The Work for a Countywide Living Wage HEATS UP

The Tompkins County Workers' Center (TCWC) continues to build a groundswell of support for our campaign for a Countywide Minimum Wage as Living Wage (where every single worker would be paid a minimum wage of $14.34/hour). Already we have 2,000 signatures on our petition, many of them from area trailer parks across the County as we go door to door. (If you haven’t yet signed the petition go to http://bit.ly/1NBpRE2.)

There is a larger national and statewide movement, linked to our own here in Tompkins County, called Fight for $15. And Governor Cuomo has committed to doing everything possible to raise the statewide minimum wage to $15, which would be phased in over a number of years. We heartily support this campaign.

We are fervent in our belief that a local campaign is needed in order to galvanize our County Legislature, workers and community alike toward action making the minimum wage a Living Wage. The cost of doing business in Tompkins County MUST INCLUDE the dignity and worth of each human being that is PERFORMING that work.

GET INVOLVED!

Continued. Page 3

A Worker Speaks: “For the past two years, I have worked 40 hours a week as a Direct Support Professional with developmentally disabled adults in Tompkins County. I make $11.06/hour. The biggest problem I face is being constantly in debt. I have 2 daughters and we live paycheck to paycheck. We never know if we’ll have enough to make all the bills. I eat once a day and depend on Public Assistance (Medicaid). We pay $600/month rent for a small two bedroom house on the edges of the Tompkins County; but our landlord is a slumlord. Paid $2000 for kerosene last winter and now have to get ready to purchase it for the upcoming winter season. I feel depressed about the wages-can’t even take in a movie with my kids, let alone help them through college.” - Anonymous worker about our campaign
Thank You 2015 Tompkins County Living Wage Supporters!

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Jane Mt. Pleasant and Darol Chamberlain
Jim and Susan Murphy
Leo Muzzy
Bob Nape
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Gay Nicholson
Jan and Janice Nigro
John Oakley and Margaret Hammond
David Ost
Carol J. Painter
Tom Palumbo
If you're wondering how YOU can support this groundbreaking campaign, here's how you can help:

1. Sign our petition online at http://bit.ly/1NBpRE2 and share it on FB and among friends, family and co-workers. If you need hard copies, please contact the TCWC at TCWRH@tcworkerscenter.org or call us at 607-269-0409;

2. Write or call your County Legislator and ask them to support this important move on behalf of those here who work for absolute poverty wages (if you don't know who your Legislator is, contact the TCWC);

3. Testify, along with others, at a County Legislature meeting in the near future. Legislators need to see that voters are behind a Living Wage. Let us know if you're interested!

4. Read our FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) sheet online at: http://bit.ly/1INEYY1

5. Sign up as a campaign volunteer (tabling, petitioning, mailings);

6. Donate financially as we are seeking to hire more organizers for the campaign.

As Kshame Sawant, City Councilperson who lead the movement in Seattle for a $15/hour minimum wage last year, said:

"This did not happen because the government suddenly decided to care about workers. We made it happen. We left them with no choice. They could either support us or be swept aside into the dustbin of history. That is how it's going to be."
Support Ithaca Teachers!

by Adam Piasecki, Ithaca Teachers Association President

Editor’s Note: On Monday, November 23rd, over 450 teachers and community members showed their support for Ithaca teachers at a very energetic rally on Route 13 in Ithaca.

Ithaca teachers consistently produce extraordinary results. Not only do we produce outstanding academic achievement results, but most importantly we produce stellar students every year from pre-K through grade 12 in all areas of education.

Teaching salaries are part of all of this. Having equitable and competitive salaries and benefits are what help attract and retain top-quality educators. However, teacher salaries in Ithaca are not competitive. Teachers in Ithaca, on average, make less than teachers in 89% of other New York State small city school districts.

Quality health insurance is a basic right. Everyone should have access to affordable, top-quality health care. The ITA has always been conscious of rising costs of health insurance and has gone above and beyond in seeking to take the burden off the taxpayers. Ithaca teachers currently pay among the highest employee contributions for health insurance in the state of NY and have done so for over 40 years.

