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. One such Local 237 member is Marie Colvin. Marie was a war correspondent. She wrote about innocent women and children caught in the crossfire of civil war. Her bravery was legendary. A movie, "A Private War", tells the real-life story of Marie Colvin, portrayed by Rosamund Pike. It depicts her life behind enemy lines covering stories of human suffering that many did not want told, in dangerous locations, where few would dare to go. It was actually a sentence in one of the movie's reviews that caused us to wonder about a possible link to Teamsters Local 237. Our research paid off because we discovered that fresh out of college, she was hired by Local 237 to write our newsletter. Marie Colvin was a Teamster! Her family told us that she wore our lapel pin proudly. One could easily imagine her today, condemning the bombing of innocent women and children in Ukraine, Israel, and Gaza — if she were still alive. Marie's journalistic diligence caused her to lose her eye at the hands of Sri Lankan terrorists in 2001, then her life, at age 56 in 2012, killed by a senior Syrian military officer to silence her.

As proud as we are of Marie, there are several other Teamster women who have done remarkable things on different battle grounds. For example: In March of 2010, Local 237 sued New York City on behalf of our 5,000 School Safety Agents, 70% of whom were women, mostly African Americans and Latinas. Many were single mothers. Their annual salary was about $7,000 less than their counterparts with similar titles working in other City agencies, who are mostly male. Some called this just a coincidence. It was discrimination! School Safety Agents have a tough job to do. They help to protect other peoples' children. All they wanted was to put bread on the table for their own children. So I called for a meeting of School Safety Agents to tell them about plans to sue the City. I told them that we needed some volunteers to sign the papers and be the official plaintiffs. Of the 25 women in the room, 22 left. But three remained: Patricia Williams, Bernice Christopher and the late Corinthians Andrews. And for four years, these three gave testimony after testimony. They refused any settlement that did not include retirees. They took days off from work. They took time away from being with their families. They worked on the case despite health issues and attended our rallies. At times, we felt pretty much alone, but then we received support from several luminaries, including: Dr. Hazel Dukes, President of the NYS NAACP; Sonia Ossorio, President of the NYC Chapter of NOW; and Lilly Ledbetter, who learned first-hand about gender-based pay discrimination when an anonymous note left in her locker on her last day at work before her retirement let her know that she was earning much less than her male co-workers, and she took her fight all the way to the Supreme Court. Lilly Ledbetter came from her home in Alabama to stand in solidarity with Local 237 on the steps of City Hall for our protest rally.

Finally, after years of rallies and legal wrangling by the City, judgment day came. I still remember Pat, Bernice, and Corinthians walked into the courthouse and knelt in prayer before they took their seats. Perhaps there was a little divine intervention, but with the help of Hazel, Sonia and Lilly an historic settlement was reached. Clearly, the words of Vice President Kamala Harris ring true: "You're going to walk into many rooms where you may be the only one who looks like you or has had your experiences. So, use that voice and be strong." And that's exactly what these women did!

Throughout the pandemic and hard economic times, our women members have played and continue to play an integral part helping to keep the City functioning. Women's History Month is the time organizations single out extraordinary women to honor. For us, at Local 237, it is not a difficult task. We are especially blessed to have among our own members so many who have distinguished themselves through acts of integrity and humanity. So, while we thank the historic, heroic women who made headlines, we take pride in acknowledging our own Pat, Bernice, Corinthians, and Marie and the sisterhood of Teamsters Local 237.

Marie Colvin - courageous in the face of danger.

(l-r) The late Corinthians Andrews, Bernice Christopher and Patricia Williams.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

# Above and Beyond

**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:**

## Incident at Martin Van Buren High School

(l-r) **L1 Milner, L1 Burke, L1 Alexander, L1 Williams, L1 Tunstall, L1 Johnson, L3 Freeman, L1 Roman and L1 Mitchell.**

A 17-year-old Martin Van Buren High School student purchasing unknown merchandise from a 16-year-old resulted in a physical altercation that included a metal knife. The alleged victim was stabbed. **School Safety Agents Mitchell and Koliatsis** recovered the knife and **SSA III Freeman and SSA Burke** escorted the alleged perpetrator to the principal's conference room where **SSA Romain** conducted a search which produced a Smith & Wesson MP 9 gun, containing 6 bullets and one bullet in the chamber. The alleged victim was transported to Cohen's Hospital and the alleged perpetrator was transported to the 105th Police Precinct.

**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**

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**Executive Board**

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**Ruben Torres** Vice President
**Donald Arnold** Secretary-Treasurer
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**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 ensure that you continue receiving your newspaper.

# Shop Steward Shoutout

## Citywide Division

**Martin Ong**, Radiographer Level 3, North Central Bronx. Martin has been a dedicated shop steward with the citywide department for 7 years and enjoys being the bridge of communication among his peers and the union hall.

**Bridget Price,** Maintenance Worker, Department of Sanitation. Bridget is a new dedicated shop steward with the Citywide Division who transferred over from NYCHA, becoming the only African American woman in the Maintenance Division at the Department of Sanitation.

## Housing Division

**Troy Moore**, Caretaker J, Albany House. Troy has been a Steward for less than a year. He is excited to learn union information to pass on to his staff. His skill set is growing on a daily basis.

**Brenda Louis**, Brownville Houses, Caretaker J. Brenda has been a Shop Steward for about 10 years. She is proud to be a Steward able to help and guide her co-workers.

## Law Enforcement Division

(l-r) **Jeuris Rodriguez and Robert Silva**, Campus Peace Officer and Campus Security Assistant, Medgar Evers College. Congratulations to our newly elected Shop Stewards at Medgar Evers College! Thank you for your time and dedication to advocate for your fellow members in the workplace.

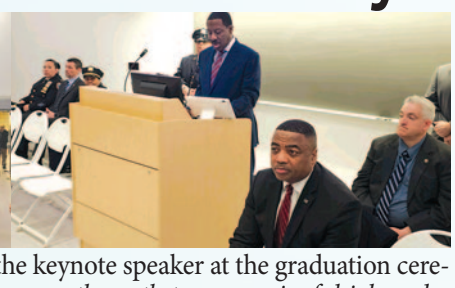
**Teri Ghee,** School Safety Agent, Manhattan North. Shop Steward Teri Ghee won an award from the Community Initiatives of NY for "outstanding performance in keeping our youth safe". Thank you for your hard work and dedication, Teri!

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

# Law Enforcement Division

*So many of our members distinguish themselves by their professionalism on the job. Here are some of their pictures and stories.*

## CUNY Graduation Ceremony



**Local 237 President, Gregory Floyd** was the keynote speaker at the graduation ceremony. He told the graduates: *"You are now on the path to a meaningful job and a rewarding career. And, despite the challenges you may face, isn't it gratifying to know that you played a role in molding the next generation of successful and productive members of society? Who knows what future leaders might be among them? Wouldn't it be great to hear 'Hail To The Chief' as one of them enters the room 20 years from now?"*

**CUNY GRADUATES OF CLASS 02-23**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Michael Abbazia** | **Wilbert Parker, Jr.** | **Shonobia Johnson** | **Joseph Thomas, Jr.** |
| **Daniel Estrella** | **Ravindra Tej-Singh** | **Craig McClary** | **Tamlin Wallace** |
| **Catherine Juca** | **Miguel Varela** | **Robert Moses** | **Adekunle Yusuff** |
| **Ezekiel McLean** | **Paul Carter** | **Jaden Robinson** | |

**PO Tamlin Wallace** with family and friend and **Jeanette Taveras** (r), Business Agent and Recording Secretary on Local 237's Executive Board.

