

What 'Union Proud' means

By **DAVID COOK**
President



We've finally arrived. We're in the midst of our opening contract meetings for workplace contracts that impact 90 percent of our members. I've spent the last few months doing everything I can to stress the importance of these meetings, and I've directed your UFCW Local 655 staff to do the same.

They've made flyers. They've talked to you in stores. They've sent emails. They've asked you to take our survey. I've called our partners personally to express my hope that they'll attend these meetings. I've sent letters to each and every single one of you.

Last week, our first two contract meetings exceeded our expectations. More of you showed up at the first meeting alone than the number of people who attended ALL of our contract meetings three years ago. This sends a crystal-clear message to your employer: that you work hard and deserve better.

This is the true meaning of union pride. Solidarity. It's a word we use a lot, because it's the heart of why unions are so important. We stand together as one, and I was moved and humbled to see so many of you stand with your co-workers.

Thank you. Thank you for standing together. UFCW Local 655 is a family. We're a partnership. We look out for each other and we depend on each other. Without each other, life gets much harder.

Union pride means caring about more than just your individual paycheck, it means caring about the people that work next to you as well. It's about fighting for benefits you've earned, demanding the wages you deserve,

and standing up against unfair treatment. Union pride was on display at our meetings, and I will do everything in my power to make sure your employers hear your message loud and clear.

Whether it was our part-time partners demanding better pay, long-term partners fighting for a strong pension, or pharmacy tech partners looking for acknowledgement for their responsibilities, union pride is a force to be reckoned with.

We're doing a few things differently this time around, as we negotiate. We're going to bargain with the 'Big Three' stores (Schnucks, Shop 'n Save and Dierbergs) separately, instead of together. Our reasoning is simple: each workplace has unique issues that need to be addressed individually.

Your negotiating committee was selected to maximize diversity and reflect the membership. Serving on the committee is: Schnucks-Woods Mill courtesy clerk Bill Crocker, Dierbergs-Telegraph Produce Dept. clerk Cindy Gamewell, Schnucks-Twin Oaks grocery clerk Paul Gebken, Shop 'n Save-Central City customer service clerk Tatanisha Hoskins, Schnucks-Lindell salad bar clerk Kellie Boggs, Schnucks-Cross Keys pharmacy technician Rebecca Schuster, Dierbergs-Marketplace non-foods clerk Evelyn Hoban, Shop 'n Save clerk Ray Derousse, and Schnucks-Arnold office checker Janice Wetherell.

As you can see, we've got part- and full-time employees, and the committee ranges widely in age and ethnic makeup.

These negotiations will be hard. I won't promise anything except that the entire UFCW Local 655 family and I are working around the clock to secure the best possible deal for our partners. We want to see your life get better, and the best way to do that is to work together and have Union Pride.

Local 655 corrects wrongful termination

Makenzie (who asked that we not use her last name) was terminated for theft.

Her bosses accused her of stealing directly from her store, which, if true, can warrant termination. But Makenzie, who has some special needs issues as well as a young son, vigorously maintained her innocence. Makenzie's mother, who helps to care for her and her son, soon contacted UFCW Local 655 and their union representative, Rick Glidewell.

Glidewell reviewed the security camera footage and immediately saw the issue. The footage simply didn't provide any evidence

showing Makenzie stealing from her store. Without proof of her wrongdoing, the company has no standing to terminate her.

"My daughter had an unpleasant experience and the Union helped her tremendously to right the wrong," Makenzie's mother said. "It's good to know that she has someone in her corner to protect her rights."

Not only was Local 655 able to reinstate the wrongly terminated Makenzie, they also secured her back pay for the nearly 40 hours of work she missed. Makenzie's story is just one out of literally thousands about how unions stand up for employees everywhere.

2016 Volunteer Organizing Program (VOP) explained

One of the obstacles in our efforts to negotiate better contracts in 2016 and beyond is the effect of non-union competition in the retail food industry. It can be a little confusing, but the average labor cost to union retailers is higher than non-union retailers. Average labor costs include wages, health care benefits, retirement benefits, vacation, holiday pay, sick benefits and premiums and there are costs associated with some work rules.