If you agree that Ithaca City School District teachers need to be treated with respect with regards to compensation and health insurance, please consider one of the following actions:

1) Email Board of Education members asking them to allocate funds to give teachers the wages they deserve. You can find out their addresses by going to http://bit.ly/1PZ826u;

2) Email Superintendent and Central Administration with the same. Addresses can be found at http://bit.ly/1lK4LwO;

3) Briefly speak at the BOE meetings (7 p.m. twice a month) about how great the teachers are and how they go above and beyond each and every day for the children in the classroom;

4) Write editorials to the Ithaca Journal about the great teachers and how they deserve their fair share and that parents want the best teachers recruited and be able to retain them as well and that can be done with competitive wages;

5) If ITA holds more events all members of the community can join us to show their support and they can find out about those on our Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/IthacaTeachers/ and Twitter @IthacaTeachers

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Cayuga Medical Center Nurses Need Your Help

About six months ago, a number of Registered Nurses (RNs) from Cayuga Medical Center (CMC), came to visit with the Tompkins County Workers’ Center (TCWC) about their desire to form a union of RNs at the main hospital in Tompkins County. After going through a number of options, including the possibility of forming an independent union, the RNs decided to work with the Service Employees International Union 1199, the largest health care workers union in the country. The following is an account by the unionizing RN’s at CMC:

The Registered Nurses at Cayuga Medical Center (CMC) are organizing to form a union at CMC. This is a grassroots campaign which was started and is being led by nurses. We currently have representation from every inpatient and outpatient unit in the entire organization. Why do nurses want to unionize at Cayuga Medical Center? Multiple generations of nurses have shared the same concerns about persistent patterns: under staffing, threats to patient safety, low wages, capricious schedules, arbitrary management decisions, and no meaningful voice in making key decisions. (See more details by going to http://bit.ly/1RZDNeU)

Please show your support for the nurses in your community as we work to improve the safety and quality of care we deliver to you. We encourage you to write Letters to the Editor and Op-Ed articles to local publications, and to join the hundreds of community members who have signed our petition (go to http://bit.ly/20Xvqqn to sign the petition), asking that the Cayuga Medical Center engage in a moral and ethical code of conduct as we approach and carry out our election.

Please contact scotdmarsland@gmail.com or the TCWC to find out how else you can support our campaign.

Fight For $15 Moves Forward!
Fast Food Minimum Jumps 11% January 1

If you are a fast food worker in Tompkins County make sure to check your paycheck in January. Last year the Department of Labor approved a new $15 minimum wage for fast food workers, starting with an 11% increase on January 1 to $9.75 hour.

If you are a fast food worker and believe you are not being paid the required amount, or want to be part of our campaign to win a Living Wage for all workers in Tompkins County, contact our workers’ rights hotline at 269-0409 or tcwrh@tcworkerscenter.org

While this is not an official list yet, we expect the increase to apply to the following Tompkins County restaurants:

- Arby’s
- Baskin Robbins
- Burger King
- Chipotle
- Domino’s
- Dunkin Donuts
- Five Guys
- Godfathers
- Jimmy John’s
- KFC
- McDonalds
- Moe’s
- Panera
- Papa John’s
- Pizza Hut
- Starbucks
- Subway
- Taco Bell
- Tim Horton
- Wendy’s

These Workers Can Expect $9.75/hr on 1/1/16

Wages are slated to increase by $1/hour every year until the minimum wage reaches $15/hour in five more years (2021). Over 180,000 working families across the state will benefit.

Hundreds of fast food workers from all over the state testified in very compelling and moving ways about their inability to survive and support their families on anything less. Almost 75% are currently paid at the lowest levels recorded by the government and well over half depend on one or more publicly supported social services.
Support our 102 Certified Living Wage Businesses with over 3076 workers!

Since our last newsletter in August 2015, we are pleased to welcome one newly-Certified Living Wage Employer: Holmberg Galbraith, LLP