(l-r) University Director of CUNY Public Safety **Andre Brown**, **Local 237 President Gregory Floyd**, **PO Daniel Estrella** and **Jeanette Taveras**.

(l-r) **André Brown**; **Gregory Floyd; PO Jaden Robinson** with his mother; and CUNY Director of Public Safety **Joseph D. Foelsch, Jr.**

(l-r) **Jeanette Taveras, PO Shonobia Johnson** with her mother.

**CPO Michael Abbazia** being pinned by his father NYPD Detective Abbazia.

**PO Daniel Estrella** with five certificates awarded to him during the graduation ceremony.

## SSA Graduation

Congratulations to the newly graduated School Safety Agents class.

School Safety Instructors with newly graduated agent. (l-r) **Level III Anderson Robinson, Agent Pedraza and Instructor Level III Santiago.**

## HHC Graduation

**RECRUIT CLASS 2023-03**

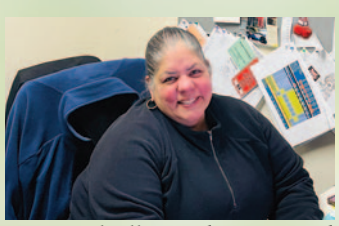
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Alvarez, Elias** | **Green, Brendan** | **Reza, MD** |
| **Arzu, Bernard** | **Harris, Leon** | **Rivera, Carlos** |
| **Ashby, Tawana** | **Ibrahim, MD** | **Rivera, Nikole** |
| **Bernardin, Gerard** | **Jean Baptiste, Nicodeme** | **Rosario, Edwin** |
| **Bukhari, Syeda Najaf** | **Joseph, Binu** | **Saint Jeance, John** |
| **Calderon, Angel** | **Lozano, Isaiah** | **Sanders, Charles** |
| **Carr, Keyshawn** | **Martin, Niya** | **Seidi-Gbamuse, Adekoya** |
| **Chavez, James** | **Martinez, Bryant** | **Shorter, Jevon** |
| **Cockerham, Terrence** | **Meran Mejia, Mateo** | **Soto, Stephanie** |
| **Daley, Malik** | **Mercedes, Katherine** | **Taylor, Kayla** |
| **Dawuda, Tafudeen** | **Nuesi, Rene** | **Tange, Kerry** |
| **Farmer, Ebony** | **Paucar, Brigitte** | **Villalon, Steven** |
| **Francisco, Misael** | **Pompee, Fritz** | **Washington, Deandre** |
| **Gill, Hakeem** | **Ramos, Justin** | |
| **Gordillo, Mauricio** | **Reese, Rosa** | |

(l-r) **Level I Hernandez and Level I Peeks** from Manhattan South Command.

(l-r) **Level III Miller and Agent Ellis** from Queens South Command showing off the 2024 pocket calendar.

Hospital **PO Delacruz** at Gouverneur Hospital, keeping a safe environment for patients, staff and visitors.

Director of Law Enforcement Division **Derek Jackson** (l) greets CUNY Peace Officer **St. John**, York College.



**Corporal Albino**, Shop Steward at Hostos College.

(l-r) **CUNY Peace Officer Ray and Derek Jackson** at York College.

18th Annual Hands That Care Thanksgiving event at a Philip Randolph Campus. **SSA1 Alston** (center) and volunteers.

Campus Peace Officers at CUNY colleges are getting fitted for bullet proof vests.

**Shawnequa Holt-Pate,** former SSA3 and now Supervisor of School Security, supervises 60 school safety agents on Staten Island, and coordinates between an NYPD precinct and the schools within it.

# MEMBERS IN THE NEWS Law Enforcement Division *Continued*

## BASSA Honors Floyd

The BASSA ASSOCIATION (Bangladeshi American School Safety Association) presented **President Gregory Floyd** with an award. Unfortunately, the president was unable to attend. **Business Agents Derek Short** (second from left) and **Kangela Moore** accepted the award on his behalf.

**CPO Burgos** from New York City Technical College, after two years of being camera-shy, finally agreed to have her picture taken.

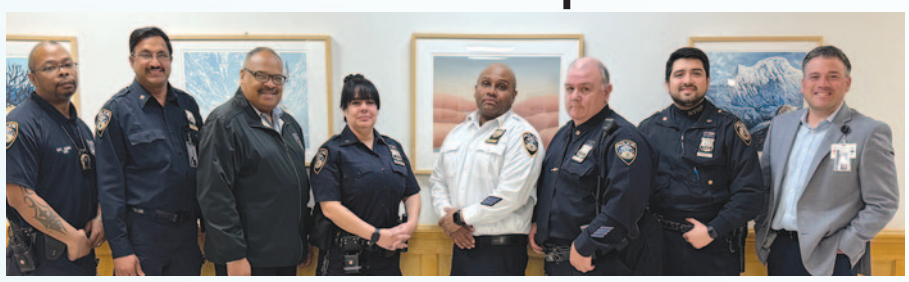
Hospital Police / DOMHH **Sergeant Dynesha Taylor** and family.

**Hospital Police Officer Albert** from Coler Hospital wished everyone a Happy Holiday and a Happy New Year.

Henry J. Carter Hospital Officers were in the holiday spirit with **Business Agent Kangela Moore** (r).

PS 18 First Annual Sock Giveaway in loving memory of **SSA Tamara Hamilton**.

## Seaview Hospital



(l-r) **Detective Christopher Alers, PO Reji George, Donald Arnold, PO Paula Fernamosca, Captain James Bing, PO Stephen Hamilton, PO Matthew Perez and CEO Matthew Lexy.**

(l-r) **Donald Arnold and Hilda Valentin**, Chief of Hospital Police.

## DOHMH Promotions

(l-r) **Derek Jackson, Chief Castro, Sgt. Taylor, Sgt. Torres, Sgt. Washington, Lt. Urdina, Lt. Lasalle and Business Agent, Mr. Frank Rella.**

On February 20, 2024, at Truman High School, the Bronx East Command held their Annual NYPD Bronx East Explorers Day.

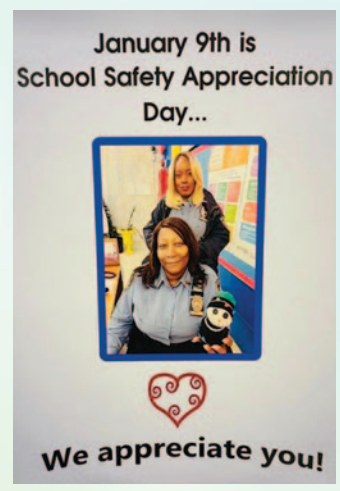
## SSA Receives Award

Reverend Al Cohen from The Community Initiatives of NY presents **SSA Terri Ghee**, Shop Steward from Manhattan South School Safety, with an award for outstanding role and performance in keeping our youth safe.

## DRIVE at Local 237

International Teamster's DRIVE representatives **Kevin Currie and Austin Rosa** met with Hospital Police Officers at Metropolitan Hospital to discuss the importance of registering for the Teamster Political Action Committee.

Just when you thought no one was paying attention to what we do as Agents: This banner is put up on the Michael J. Petrides perimeter as a thank you from School Crossing Guards and parents.




Although School Safety has an official day on which they are recognized, we recognize them every day! Thank you for your hard work and dedication to keep NYC students safe.

(l-r) **James Chavez,** Gold Academic Award; **Deondre Washington,** Silver Academic Award; **Isiah Lozano**, Bronze Academic Award; and **Charlie Cotto**, Director of Operations, Law Enforcement and Citywide Divisions.

