



Winter
2015

The Workers' Edge

Voice of the Tompkins County Workers' Center

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

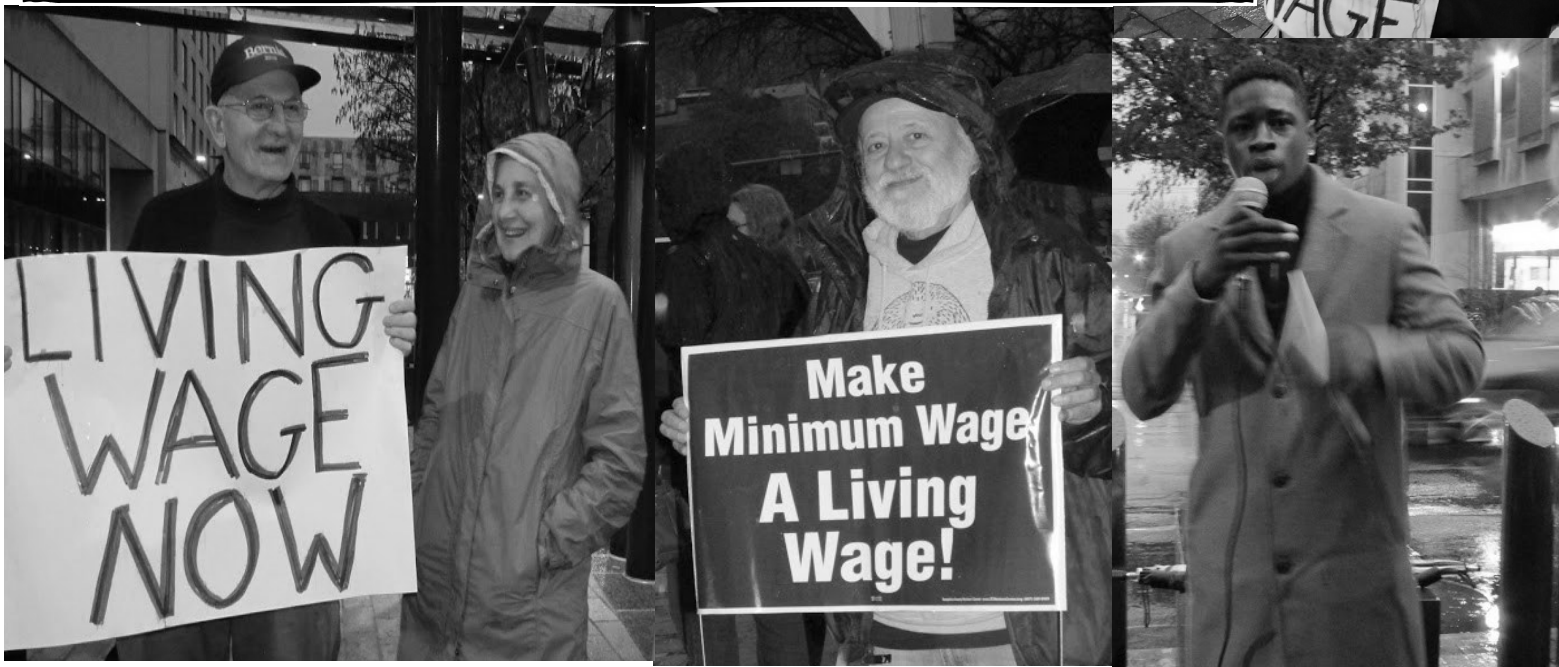
minimum wage to \$15, which would be phased in over a number of years. We heartily support this campaign.

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!

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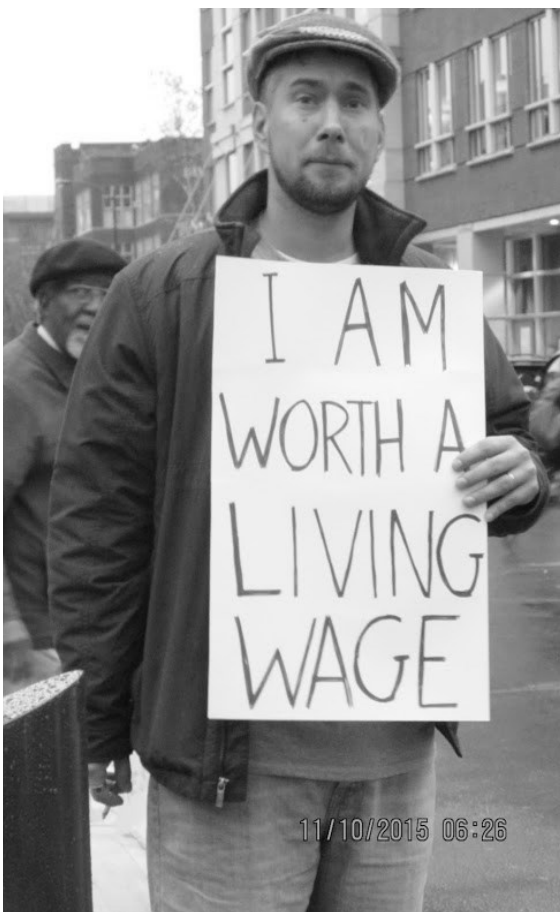
A Worker Speaks: "For the past two years, I have worked 40 hours a week as a Direct Support Professional with developmentally disabled adults in Tompkins County. I make \$11.06/hour. The biggest problem I face is being constantly in debt. I have 2 daughters and we live paycheck to paycheck. We never 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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		Sandy Gutman and Linda		John Oakley and Margaret Hammond
				David Ost
				Carol J. Painter
				Tom Palumbo

County Living Wage Campaign HEATS UP: How You Can Help



Photos by Joan Lockwood

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/1INEYYI>
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/1IK4LwO>;

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

2015 Supporters Cont.

Ritchie Patterson and Lawrence Gibbons	Jim Rundle and Tammy Lovett	Tom Sieling and Risa Sokolsky	Roselyn and Saul Teukolsky	Nancy Weislogel
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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

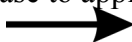
who have signed our petition (go to <http://bit.ly/20Xvqqn> to sign the petition), asking that the Cayuga Medical Center engage in a moral and ethical code of conduct as we approach and carry out our election.

Please contact scottdmarsland@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: 

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.

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



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