Essex workers provide quality care for our residents. It’s time for a fair contract, so we can afford to care for our families, as well.

BARGAINING UPDATE: After years of living on wages that don’t keep up with the cost of living, last week Frank Romano—the owner of Essex Nursing homes—made an insulting offer to the hard-working 1199SEIU members by offering us a pitiful raise of less than 1%.

Frank doesn’t get it! A less than 1% raise isn’t enough for us to pay our rent or feed our children. We make impossible choices between buying groceries and paying our utility bills. Enough is enough. **We deserve a better life.**

Frank also wants to destroy the education and training opportunities we need to provide high quality care for our residents and career ladders for us. By proposing to eliminate the training fund, Frank’s proposal doesn’t cost him a dime.

Meanwhile, Frank has been crying that he “doesn’t have the money” while stacking the payroll with his family who are living in the lap of luxury.

It gets WORSE: Frank offered half of 1% for the second year of our contract! Is he joking?

The Romano family takes in $50 million in combined revenues and is asking us to take their scraps.

Essex workers won’t stand for it. We will unite to fight back for a better future!

Here’s what some of the bargaining committee members had to say (cont’d on pg 4.):

"We need our voices to be heard. This offer is an insult. It says they don’t respect us. The lack of a fair raise is an abomination. I have worked at Essex for 13 years. I am here to represent the workers. If the workers get good pay, the residents get even better care. The workers need a raise to pay their rent, pay for their mortgages, to buy food and gas, the basic living expenses. Management needs to increase wages. For those who want a better life and a raise, we need to hold together. We need to be strong and unite so our voices will be heard. We cannot let management divide us."
– Tommy Kegbeh, Blaire House of Worcester

“I think 1% is an insult to the kind of care we give to the residents. It’s disrespectful because we are there to give proper care and we deserve a fair raise after all this time.” – Uritiah Gardner, Blaire House of Worcester

“It’s simple. Nobody can live on a 1% raise.”
– Betty Albano, West Side House

“The cost of living has gone up tremendously in the past three years, but we employees at Essex have not had any good raises. Now it’s time for a good raise, not 1%. Workers need a raise so we can afford to continue doing this job providing good care for the residents. So let’s get together and stand up for our rights.” – Babrah Mugandani, West Side House

RNs, LPNs, CNAs. DIETARY AIDES, HOUSEKEEPING, MAINTENANCE, AND ALL OTHER WORKERS AT ESSEX NURSING HOMES:

It’s time to unite for a better life!
POLITICAL ACTION UPDATE:
The powerful voices of 1199SEIU nursing home members were able to gain more than $30 million in additional Medicaid funding next year. This victory was won by 1199SEIU members meeting with our legislators to explain the need for increased nursing home funding.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars will be going into Essex nursing homes—this could have been great thing for residents and the workers of Essex who desperately need a real raise.

Instead Frank Romano has offering us nothing real in contract negotiations and wants to keep all of this new funding for himself.

What will Frank do with this new money from the taxpayers if he doesn't use it to pay his workers a reasonable wage? Will Frank buy himself another vacation home on the lake? Will he buy another boat?

Frank should do the right thing and invest the money in his workers who provide quality care every day to the residents in our nursing homes.

It was OUR strong, untied voices that won this vital funding so that it could be invested in caregivers and residents—not lining Frank's pockets. It was NOT meant to be used to pay Frank's lawyers to try to break our union or to fund the lavish lifestyle of Frank and his family on the backs of workers or our residents.

Now, Frank Romano wants to keep the Essex portion for himself and his family.

Enough is enough, Frank. No more excuses. Essex Nursing Home workers deserve a better life.

Delegates

Brandon Woods of New Bedford:
Carol Reis, Audrey Wynn, Ann Bizarro

West Side House:
Betty Albano, Babrah Mugandani

Blaire House of Worcester:
Joe Koffi, Tommy Kegbeh, Lucy Mwangi,
Linda Camiso, Emmanuel Ayesui

Blaire House of Milford:
Angela Carter, Jean Devine

CNA's • LPN's • RN's • Food Service • Social Work • Housekeeping

Leadership Conference for 1199SEIU Nursing Home Workers

WHERE: 1199SEIU HQ, 150 Mt. Vernon St., 3rd Fl.