**SSA Gwendolyn OTT Level III** and peer counselor in the Employee Assistance Unit at the NYPD received a special commendation.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

# Public Housing Division

*So many of our members distinguish themselves by their professionalism on the job. Here are some of their pictures and stories.*

## Trust Passes at Nostrand Houses

The Trust Vote Passed! The NYCHA members of Local 237 played an important part to inform residents of the vote. **Business Agents Ken Roper, Ken Franco and Vincent Lattimore** assisted.

(l-r) **Superintendent Tuesdai Gaskin, Business Agent Ken Franco and Manager Tobi Brown.**

Superintendent from Brevoort HS **Lisa Shuman**, resident of Nostrand Houses.

(l-r) **Tuesdai Gaskin, Chayenne Shepherd, Charlotte Parris, Mariah Shumake, Anthony Taylar , Kenneth McNatt, Vijai Pariag, Kerly Caesar and Tobi Brown.**

## Bushwick Houses

Local 237 Members at Bushwick Houses.
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## Plasterer Graduates

For the first time in nearly 20 years, members graduated upon receiving formal "classroom" instruction to learn the public housing plasterer trade. Instructor Ray Hall had two plasterers each day of the week while six were in the field at locations working with the other instructors. **Carl Giles**, Director of Local 237's Public Housing Division said: *"Our members now have the know-how and expertise required in a very specialized skill profession, which only those who have mastered the trade themselves can adequately impart to others. I congratulate the graduates and thank their instructors."*

(l-r) (back row): **Plasterer Rafael Ruiz, Instructor Ray Hall, Senior VP of Tech programs Lauren Grey, VP of Tech Services Cal Bruno, Lead Instructor Geoffrey Psillos, Plasterer Shaun Fulford, Local 237 Director of the Housing Division Carl Giles, Plasterer Warren Banks, Project Development Coordinator Leslie James, Special Projects Caroline Smith.** (front row): **Plasterer Efrain Diaz, Plasterer Albert Cruz, Plasterer Latoya Cleary, Plasterer Osavldo Torres and Plasterer John Williams.**

## NAACP – NYCHA Chapter Black History Month Celebration

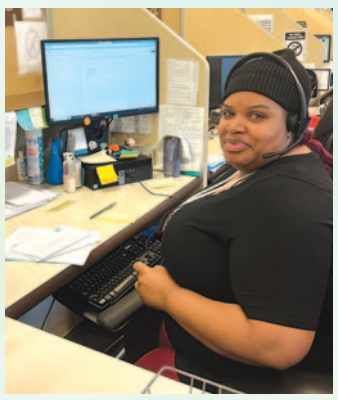
(l-r) **Director of the Housing Division Carl Giles, Plasterer Mickey Vallejo, Assistant to the President Ken Roper.**

Supervisors of caretakers, plasterer helpers, caretakers and maintenance of NYCHA's Claremont Houses after AM muster.

Staff at 1010 Consolidated

Staff in Monroe Houses, committed to boosting morale, gather in unity for a picture.

Supervisor of Caretakers Van Dyke Houses **Ms. Takeisha Mcdouglad**, helping her staff shovel the sidewalk and leading by example.



Welcome newly appointed Housing Assistant, **Carolyn Alleyne** at Bronx 1 Fordham Plaza, Walk-in Center. She is recognized by her peers and supervisors for her quality of work and excellent customer service.

Bronx Borough Safety Associates.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

# Citywide Division

*So many of our members distinguish themselves by their professionalism on the job. Here are some of their pictures and stories.*

Evidence and Property Control Specialist police academy graduation, January 17, 2024, with **George Wade,** Assistant Director of Citywide (fifth from left); **Curtis Scott,** Local 237 Executive Board Trustee and Business Agent (center); **Bianca Jones**, Business Agent (right).

(l-r) **Thomas Nolan**, Farrier, **Curtis Scott** and **Segundo lazo,** Hostlier. They work at Pelham Park NYPD Troop D.

Seaview Hospital Environmental Services (l-r) **Joseph Conigliaro**, Supervising Housekeeper; **Christine O'Neill**, Director of Environmental Services; **Randy Briscoe**, Supervising Housekeeper; and **Curtis Scott**, Citywide Business Agent and Local 237 Board Trustee.

(l-r) **Andrea Harris,** Cement Mason, Shop Steward and Grievance Rep; **Donald Arnold**, Director of the Citywide Division and Secretary-Treasurer of the Local 237 Executive Board and **Dennis Lynch**, Cement Mason.

(l-r) **Juliet J. McKenzie,** Kings County Hospital Radiologic Technologist; **Business Agent George Wade and James Young,** Kings County Hospital Radiologic Technologist, and Local 237 Shop Steward.

NYPD maintenance workers with **Curtis Scott** (center).

NYPD maintenance workers.

## "ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PRINT"

*That is the slogan of the New York Times, which recently applied the sentiment to an article about the NYPD's Evidence and Property Office by **Chelsia Rose Marcius**, which featured Local 237 member, Eugenio Ramos, an Evidence Specialist and Grievance Representative. Below is an excerpt from that article, entitled:*

### A Plush Dog, Samurai Sword and 42,439 Guns: Inside an N.Y.P.D. Basement

The NYPD office of the Manhattan Property Clerk is a subterranean repository for lost objects and the tangible aftermath of crime and misadventure. Almost every item that passes through the borough's 22 precincts must go to the basement to be numbered and cataloged to be held as evidence for a trial or wait for its rightful owner. Some objects come from crime scenes. Others were turned in after they were left behind on a park bench or a sidewalk. To make room, workers routinely take inventory to see which items meet the stringent criteria for removal. Two white sheets of paper pinned to a bulletin board offer a reminder: Lost objects worth at least $5,000 have to stay for three years. So do guns used in felonies. And any evidence related to a homicide, sexual offense, arson, explosion or an internal affairs investigation has a simple note: "Never destroy." But the inventory is always growing. During business hours, five days a week from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., a procession of officers passes through doors that resemble those of the Death Star. The clerk's office has a rolling schedule for precincts to help handle the inexorable accumulation of stuff. The officers bear clear, sealed plastic bags filled with what was left behind when laws were broken. On this day, Sergeant Consuegra watched as Eugenio Ramos, an evidence specialist, examined a black toy gun. He then looked through the corresponding paperwork to check for errors. Whenever he finds a mistake, Mr. Ramos must send the evidence or property back to the precinct it came from, and the process begins again. Items that clear inspection are assigned a number that determines where they will be stored. The most sensitive — guns, drugs and money — are kept in the two rooms of the basement vault. "This is quality control," Sergeant Consuegra said, adding, "You cannot break that chain of custody."

**Eugenio Ramos**, an evidence specialist, makes sure all of the paperwork is correct for the items that are sent to the clerk's office.

# Added to the Roster of Retirees

*Local 237 wants to thank the following members for their years of dedicated service, and wishes them well in their retirement:*

(l-r) **Business Agent, Jaleesa Moye with Property Manager, Retiree Linda Hayes and Assistant Superintendent, Jarell Redd** of Mott Haven Houses.

(l-r) **Louis Sanches, Grievance Representative; Jeanette Taveras, Local 237 Recording Secretary; Ramona Prosper, Retired Sergeant at Baruch College; and Wanda Borders, CUNY Public Safety Officer.**

**Len Proctor,** Deputy Director, Welfare Fund**; Retiree James Young;** with Assistant Director of Citywide **George Wade.**

CUNY Peace Officer **Sergeant Thompson** at York College.

(l-r) **Business Agent, Jaleesa Moye with Supervisor of Housing Groundskeepers, Retired Gregory Williams and Assistant Superintendent, Jarell Redd** of Mott Haven Houses.

(l-r) **Business Agent Kangela Moore** with **Hospital Police Officer Bell** at Metropolitan Hospital.