Advocacy Center
Alcohol & Drug Council of Tompkins County
Alternatives Federal Credit Union
Ancient Wisdom Productions
ASI Renovations
Autumn Leaves Used Books
Avalon Homes
Blue Spruce Painting and Decorating
Boyce Thompson Institute
Brightworks Computer Consulting
Buffalo Street Books
Cancer Resource Center of Finger Lakes
Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga
CFCU Community Credit Union
Child Development Council
Cinemapolis
City of Ithaca
Colonial Veterinary Hospital
Community Dispute Resolution Center
Community Foundation of Tompkins County
Community Nursery School
Community Science Institute
Contemporary Trends, Inc.
Cornell Child Care Center
Court St. Chiropractic of Ithaca
Crown Construction, Inc.
Downtown Ithaca Alliance
Family and Children’s Service of Ithaca
Finger Lakes Naturals
Finger Lakes ReUse
First Baptist Church of Ithaca
First Congregational Church of Ithaca, United Church of Christ
First Presbyterian Church of Ithaca
First Unitarian Society of Ithaca
Foodnet Meals on Wheels
Friendship Donations Network, Inc.
Holmberg Galbraith, LLP
Home Green Home
Hospicare and Palliative Care
Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County
International Food Network, Inc.
Ironwood Builders of Ithaca
Ithaca CarShare
Ithaca Cayuga Optical Service
Ithaca Health Alliance
Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services
Ithaca Oral Surgery and Implants
Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency
IthacaMed
Ithaca Teachers Association
Jewel Box
Jillian’s Drawers
Julia e Dean Inc/The Clay School
Loaves and Fishes
Mama Goose/Mimi’s Attic
McBooks Press
Miller Mayer Law Firm
Namaste Montessori School
New Roots Charter School
Northeast Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine
Nutritional Wellness Center
OAR – Opportunities, Alternatives and Resources
One World Market
Ongweoweh Corporation
PPM Homes, LLC
Quintiles Biosciences Inc. LLC
Renovus Energy, Inc.
Schlather, Stumbar, Parks and Salk
Segal and Sorensen
Shade Tree Auto, Inc.
Shaw & Murphy Law Firm
Silk Oak/Ithacamade
Singlebrook Technology, Inc.
Snug Planet LLC
Sparks Electric
Sprague & Janowsky
St. Catherine of Siena Church
St. Luke Lutheran Church
Stone Quarry House
St. Paul’s United Methodist Church and Nursery School
Strawbridge and Jahn Builders
Sunbeam Candles
Sunny Brook Builders
Sunny Days of Ithaca
Sustainable Tompkins
Taitem Engineering
Temple Beth El
The Frame Shop
The Strebel Planning Group
Tompkins County
Tompkins County Public Library
Tompkins County Recycling, LLC
Town of Caroline
Town of Danby
Town of Ithaca
TRC Energy Services (Ithaca)
Trumansburg Community Nursery School
United Auto Workers Local 2300
Upscale Remodeling Corporation
Viridius Property
Weaver Wind Energy
Are You a Member of the Tompkins County Workers’ Center?

I want to Get Involved In the Fight for Workers Rights!

$_____ Individual Annual Membership
Due = One Hour’s Wage or $8.75 if not working

During the next year, I’LL BE THERE at least five times for someone else’s fight, as well as my own. Contact me for Rapid Response Alerts.

________________________________________
Signature
Name (Please Print):
Home Address
City/State/ZIP
Phone
Email

Mail to: TC Workers Center
115 The Commons/ E MLK St. Ithaca, NY 14850
You’ll receive a laminated card in the mail. Great to have you with us!

________________________________________
Is a member of the Tompkins County Workers’ Center
During the year, I’LL BE THERE at least five times for someone else’s struggle as well as my own. If enough of us are there, we’ll start winning.

I’LL BE THERE...
...standing up for our rights as working people to a decent standard of living
...organizing working families to take strong action to secure better economic future for all of us
...fighting for secure family-wage jobs in the face of corporate attacks on working people and communities
...supporting the right of all workers to organize and bargain collectively in the workplace

Has your job made you sick?

Occupational Health Clinical Center Can Help!

- Are your symptoms work-related?
- Have you been exposed to substances on the job that might make a person sick?
- Have you recently left a job (through retirement, lay-off, termination, etc.) that caused your symptoms?

Call to find out how we can help you....

Occupational Clinical Health Centers are staffed by a team of health professionals actively working to support worker health and safety in 26 counties in New York. Occupational Illnesses and diseases are highly preventable, and we can help.

As a medical practice, we focus on Medical Services including medical and occupational history; physical exam and diagnostic testing, referral and social work services.

Prevention of Occupational Illness and Disease, including screening and monitoring; education and workplace safety assessment; data collection; public policy advocacy; worker/patient empowerment, including risk mapping, workers’ rights to health and safety at the workplace; navigating the Workers’ Compensation system, support groups, and popular education related to the impact of worker health on public health.

Convenient locations in Binghamton, Syracuse and Canton
Call OHCC at 315-432-8899 or toll-free at 1-800-432-9590
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