WHEN: Thursday, August 1, 2013, 5pm-8pm
(Dinner: 5:00 – 5:30 Council Meeting: 5:30 – 7:30)
Children welcome

Your on-the-job experience, daily leadership and point-of-view is vital to the success of this important 1199SEIU conference.

Let's discuss:

- Implementing a living wage for nursing home workers
- Achieving quality and affordable healthcare benefits
- Ensuring stronger on-the-job rights and respect
- Winning a pension we can live on
- Creating better living standards for our residents

Call: (877) 409-1199 to RSVP
July 18, 2013

Dear Elected Official:

On behalf of the more than 300 1199SEIU members at four Essex Group nursing homes, as well as the nearly 50,000 nursing home, hospital, and home care workers of 1199SEIU-Massachusetts, we write to ask for your support in bringing our stalled and protracted collective bargaining negotiations with Frank Romano’s Essex Group Incorporated (EGI) to a positive end.

The core of Frank Romano’s business operation consists of six nursing homes. 1199SEIU represents direct care (certified nursing assistants and nurses), dietary, maintenance, housekeeping and other staff at four of the six EGI homes: West Side House in Worcester, Blaire House of Worcester, Blaire House of Milford and Brandon Woods of New Bedford.

Although the 1199SEIU workforce at these four homes continues to live on poverty-level wages the Essex Group and owner Frank Romano have failed to offer any reasonable proposals to begin to lift the workforce out of poverty. Despite reporting over $50 million in gross income, thousands of which go to the salaries of the Romano family (Frank, Deborah and their three sons are all on the payroll), Frank Romano has dragged out negotiations arguing that he could not make a wage proposal until the conclusion of the FY14 state budget.

Now, with the FY14 budget finalized with an increase of $30.7 million in nursing home Medicaid rates, Frank Romano proposed a mere 0.75% annual wage increase – less than 10 cents an hour for the average worker – and conditioned any raise on eliminating benefits including training/educational support. 1199SEIU understandably rejected this proposal and we’ve accepted mediation.

Though the nursing home industry has received more than $90 million in supplemental Medicaid funding in the last three state budgets (FY12-FY14), the EGI non-management workforce has seen their pay virtually frozen for almost five years. 1199SEIU and the Essex nursing home workforce need your help! Please contact Essex Group owner Frank Romano and tell him that it is time for him to leave all existing benefits in place, make a reasonable proposal for wage increases, and finalize this contract with 1199SEIU members. Call him at (978) 948-7383 and/or send a letter to:

Frank Romano
Essex Group Management
51 Summer St
Rowley, MA 01969

We appreciate your time and attention to this very important and urgent matter. The 1199SEIU Political Department will follow-up with you in the coming week to address any questions or further concerns you may have about these negotiations.

Sincerely,

Veronica Turner                    Tim Foley
Executive Director - MA        Vice President & Political Director - MA
Essex Worker Voices
(cont'd from page 1)

“I do a lot of double shifts—coming in early, staying late. I really care. Workers deserve to get a fair share—to get what we deserve. We need to stand up for what’s right. Maybe if we all help out with the campaign things will get better. Show that you care. If you care, maybe the next person will. It’s time to get involved and lead by example. If people see you getting involved, they will too.”
– Jean Devine, Blaire House of Milford

“We need management to hear our voice as a union. It is nonsense when he mentioned only 1% for the workers. It’s important to get involved right now. We need to show our unity so that Frank will hear what we’re saying. It’s clear that right now Frank Romano has no empathy for his workers.”
– Joe Koffi, Blaire House of Worcester

Why are these folks smiling??

Because they think they can trick us into giving up our union.
What could that mean for the people in this picture?

• A new vacation house they can buy with a poverty-wage workforce!
• A bigger boat for them with lower wages for workers!
• Total power to make every decision for every worker, every day for any reason or no reason at all!
• And best of all: As the census goes up or down... so do the staffing, wages, benefits, holidays vacation and OT... whenever Frank wants!

Don’t be fooled! Essex workers deserve a better life. Frank and his family on the payroll are all smiles while Essex workers suffer.

We’re not joking Frank: No more excuses. It’s time for a real wage increase.