**Mr. William Sanabria Jr.** said, "It's been a long journey. I started from the bottom and made it to the top. I've met a lot of great people along the way. Remember the follow your dreams. I would like to thank NYCHA and Local 237."

(l-r) **Richard Pratts, Radiologic Technologist Level 3, Lincoln Hospital and Local 237 Shop Steward; with George Wade.**

Retiree **James Pena**, Chief Inspector, DEP, 33 years on the job, with **Donald Arnold**, Director of the Citywide Division and Secretary-Treasurer on the Executive Board.

# The Message of Spring

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

Ah springtime; Mother's Day, Memorial Day, Buds turn into flowers; the first baseball of the season has been thrown out to the cheers of hopeful fans forgetting a disappointing last year; Mr. Softee's trucks are back on the road driving us crazy with that obnoxious tune, a call to little kids eager to wait in line for that first lick of ice cream; and time to book your summer vacation…worrying, "will I fit into my swim suit"?

Ah springtime!

Much has been written and said about spring and its attractions. Baseball great Ernie Banks said: "Spring training means flowers, people coming outdoors, sunshine, optimism and baseball. Spring training is a time to think about being young again." Former First Lady, Ladybird Johnson said: "Where flowers bloom, so does hope." Singer and songwriter Sheryl Crow memorably wrote about spring: "No matter how chaotic it is, wildflowers will still spring up in the middle of nowhere." And Mother Nature seems to agree with these sentiments as daylight lasts a little longer and our snow boots get pushed to the back of the closet. It seems that we can finally begin to place the Covid chaos in the rear-view mirror, there's a feeling that spring has definitely sprung, bringing new beginnings, a fresh start, a clean slate — and inspiration too.

So much has been written about the season. Toni Morrison, the renowned writer and recipient of the 1993 Nobel Prize in Literature, once wrote: "When spring comes to the city people notice one another in the road; notice the strangers with whom they share aisles and tables and the space…. It's the time of year when the city urges contradiction most, encouraging you to buy street food when you have no appetite at all; giving you a taste for a single room occupied by you alone as well as a craving to share it with someone you passed in the street. Really there is no contradiction—rather it's a condition." The Ghanaian founder of Smart Youth Volunteer Foundation, Lailah Gifty Akita calls spring: "A season for the soul to regain its strength." And even comedian Robin Williams had an opinion on spring, calling it, "Nature's way of saying 'Let's Party' ".

It's no coincidence that Ramadan, Easter and Passover are spring holidays. The renewal of nature that comes with spring amplifies the promise of redemption embedded in the historical events being commemorated by all three religions. Ramadan, a month-long celebration, marks the holiest month of the Islamic calendar. According to tradition, the holy book of the Quran was revealed to the prophet Muhammad during Ramadan. Muslims believe that during this month, the gates to Heaven are open and the doors to Hell are closed. Muslims focus on their connection to God, reflect on their lives and spend quality time with friends and family. Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus and His victory over death.

Aug. 28, 1963., The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. waves to the crowd at the Lincoln Memorial for his "I Have a Dream" speech during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in Washington.

Around the same time — and often overlapping — Jewish people celebrate Passover, the holiday commemorating the Hebrews' exodus from slavery in Egypt. In both festivals, nature and history converge with a resounding message of hope. These holidays are about delivery from a state of despair. Easter assures the individual that life is eternal. It offers a way out of a world beyond repair. It celebrates a religion that provides comfort to those who had lost faith in the gods of Rome. It spreads the message that the death of one has the capacity to save many and the resurrection of Jesus is the ultimate affirmation of life. Passover summons Jews collectively into the world to repair it. The message of Passover is that a tyrant-like Pharaoh could be overthrown. A nation as powerful as Egypt could be defeated. Slaves could become free men. The oppressed could break the shackles of their captivity. Anything is possible, if only we dare to dream the impossible dream.

It was the biblical record of the Exodus from Egypt that enabled the spirit of optimism to prevail in the quest for equal rights, because they were stirred by the vision of Moses leading his people to the Promised Land. In fact, the historic speech that King delivered at the Mason Temple in Memphis, where he went on April 3 in 1968 to support sanitation workers protesting their meager wages of $1.65 an hour and deplorable working conditions, included the prophetic line: "I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the Promised Land." He was assassinated the next day. It was ironic that many of King's supporters, aides and confidants had urged him against expanding their focus and leaving their comfort zone to take on new causes, such as the Poor People's Campaign, which he was pushing. King would have none of it. Instead, he urged the sanitation workers to go on strike telling them: "You have to escalate the struggle a bit." And he countered the containment argument with: "We have moved into an era where we are called upon to raise certain basic questions about the whole society."

When we celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., it is impossible not to recognize that his lessons are similar to the main lesson of spring: Without hope, all will be lost. So much about our nation underscores that sentiment. Even the drawing on America's official seal — suggested by Benjamin Franklin in August 1776 — attested to this belief, with the dramatic scene described in Exodus where Moses divided waters of the Red Sea that is depicted on the seal. The history of our nation, the hope and sense of rebirth that springtime inspires, has a message that is clear: The impossible can happen, it just takes longer. Dr. King believed that and lived it. We should too.

*Without hope, all will be lost.*

Tuskegee Airman and Local 237 member the late Dabney Montgomery

# LONG ISLAND REPORT

Town of Babylon Holiday party. A great bunch of Teamsters working hard every day for the taxpayers!

(l-r) **Benny Carenza, Paul (scalehouse) Salemi and Chris LoSardo**. Paul doing a great job at North Babylon schools. Liaison Chris LoSardo also working hard for the members every day!

**Long Island Business Agent John Gallagher** (bottom left) works with the Port Jefferson members at their summer recess Union meeting. A great bunch of members!

Commack custodians **Jordan Maccaro** and **Chris Reganato** getting the building ready for students and teachers return.

North Babylon Sunday meeting, to talk about a 5-year Memorandum of Agreement we worked hard to accomplish. All were very happy with the offer. Local 237 is happy for all North Babylon members. Thanks very much for the support and hard work of the committee!

Jakes 58 **Business Agent Cathy Rice** and **Director Ben Carenza** attended a great member appreciation event for Jakes 58 Casino. Awesome members who deserve the recognition!

# Congratulations!

**Silvestre (Kito) Baez** (r) retired from the Town of Islip Resource Recovery Unit. Kito as the Steward and Foreman worked hard with me to help out all of the members there. Kito will be missed by all but we wish him the very best. Kito wanted to retire as a Teamster, collecting his pension as his dad is for 30 years and counting. Happy retirement! **Long Island Business Agent John Gallagher** (l) presented him with his plaque.

North Babylon Bus Driver **Tony Fichera** retires after 25 years on the job. Surrounded by his co-workers, who celebrated him.

**Kenny LaDue, MMIV,** retired with 36 years of service to the Town of Babylon. Lots of family, current members and retired members attended. Pictured is Kenny with his wife and daughters. Enjoy it Kenny!

North Babylon Teamster **John Hanslin** (second from left), retired after 30 years on the job. We all wish him the best!

# POLITICAL AND LABOR NEWS

## Governor Hochul Announces Tentative Labor Agreement Covering Over 10,000 CUNY Employees Including Teamsters Local 237

CUNY Recognition Day, July 19, 2023.

Governor Kathy Hochul announced on Wednesday, January 10 a tentative labor agreement lasting over five years between The City University of New York and Teamsters Local 237, District Council 37 and SEIU Local 300, covering over 10,000 employees, including custodial staff, college assistants, IT and public safety officers. The proposed retroactive contract is subject to approval by the CUNY Board of Trustees and ratification by the union membership.