The Volunteer Organizing program is designed to address the issue of unfair non-union competition.

The program will concentrate on two areas in 2016;

1. Picketing/hand billing the public in front of non-union food retailers.
2. Hand billing workers at non-union food

retailers.

Shifts will be scheduled and be adequate in number to accommodate flexibility for program participants. Shifts committed to by volunteers must be worked to continue in the program.

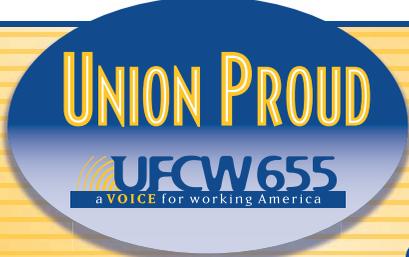
Participant obligations will be no less than 6 two hour shifts. Shifts may be consecutive. Picket signs and handbills will be provided.

The program will start the week beginning March 7, 2016.

Training will be provided in early March at a time and date to be determined at the Union Hall.

Per the Collective Bargaining Agreement, volunteers will be scheduled off by 6 p.m. Fridays and be off on the weekends at the volunteer's choosing.

**AN EXCLUSIVE
TWICE MONTHLY
REPORT FOR**



**UFCW 655
MEMBERS &
THEIR FAMILIES**

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Contract negotiations bring members unify



More than 500 members showed up to the first opening contract meeting in south St. Louis last week. There was standing room only in the Holiday Inn on S. Lindbergh as partners squeezed in to tell their union what they needed to get a better deal at work.

UFCW petitions for Union election At Weekends Only

For some time, organizing staff from UFCW Local 655 have been working with employees at the Weekends Only location on Manchester Rd. Employees approached UFCW staff about concerns they had in the workplace that could be solved by a union-bargained contract.

On Feb 2, with a majority of Weekends Only employees signing cards showing interest in a union, organizers at UFCW formally petitioned the National Labor Relations Board to hold a vote.

If Weekends Only employees vote in favor, UFCW officials will begin negotiating a contract with the company. If that process produces a contract that workers at Weekends Only support, they'll approve the contract with a vote and become members of the UFCW Local 655 family. The NLRB closely monitors all votes.

Workers at Weekends Only expressed relief to UFCW Local 655 staff that the process was now making significant progress. Employees have growing concerns about scheduling, accurate job descriptions and fair treatment from management.

Local 655's campaign to organize Weekends Only is part of their larger organizing effort with workers all across the region. Consistent efforts to expand union membership

improves worker's lives, union officials argue.

"We're always thrilled to be able to help more workers and we welcome them into the UFCW Local 655 family," said David Cook, UFCW Local 655 President. "Employees all over work hard and deserve better, and a strong union contract can help to correct those issues. We're very excited to have some new members in the Local 655 family."

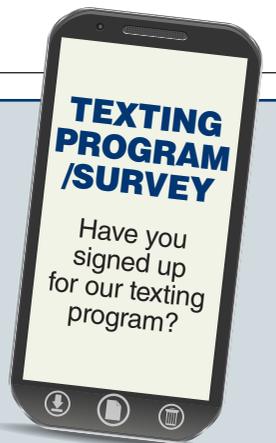
While several employees initiated the process, they also emphasized that Weekends Only is not a "bad company."

"We approached the union because Weekends Only has some issues they need to address," said one worker, who asked not to be identified before the vote. "They aren't a bad company or anything like that, but there are some problems that need to get fixed and the union is the best way to do that."

The Manchester Road Weekends Only location has about 50 employees that will be given the choice to join a union. Union officials asked that their membership show support any way they can for Weekends Only employees. UFCW encourages their members to go to the Manchester location wearing union buttons or jackets.

Get vital information about your workplace, your contract and more.

Text 'Join' to 738-674 to get signed up for our text program!



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