

SEIU Local 140 Newsletter 3.23.23

Actions and solidarity

- Upcoming bargaining dates (All are welcome to attend as long as they are off the clock)
 - 4/7 at PEC 501 N Dixon St. from 1 - 5pm
 - 4/21 at SEIU 503 525 NE Oregon St. from 1 - 5pm
- Have lunch with fellow union members
 - Saturday 4/1 from 12 - 2pm at Hawthorne Asylum Food Carts SE Madison and 11th.
- Union meeting
 - Saturday 4/8 at 10am 525 NE Oregon St. or on zoom.
- Follow and spread the word about our Instagram!

3/16 Rally for Hazard Pay

On Thursday March 16th, a group of night custodians gathered at PPS district headquarters to deliver a group grievance regarding the district's refusal to offer hazard pay to those who worked during last month's snowstorm. Workers shared testimony of their hardships at work during the snow and chanted in support of hazard pay and workers rights. Roshni Sabedra, the district's senior partner of Employee and Labor Relations came out to receive our grievance but would not answer questions. Apparently, Frank Leavitt was in a budget meeting and no one from PPS's communication department could come to answer our questions. Roshni was unable to explain why we were prevented from entering the building, even to use the restrooms. Thank you to everyone who came out in support including members of Portland DSA, Jobs with Justice, and GABRIELA Portland!

On Tuesday 3/21, stewards Aubz and Gabe met with Roshni and Frank to follow up on our grievance for hazard pay. We presented 9 pages worth of worker [testimony](#) collected from the snow day impact survey. We made several information requests including how many custodians went unpaid on February 23rd and 24th and how many buildings FOMs visited during the snow days. Management took our information requests, but refused to answer our questions during the meeting. Normally, they have 14 calendar days to respond to a grievance in writing, but they used the opportunity of this meeting to request another 2 weeks to respond. This is evidence of management dragging their feet on an issue that is urgent to members and easily remedied. All we are asking is that management honor the spirit of the contract by paying custodians overtime who were forced to come to work in hazardous conditions during the snow days. We are also asking that they compensate workers for any expenses resulting from commuting to and from work and that they pay workers who stayed home so we do not lose our earned paid time off.

Nutrition Service Update

An update about nutrition services from Amy Silvia:

Hello Nutrition Service Workers. I wanted to give you an update of what happened with the snow day pay. I'm sure you know that Custodians filed a grievance with Management regarding snow pay. Nutrition services did not break the contract language so we could not grieve the no pay. Instead, I asked Whitney if we could use a personal or emergency day to get paid. I explained that November and December are basically half paychecks and February is a short month. Those unpaid days add up. Yes,

we will have a day added on at the end of the year, but that does not pay my bills today. Whitney agreed to look into an LOA (Letter of Agreement) regarding letting us use our personal day for the snow days. She sent me a draft yesterday. SEIU will be signing this. If you have personal or emergency days left, you will get to use those days for the make up snow days. See attached LOA. I know this isn't the best answer, but it is a start. We are currently working on a proposal to add inclement weather language into our contract. Here is what needs to be done by you: The answer is NOTHING. The management higher ups need to sign the agreement and SEIU needs to sign the agreement. Once that happens payroll will automatically make the two snow days paid if you have personal or emergency days available. If you do not have any days available, you will not get paid. You DO NOT need to sign the LOA. You DO NOT need to contact payroll or Denise or Whitney or anyone. Just wait for extra days on paycheck following signing of agreement. It will not be on the next paycheck as it has not been signed yet. Feel free to call me if you have any questions.

LA Education Workers on Strike

Tens of thousands of education workers in the Los Angeles Unified School District are on [strike](#) beginning Tuesday 3/21. The unions participating include SEIU 99 which represents 30,000 cafeteria workers, bus drivers, custodians, and paraeducators. Teachers are striking in solidarity with SEIU 99 workers who make less than \$28,000 a year on average. The LAUSD has \$4.9 billion in reserves, yet they are refusing to agree to worker demands of 30% pay raises over 4 years.

The General Strike Through History

The neoliberal policies of French president Emmanuel Macron have sparked yet another wave of [protests](#) involving vast numbers of people including many workers' actions such as strikes and blockades of various infrastructures. Many gas stations are running low on fuel after strikers have obstructed oil refinement and storage facilities. The uprising kicked off when Macron's administration announced plans to raise the retirement age to 64. This was the final straw for working class people already battered by years of austerity cuts to public services. French unions are calling for a general strike as more and more people pour into the streets.

In 1919 a [general strike](#) brought the city of Seattle grinding to a halt. While protesting the unjust social conditions of the time, workers used mutual aid to ensure that the needs of the people were taken care of, such as delivering food, keeping hospitals up and running and even creating and distributing their own newspaper to communicate about what was going on. This is one example of how workers can take care of their own needs and perhaps the movement in France may take this path.

Other examples include nationwide protests in France in May of 1968. The movement began as a series of student occupations and quickly spread throughout the country, involving factory occupations as well as a massive general strike of workers from a variety of industries. The May 68 protests addressed many issues including the war in Vietnam, a former French colony, and the serious economic inequalities at the heart of French society. When we study the history of labor struggles or people's movements more generally, we can better understand and work for liberation under our current circumstances.