**Teamsters Local 237 President Gregory Floyd** said: *"This was a difficult negotiation, but with the collective efforts of Governor Hochul, Mayor Adams and CUNY Chancellor Matos Rodríguez, we have reached an agreement to bring to our members."*

In a statement by Governor Hochul she said: *"This tentative agreement will help to ensure that these hard-working employees of The City University of New York are fairly compensated for the work they do every day to support New York's college students." My administration is committed to standing up for workers and ensuring they get the wages and benefits they deserve."*

## President Floyd Attends White House Meeting

Local 237 President Gregory Floyd (l) meets Senior Advisor to the President of the United States Stephen K. Benjamin (r) at the White House.

## Maintenance Contract Ratified

The contract was overwhelmingly approved by Local 237 maintenance members working at NYCHA, City agencies and CUNY. The ratified contract includes annual raises totaling 16.21%, retro-pay and a $3,000 signing bonus, as well as the protection of healthcare and supplemental union benefits at no additional costs to workers. Maintenance workers also won a new benefit — Comp. time or cash for overtime hours.

The contract ratification was conducted by (l-r) Local 237 Housing Division Director Carl Giles, Local 237 Trustee Curtis Scott, Local 237 Secretary Treasurer Donald Arnold, Sanitation Dept. Maintenance Worker Bridget Price and Local 237 BA Ken Roper.

## CUNY Members, Cement Masons Ratify Contracts

By wide margins, Local 237 members working at CUNY and Cement Masons working at all City agencies, ratified contracts that provide annual raises, retro-pay and a signing bonus, as well as the protection of healthcare and supplemental union benefits.

Overwhelming ratification by CUNY members. (l-r) Local 237 Trustee Curtis Scott, Local 237 Recording Secretary Jeanette Taveras, Baruch College Grievance Rep. and Shop Steward Luis Sanchez, Local 237 Attorney Lawrence Bosley, Local 237 Secretary Treasurer Donald Arnold, Local 237 Attorney Martha Bodhnarain, Local 237 Business Agent Kangela Moore and Local 237 Law Enforcement Division Director Derek Jackson.

Unanimous vote for Cement Mason Contract. (l-r) Local 237 Recording Secretary Jeanette Taveras, Local 237 Trustee Curtis Scott, CUNY Grievance Rep. Luis Sanchez, Local 237 Business Agent Bianca Jones, Local 237 Attorney Lawrence Bosley, Cement Mason Grievance Rep. and Shop Steward Andrea Harris, Local 237 Secretary Treasurer Donald Arnold, Local 237 Attorney Martha Bodhnarain, and and Local 237 Law Enforcement Division Director Derek Jackson.

## Local 237 Contracts Ratified

*"**Local 237 President Gregory Floyd** told us: 'Let's get this done!' and we did"* said chief negotiator **Donald Arnold**, who is the Secretary-Treasurer of the union's Executive Board and Director of the Citywide Division. *"President Floyd felt that our members needed to have peace of mind knowing that their workplace duties and benefits were discussed and finalized with the City. And, they showed their approval by overwhelmingly voting to ratify all of the contracts,"* said Arnold, who went on to say: *"Our members understand that their union has their backs. That's evidenced by successfully and consistently negotiating contracts in their best interests."*

# Union Members Get Out the Vote in Queens to Elect Labor's Candidate Tom Suozzi

With labor's help, Tom Suozzi was victorious…and he acknowledged labor's role in his acceptance speech after the votes were counted. We made a difference! New York City union members made more than 50,000 calls and knocked on nearly 10,000 doors in Queens alone, in a member-to-member campaign that saw action by 86 different NYC CLC local union affiliates. But, we may have to do it all over again as Congressman Suozzi is up for re-election this November.

*"The New York City Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO is proud to congratulate our friend Tom Suozzi on his successful election in NY's Third Congressional District,"* said **NYC CLC President Vincent Alvarez** following the victory in the February 6th special election to replace ouster Congressman George Santos in the 3rd Congressional District. "Union members in Queens know that Tom has been a champion for working families throughout his entire career in public service, including during his time spearheading the House Labor Caucus. We know that we can count on Tom to continue fighting for policies that help all workers and supporting organized labor as the most effective means of building a strong middle class."

*"Congratulations Tom, it's good to have you back,"* said **Gregory Floyd, President, Teamsters Local 237 and Vice President at-Large on the General Board of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.** *"On behalf of working families, and especially among Teamsters — who, with your co-sponsoring of the Butch-Lewis Act were saved from an estimated 60% reduction of hard-earned pension benefits for active members and retirees — know that we look forward to continuing our collaborative effort in the fight for fairness and dignity in the workplace. Congratulations too, to the voters of the Congressional District 3 who can now be assured that experience and integrity has returned and their representation in Washington is once again a source of pride and a promise of accomplishments in the future."*

# Spring: Nature's Call to Action

**By Saul Fishman**

*CSBA President*

Although I am writing this column just ahead of the March 1st submission deadline, you will likely be reading this article in late March or early April as Spring blossoms around us. Pleasant warmer weather (and some rain) is in the forecast, and daylight now welcomes us for longer after we arrive home from work. Hopefully you receive some measure of pleasure in these seasonal changes!

Spring is traditionally associated with rebirth and renewed energy, and most people I know (myself included) are really looking forward to it.

What does this have to do with our union, the Civil Service Bar Association, and with our employment as attorneys for a New York City agency? Technically nothing, but I'm hoping that as we feel a bit better about ourselves and our immediate surroundings, we ask ourselves how can we help bring about more durable, non-season-dependent career opportunities and a more pleasant working environment?

Friends, a union is pretty much like any group or organization. We belong because we know that together we are stronger, and that when trouble comes around, it's better to have people committed to mutual assistance.

But let's not kid ourselves. CSBA is a relatively small union, albeit affiliated with a larger one (Teamsters Local 237). Each year, there is some turnover among our Directors (seven are elected each year for a three-year term; 21 Directors total). Directors aren't technically shop stewards but we do encourage people from different agencies and locations to seek nomination every May (May 14th this year) to assist us in knowing what's happening in different shops. It's a two-way street, and you (and through you, your colleagues) can become among the first to know about agency and citywide changes that may have come to our attention ahead of any announcement.

Not everyone can be a Director, and we realize that many Directors can only devote so much time and effort to work-related issues other than their specific job assignments. Hence there are multiple potential CSBA committees to join for which you do not have to be a CSBA Director. These committee efforts may potentially yield enhanced career advancement or networking opportunities to know about what our colleagues are doing elsewhere or perhaps a social committee to just provide fun socials from time to time.

Separate from CSBA committees, almost every agency has a Labor-Management Health & Safety Committee which meets quarterly on agency time. As CSBA President, I can usually appoint a member from your agency to attend on paid release time. What better way to make sure that we're in the know about potential hazards and contribute to the ongoing safety of ourselves and our colleagues?

Thanks for reading and caring. For more information and/or to volunteer, please reach out to us via **csbainfo@local237.org**. Happy Spring!

# Hot City Issues Come to a Boil This Spring

**By Vito R. Pitta, Esq.**

***Canceled Budget Cuts Headline Spring's Political News***

Many New Yorkers breathed a sigh of relief when Mayor Eric Adams announced late in February that promised budget cuts were no longer in the offering. This is of particular relief to our members and their families since New York City agencies were staring down the barrel of a 5 percent cut in spending for April 2024 on the heels of two previous rounds of budget cuts. Further comfort could be found in Mayor Adams' announcement that there would be a relaxation of the hiring freeze that was in place, along with other limits on contract spending.

Higher than expected revenue projections, along with a 10 percent drop in the cost of sheltering migrants were the primary reasons for the good budget news.

The relaxation of the hiring freeze will allow city agencies to hire a new person for every two individuals that leave. Also, among the rollbacks are cuts in all non-salary spending for everything from supplies and equipment to contract services.

***February Special Elections***

Former Democratic Congressman Tom Suozzi was victorious in a special election for Long Island's 3rd District to replace former GOP Congressman, George Santos. Suozzi defeated Republican Mazi Pilip despite the snowstorm that battered New York City on election day. There is a very good chance Suozzi and Pilip will face off again in the general election in November.

Also, victorious on the snow-covered day was attorney Landon Dais who prevailed in the Assembly race for the 77th District seat in the Bronx, representing portions of Claremont, Concourse, Highbridge, Mount Eden and Morris Heights. Dais succeeds Democrat Latoya Joyner who resigned the seat in January.

Looking ahead, Republicans chose former NYPD Detective Mike Sapraicone at their convention as their nominee to run against Senator Kirsten Gillibrand in November. Though Sapraicone won over a majority of Republican delegates at their Binghamton convention, he still faces a primary challenge from two conservative members of the party, Josh Eisen and Cara Castronuova.

***NYCHA Gets New Federal Monitor***

The international law firm Jenner & Block will serve as NYCHA's new independent monitor beginning on March 1st. Jenner & Block succeed Bart Schwartz and his consulting company, Guidepost Solutions, which have served as the monitor since February 2019 in an agreement between NYCHA, then Mayor Bill de Blasio, and the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD). The independent monitor is meant to help NYCHA address issues of neglect and mismanagement as it concerns its properties and tenants.

Though they applied to continue their work, Schwartz and Guidepost failed to meet many of the milestones set out to improve living conditions in NYCHA's properties. For this reason, HUD, the Manhattan U.S. Attorney and the City decided to move on to Jenner & Block. Two partners from Jenner & Block will offer their monitorship for free but will charge the city for its services and any consultants they decide to hire.

***NYCHA Residents Set for Second "Trust" Vote***

In mid-March almost 200 seniors at NYCHA's Bronx River Addition in Soundview will follow their neighbors at the Nostrand Housing in Brooklyn and vote on whether the Housing Authority should bring in private developers, maintain traditional public housing, or count on the Public Housing Preservation Trust to perform upgrades and repairs.

In December 2023, the Nostrand tenants voted overwhelmingly for the Trust option – over 750 votes.

Since as a public authority NYCHA cannot issue bonds, the Public Housing Preservation Trust was set up as a non-profit in association with NYCHA, that will have the ability to raise billions of dollars for repairs through the bond market. The Trust is overseen by a 9-member Board of Directors – one of those directors is a labor representative, who is a Local 237 member.

Though the Brooklyn vote was a blow out for the Trust and a strong vote of confidence in NYCHA's public employees, the Bronx River vote is complicated by the fact that many of its households are scattered throughout the city. Due to a faulty heating system, Building 12 in Soundview was deemed uninhabitable and 60 seniors were forced to move to temporary residencies throughout the city.

Even though tenants can mail-in ballots or vote remotely, the fact that so many residents are spread across the city has complicated outreach and voting educational efforts.

Remote voters can cast ballots by mail or online for 30 days beginning March 13th, which is followed by 10 days of in-person voting between April 2nd and April 11th. The voting near the Bronx River Addition will take place between 10:00 am and 7:00 pm on all days. Developments opting for the Trust will continue to be managed and maintained by Local 237 members.

**Vito R. Pitta** *is a partner at Pitta LLP, a firm whose practice consists primarily of traditional union-side labor law, employment law, employee benefits law, and campaign finance compliance law. The firm counts more than forty local and international labor unions as its clients. Mr. Pitta's practice consists of counseling the firm's clients on traditional labor and employment matters, as well as advising the firm's political campaign and political action committee clients with respect to federal, state, and local campaign finance laws. Mr. Pitta is also a Partner in Pitta LLP's affiliated personal injury firm, Pitta & Baione LLP, which represents victims of the September 11th terrorist attacks; and a member of Pitta LLP's affiliated lobbying firm, Pitta Bishop & Del Giomo LLC.*

# Keeping you in the know

## Planning For Your Future

**By Mitch Goldberg**
*Director of the Welfare Fund*

### FINANCIAL PLANNING PROGRAM

Teamsters Local 237 Welfare Fund offers a Financial Planning Program for all Citywide and Housing members. The program is designed to provide you with a personal financial planner to review your finances, to help answer your financial questions and /or assist you with the development of a financial strategy. There is no cost to you, the program is paid for by the Welfare Fund.

Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. is the firm that administers the program and is one of the 500 largest investment advisors in the world. The Financial Counseling Program is intended to provide you with access to qualified professionals, Certified Financial Planners® and Registered Investment Advisors who are available to work with you to provide **objective and unbiased** advice regarding: *debt management, deferred compensation allocations and decisions, retirement planning, insurance, investing, college planning, budgeting, rollovers, and much more.* Stacey Braun representatives are prohibited from selling investment products or insurance. If you are interested in taking advantage of the **Financial Counseling Program, please contact Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. at 1-888-949-1925 or email JLandicho@staceybraun.com.**

### PENSION COUNSELING SERVICES

Individual pension counseling is available on an appointment basis for Citywide and Housing members. You can receive advice on pension options, procedures for applying for pensions, how to make the most of your retirement arrangements and other matters relating to your individual pension questions. **You may set up an appointment by calling the Pension Counseling Appointment Desk at (212) 807-0555.**

***Stacey Braun will be offering webinars this spring.***
***Please call 1-888-949-1925 for further information if you are interested.***

A six-week retirement planning series is offered twice a year by Local 237 retirees Division. Topics such as pension, Social Security, health insurance coverage in retirement, and lifestyle adjustments are discussed in different sessions. Citywide and Housing members may call the Retiree Division at 212-807-0555. For more information regarding retirement planning the Retiree Division is sponsoring a pre-retirement online seminar April 17 & 18.

The Trustees of Teamsters Local 237 offer these benefits so that you can secure a stable and successful financial future for you and your family. Many members do take advantage of these benefits but many are unaware that we offer these services free for you to access and plan for financial success.

## Not a Time to Wait: "Spring" Into Action!

**By David Bonington, CFP®**
*Financial Planner, Stacey Braun Associates, Inc.*

An excellent opportunity is right down the street at your corner bank or credit union. Interest rates on savings accounts are significant again! And if you didn't take advantage of this opportunity last year, you are not too late!

What created the opportunity? The Federal Reserve Bank's action over the last two years to dramatically raise an underlying interest rate it controls. Such action is taken to combat significant inflation: although it is painful for borrowers, it creates the opportunity savers enjoy today.

High-yield savings account rates are close to 5%, almost twice the last-40-year average rate on Cash. For savers willing to "lock up" funds for short periods, measured in months, Certificates of Deposit ("CDs") should offer a bit more. (If you are comfortable with online banking, rates can be even better, without sacrificing important FDIC insurance.) Finally, one can get the best of two worlds – handsome rates and flexibility – by "laddering" CDs of different lengths (for example, putting a little money into each of a three-month, six-month, and nine-month CD). Consider discussing this with your institution – or, if you are unsure how all this works, call Stacey Braun for an appointment first!

The only thing better than a good opportunity is a good opportunity which remains available and which offers more than it did in the first place. My strong suggestion? Rates are higher than they were a year ago – take steps to make your savings work as hard as you are!

**Free, confidential sessions with a Stacey Braun planner are available to all active and retired Local 237 members. They can be arranged by calling 1-888-949-1925. No financial products are sold and there is never sales pressure.**

## Help Us Spot Government Imposters

**By Ravi Gopaul** *Social Security Public Affairs Specialist in New York*

Do you know how to spot a government imposter scam? We continue to raise public awareness about Social Security-related and other government imposter scams during the fifth annual "Slam the Scam" Day on March 7, 2024. Knowing how to identify potential scammers will help safeguard your personal information.

There are common elements to many scams. Scammers often take advantage of fears and threaten you with arrest or legal action. Scammers also pretend to be Social Security or other government employees and claim there's a problem with your Social Security number (SSN) or your benefits. They may even claim your SSN is linked to a crime.

When you suspect you've been contacted by a scammer:

- Hang up right away or ignore the message.
- Never provide personal information, money, or gift cards.
- Report the scam immediately to our Office of the Inspector General (OIG) at oig.ssa.gov/scam-awareness/report-the-scam.

If you owe money to Social Security, we'll mail you a letter with payment options and appeal information. We only accept payments electronically through Pay.gov, Online Bill Pay, or by check or money order.

We will never:

- Threaten you with arrest or legal action because you don't agree to pay us money immediately.
- Promise a benefit increase in exchange for money.
- Ask you to send us gift cards, prepaid debit cards, wire transfers, internet currency, cryptocurrency, or cash through the U.S. mail.

Scammers continue to evolve and find new ways to steal your money and personal information. Please stay vigilant and help raise awareness about Social Security-related and other government imposter scams. For more information, please visit www.ssa.gov/scam.

Tell your friends and family about government imposter scams. Let them know they don't have to be embarrassed to report if they shared personal financial information or suffered a financial loss. The important thing is to report the scam right away.

Together, we can "Slam the Scam!"

## Personnel Note

Effective January 15, 2024, **Carlos Cotto** received a new title: Director of Operations, Law Enforcement and Citywide Divisions, and an increase in salary of $3,376.00 per week ($175,552 per year). His monthly car allowance also increased to $1,000 per month effective, February 2, 2024.

Resumen En Español

# El Mensaje de la Primavera

¡Ah, primavera! Día de la Madre, Día Conmemorativo, los capullos se convierten en flores; el primer lanzamiento de béisbol de la temporada ha sido hecho entre los aplausos de los aficionados esperanzados, olvidando un decepcionante último año; los camiones del Sr. Softee están de vuelta en la carretera volviéndonos locos con esa molesta melodía, una llamada a los niños ansiosos por esperar en la fila para el primer sorbo de helado; y es tiempo de reservar tus vacaciones de verano... preguntándote, "¿entraré en mi traje de baño?"

¡Ah, primavera!

Mucho se ha escrito y dicho sobre la primavera y sus atractivos. El gran jugador de béisbol Ernie Banks dijo: "El entrenamiento de primavera significa flores, personas saliendo al aire libre, sol, optimismo y béisbol. El entrenamiento de primavera es un momento para pensar en ser joven de nuevo." La ex Primera Dama, Ladybird Johnson, dijo: "Donde florecen las flores, también lo hace la esperanza." La cantante y compositora Sheryl Crow escribió de manera memorable sobre la primavera: " No importa cuán caótica sea, las flores silvestres seguirán brotando en medio de la nada." Y la Madre Naturaleza parece estar de acuerdo con estos sentimientos, ya que la luz del día dura un poco más y nuestras botas para la nieve quedan relegadas al fondo del armario. Parece que finalmente podemos empezar a dejar el caos del COVID en el espejo retrovisor; hay una sensación de que la primavera definitivamente ha surgido, trayendo nuevos comienzos, un nuevo comienzo, una pizarra limpia, y la inspiración también.

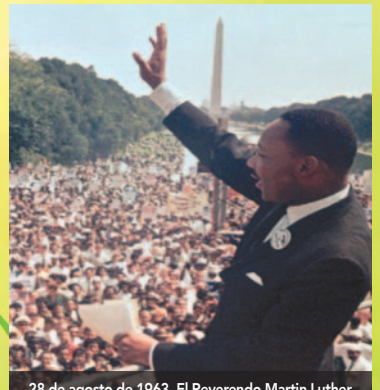
Se ha escrito mucho sobre la temporada. Toni Morrison, la renombrada escritora y ganadora del Premio Nobel de Literatura en 1993, una vez escribió: "Cuando llega la primavera a la ciudad, la gente se fija en los demás en el camino; se fija en los extraños con quienes comparten pasillos y mesas y el espacio... Es la época del año en que la ciudad insta más a la contradicción animándote a comprar comida callejera cuando no tienes apetito en lo absoluto; dándote un gusto por una habitación ocupada solo por ti, así como un deseo de compartirla con alguien con quien te cruzaste en la calle. Realmente no hay contradicción, más bien es una condición." La fundadora ghanesa de la Smart Youth Volunteer Foundation, Lailah Gifty Akita, llama a la primavera: "Una temporada para que el alma recupere su fuerza." E incluso, el comediante Robin Williams tenía una opinión sobre la primavera, llamándola "La forma en que la naturaleza dice '¡Vamos de Fiesta!'".

No es casualidad que el Ramadán, la Pascua y la Pascua Judía sean festividades de primavera. La renovación de la naturaleza que llega con la primavera amplifica la promesa de redención incrustada en los acontecimientos históricos, que son conmemorados por las tres religiones. El Ramadán, una celebración que dura un mes, marca el mes más sagrado del calendario islámico. Según la tradición, el Libro Sagrado del Corán fue revelado al profeta Mahoma durante el Ramadán. Los musulmanes creen que, durante este mes, las puertas del Cielo están abiertas y las puertas del Infierno están cerradas. Los musulmanes se centran en su conexión con Dios, reflexionan sobre sus vidas y pasan tiempo de calidad con amigos y familiares. La Pascua celebra la resurrección de Jesús y su victoria sobre la muerte. Casi al mismo tiempo, y a menudo superpuestas, los judíos celebran la Pascua, la festividad que conmemora el éxodo de los hebreos de la esclavitud en Egipto. En ambas festividades, la naturaleza y la historia convergen con un mensaje resonante de esperanza. Estas festividades se tratan de la liberación de un estado de desesperación. La Pascua asegura al individuo que la vida es eterna. Ofrece una salida de un mundo irreparable. Celebra una religión que brinda consuelo a aquellos que habían perdido la fe en los dioses de Roma. Difunde el mensaje de que la muerte de uno tiene la capacidad de salvar a muchos, y la resurrección de Jesús es la afirmación última de la vida. La Pascua Judía convoca colectivamente a los judíos al mundo para repararlo/redimirlo. El mensaje de la Pascua Judía indica que un faraón tirano podría ser derrocado. Una nación tan poderosa como Egipto podría ser derrotada. Los esclavos podrían convertirse en hombres libres. Los oprimidos podrían romper las cadenas de su cautiverio. Todo es posible si tan solo nos atreviéramos a soñar el sueño imposible.

Fue el relato bíblico del Éxodo de Egipto lo que permitió que el espíritu de optimismo prevaleciera en la búsqueda de la igualdad de derechos, porque fueron conmovidos por la visión de Moisés guiando a su pueblo hacia la Tierra Prometida. De hecho, el histórico discurso que King pronunció en el Templo Masón de Memphis, donde él fue el 3 de abril de 1968 para apoyar a los trabajadores de saneamiento que protestaban por sus magros salarios de 1,65 dólares la hora y sus deplorables condiciones laborales, incluyó la frase profética: "Quizás no llegue allí con ustedes. Pero quiero que sepan esta noche que nosotros, como pueblo, llegaremos a la Tierra Prometida." Fue asesinado al día siguiente. Era irónico que muchos de los partidarios, ayudantes y confidentes de King le habían instado a no ampliar su enfoque y abandonar su zona de confort para asumir nuevas causas, como la Campaña de los Pobres, que él estaba impulsando. King no aceptó nada de eso. En cambio, instó a los trabajadores de saneamiento a ir a la huelga diciéndoles: "Tienen que intensificar un poco la lucha." Y contrarrestó el argumento de la contención con: "Hemos entrado en una era en la que estamos llamados a plantear ciertas preguntas básicas sobre toda la sociedad."

Cuando celebramos el legado del Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., es imposible no reconocer que sus lecciones son similares a la lección principal de la primavera: Sin esperanza, todo se perderá. Tanto en nuestra nación subraya ese sentimiento. Incluso el dibujo en el sello oficial de Estados Unidos, sugerido por Benjamín Franklin en agosto de 1776, atestiguó esta creencia, con la dramática escena descrita en el Éxodo donde Moisés divide las aguas del Mar Rojo que está representada en el sello. La historia de nuestra nación, la esperanza y el sentido de renacimiento que inspira la primavera, tienen un mensaje claro: Lo imposible puede suceder, solo lleva más tiempo. El Dr. King creía en eso y lo vivió. Nosotros también deberíamos hacerlo.

El fallecido Dabney Montgomery, miembro de los Tuskegee Airman y del Local 237.



28 de agosto de 1963. El Reverendo Martin Luther King Jr. saluda a la multitud en el Monumento a Lincoln durante su discurso "Tengo un Sueño" durante la Marcha en Washington por el Empleo y la Libertad en Washington.

# Keeping you in the know

## Spring Cleaning, 2024

**By Karla Steinberg, LMSW**

*Membership Social Worker*

Spring is almost here and as it gets warmer, we start feeling antsy, eager to get out again and re-emerge from winter hibernation. Now is a great time to get into a new hobby, or re-kindle a love and excitement you have for an old one. Sometimes, looking at something from a different perspective can spark new ideas, new inspiration. This could apply to your spring cleaning, or it could be changing of your personal space within your home.

Did you know that just rearranging the layout of a room has real psychological benefits? From *Psychology Today*:

"**How does rearranging the furniture relate to creativity and mood elevation?** An impact on the environment, whether an imprint or a removal, lifts mood, provides concrete satisfaction, and instills a sense of effectiveness. Inner and outer harmony happen when pieces are placed in a way that makes sense for you."

It can also improve creativity, boost morale, inspire you, and may even increase your productivity. Spring cleaning doesn't just have to mean dusting and clearing things out, but if you are already doing that, it is an opportune time to look at your living and work spaces too. Rearranging your furniture away from a door opening tends to give a more open feel to a room, which many people find calming. Lighting also has a big impact on space and emotions. Look around your rooms; do you have an opportunity to let more natural light in? Is light blocked by a tall dresser or cabinet? Now that daylight is around longer, we can take more advantage of the benefits of natural sunlight. If you don't have a lot of windows, getting some warm lighting lightbulbs in lamps can also do the trick.

Spring cleansing doesn't only have to be for home. A desk covered in papers may produce anxiety or provoke feelings of feeling overwhelmed and anxious. In contrast, a clean desk could translate into a clean headspace. There are so many ways of organizing space; using shelves, drawers, desk organizers, paper trays. -A simple old cup for pens, pencils, markers, envelope openers, erasers, etc. A small bowl or dish for paper clips or thumb tacks. Paper trays and file holders (and file folders!) are great ways of organizing the area around you.

A lot of our members drive to work and living and commuting around NYC is not for the faint of heart. This means a bulk of us are spending a significant amount of time in our vehicles. Keeping a bag around your shift knob for trash (tissues, take out, gum wrappers, etc.), and then emptying the bag or swapping it out altogether, is a great way to keep some order in your ride. Starting your day with a clean commute is a great way to set the tone for your mood and the day ahead of you. Happy Spring and remember: A clean space = a happy place.

## Forever In Our Hearts

**To the families of Local 237 members who are no longer with us, and to our members who have suffered a loss, please know that we share your sorrow and hope that fond memories will offer you peace and comfort.**

**President Gregory Floyd,**
**the Executive Board and Staff**

## The Education and Training Department wants to help you build a stellar resume!

**By Shanell Grayson**

*Director of Training and Education*

(l-r) Shanell Grayson, Director; Geraldine Carpentier, Education Coordinator; and Katie Grate, Assistant Director.

***Have you updated your resume recently?*** Or better yet, do you have a resume? If your answer to either of these questions is no, then I highly recommend that you take advantage of our ***new*** Resume Building Workshop. Even if you're not looking to get a new job or promotion anytime soon, it's always a good idea to have an updated resume.

This 4-week course will guide you step-by-step through the resume-building process. You'll learn the importance of a resume, how to describe your experience in an impactful way, and which design elements can make your resume stand out to future employers. After learning the basics, you'll take these skills into the computer lab where you will draft, revise, and print your finished resume.

The Resume Building Workshop will begin in late-April. If this course, or any other courses on our calendar are of interest to you, you can use the QR code below to register. Space in this new workshop is limited, so don't wait to sign up!

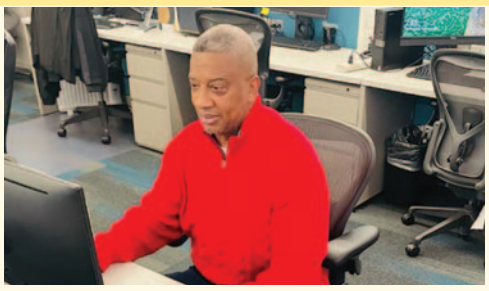
As always, ***we look forward to serving you!***

## TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

### Jason Brewster

***Warehouse Operations Manager, OCP/DCAS/Facilities & Warehouse Middle Village***

Member Jason Brewster is one of our newer instructors. He recently taught a class to Stock Workers who were taking the upcoming Supervisor of Stock Worker Civil Service Exam. He did an excellent job and helped many of our members pass the exam. We are delighted to welcome him to our teaching staff. Thanks for all your hard work and dedication, Jason!



### Theodore Haynes

***Administrator, EMSD Long Island City***

For the past 5 years, Local 237 member Theodore Haynes has been an outstanding HPT instructor for both the Civil Service and Certificate Program classes. By sharing his extensive heating knowledge with our members, many have been able to elevate through the ranks at the NYC Housing Authority. Keep up the great work, Theodore!

## Interested in any of the Education Department's FREE Courses?

**Email:** *training@local237.org* • **Call:** *212-807-0550*

**CIVIL SERVICE EXAM PREP CLASSES**
- Bricklayer (March)
- Supervisor of Housing Groundskeeper (Mar.)
- Housing Manager (April)
- Public Health Educator (May)
- Maintenance Worker (June)

**SCHOLARSHIPS**
- Teamsters International Scholarship
  - High School Seniors
  - $10,000 Award
  - Deadline: March 1, 2024
  - JRHMS.org
- Union Plus Scholarship
  - Members and their families
  - Unionplus.org

**COURSES AT PARTICIPATING UNIONS**
- GED Prep
  - 1199: (212) 894-4362
  - UAW: (212) 228-0041
- English and Spanish Courses
  - 1199: (212) 494-0525

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES**
- Beginning Computer Skills (March)
- Shop Steward Training #2 (March) (For current Shop Stewards ONLY)
- Fundamentals of Heating Plant Operations (April)
- Resume Building Workshop (April)

**PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES**
- Defensive Driving NY (March)
  - 10% off insurance
  - 4 points off license

**Scan the QR Code to register now.**

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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.

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