



Teamsters Local 117

# Teamster Talk

*Fighting for Workers' Rights Since 1936*

Teamsters Local 117: 14675 Interurban Ave. S, Suite 307 • Tukwila, WA 98168 • (206) 441-4860 • [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org)

## TEAMSTERS CALL FOR \$15/HR AT MLK DAY CELEBRATION

*"What do we want? \$15! When do we want it? Now!"*



Local 117 members rally outside Garfield High School on MLK Day 2014

**T**eamsters 117 joined thousands of community members for the annual **MLK Jr. Day March and Rally** in Seattle on January 20.

It was a day-long celebration honoring the slain civil rights leader, with workshops in the morning, an 11 A.M. rally, and a noonday march from Garfield High School in Seattle's Central District to Westlake Park downtown.

The need to address growing income inequality and the effort to raise the minimum wage were central themes of the day.

### FIGHTING POVERTY, DEMANDING RESPECT

Hundreds of marchers filled the streets, carrying \$15 Now! signs, and chanting, "What do we want? \$15! When do we want it? Now!"

King's historic quest for Civil Rights is

well known in this country, but fewer people are aware of his commitment to fighting poverty.

In his final sermon, **Remaining Awake through the Great Revolution**, Dr. King said:

*"We are coming to demand that the government address itself to the problem of poverty. We read one*

*day, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." But if a man doesn't have a job or an income, he has neither life nor liberty nor the possibility for the pursuit of happiness. He merely exists."*

Teamsters 117's participation in the event was coordinated by the **Black Teamsters United (BTU)**, a caucus of Union members dedicated to providing Teamsters an opportunity to be inclusive in an environment that will enrich, embrace, and respect the diversity of its members.

**If you are interested in learning more about BTU, please contact the Vice President of your Union's Executive Board and BTU Secretary-Treasurer, Cetris Tucker, at 206-441-4860. ●**

## DOC REQUIRED TO POST PERC RULING

*Member courage leads to major ULP victory*

**S**tarting February 3, the Department of Corrections (DOC) is required to post a ruling by the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC) indicating that the Department committed a series of Unfair Labor Practices on a statewide basis and that it must comply with the remedies outlined in the notice.

The ruling states that the employer:

- **Interfered with employees' right to discuss workplace safety issues;**
- **Interfered with employees' right to participate in union activities;**
- **Interfered with employees' ability to communicate with the union;**
- **And a number of other unlawful activities.**

The notice must be posted at all DOC facilities for 60 days.

The strongly-worded ruling represents a strong rebuke to the DOC and a major victory for all Teamsters. It demonstrates that employers cannot discriminate against workers because they are a member of a union or violate the rights of union members who are engaging in protected, concerted activities.

If you are a Teamster at DOC, look for the ruling posted at your institution. You can also view it on your Union's website at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org).

**Thank you to all of the members who had the courage to speak out when their rights were violated and to the many Shop Stewards, who helped represent them throughout the process. ●**

## A message from your Secretary-Treasurer



Tracey A. Thompson

Brothers and Sisters:

I recently spent two amazing days with over three hundred labor leaders, community activists, faith leaders and environmentalists from across the country. The **Partnership for Working Families** is a national network of regional advocacy leaders who are committed

to working together for economic, racial and environmental justice. The Partnership provides a voice for working families, promoting policies that create quality jobs and thriving, healthy communities.

It is not surprising that a significant focus of the two-day summit was civic engagement. Your Union has long understood that if we are to succeed in protecting the rights and improving the lives of our members and all working families in our region, we must actively engage our members in the political process, both locally and state-wide.

### TEAMSTERS ENGAGING IN POLITICAL ACTION

On January 28, we had our first Lobby Day of this year's legislative session. More than 70 Teamsters from across our Union met with their representatives throughout the day. We asked legislators to support a range of issues, impacting members in the public sector, the private sector, and the DOC.

On February 20, the Joint Council of Teamsters will be having a Lobby Day where Teamsters from local unions around the State will be speaking to their legislators about issues that affect Teamster families state-wide.

This is the power of the Teamsters. Members from the public sector, private sector, and the DOC - and from different local unions - speaking together with one powerful, united voice.

The common thread of our political program is our steadfast commitment to engage our members in civic activities to protect and expand the rights of all working people. That is the work of our Union, and that is why we fight.

I encourage you to join us in that fight.

In Solidarity,

Tracey A. Thompson  
Secretary-Treasurer

## TEAMSTERS ASSIST IN EFN REPACK PROJECT

### Volunteering at the Emergency Food Network



Working at the EFN on Jan. 4.

On January 4, a team of Food Services of America Shop Stewards met up with John Searcy, Local 117 President and Executive Assistant, to spend a cold winter morning volunteering at the **Emergency Food Network's** repack project.

Their work involved repacking frozen, cut corn, which had been donated in bulk, into two-pound, family-sized bags. Together, Searcy, along with Jason Stepner, John Langenbach, Mike Reavey, and Jason King helped repack 6,400 pounds of frozen, worked a 3-hour shift.

### FIGHTING HUNGER, HELPING COMMUNITIES

"Each month there are more than 116,000 visits made to Pierce County emergency food sites by children, seniors and adults needing help," Searcy said. "I work hard representing members of our Union every day, but my responsibility to the struggling middle class extends to the rest of the community as well."

Jason Stepner, a longtime Shop Steward at FSA, has always been willing to donate his time to those in need and was appreciative of his Union's leadership for presenting him with the opportunity. "I feel that our members truly believe in working together in solidarity to address major issues in our workplaces, our communities, and beyond," he said.

Jason King shared his feelings after volunteering: "The most rewarding part is giving back to the community that has given to me my entire life."

Once repackaged, the bags were ready for distribution to individuals and families in need at Pierce County emergency food sites.

Mike Reavey talked about the power of this collective effort: "It is great to see that Teamsters can stick together in the workplace and also come together to help our community," he said.

John Langenbach the most senior Teamster of the bunch, with over 20 years of membership experience, put it simply: "Helping communities is what Teamsters do. If we all helped out in a small way in our communities, just imagine how much better off things would be." ●

# FARM TO FAMILY COALITION RALLIES AT DARIGOLD HEADQUARTERS

*Labor & community step up their support of farm workers*



**T**eamsters joined farm workers, Farm to Family Coalition members, and their supporters for a rally at Darigold Corporate Headquarters in Seattle on January 16 to demand that the company put a stop to the abuse of workers on the farms that supply Darigold's milk.

Dairy workers, who had traveled from eastern Washington to attend the event, described squalid conditions on the farms. They spoke of rest and meal breaks denied by their employers, a lack of access to clean drinking water, and rampant wage theft.

"There is a lot of abuse directed at workers. They make us work for 10-12 hours and our checks would come out to 8 hours," said Rafael Muñoz, who worked for three years at the Ruby Ridge Dairy in Mabton, WA. "When we sought representation to help resolve these issues, we were fired."

Standing in solidarity with the farm

workers were members of several other unions and community organizations, including Teamsters 117, Teamsters 38, UFCW Local 21, UFCW Local 367, UNITE HERE Local 8, SEIU, the MLK County Central Labor Council, and others.



*Labor and community unite under Farm to Family banner.*

All of the participating organizations have joined forces to form a new Farm to Family Coalition that is committed to health and safety and fair labor standards across the food supply chain.

**"AND WE WILL FIGHT FOR THAT!"**

"Workers deserve humane working conditions, whether they work on the farms, in the processing plants, in the grocery warehouses, or in our neighborhood grocery stores, and

we will fight for that!" said Tracey A. Thompson, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters 117, who spoke at the event.

After the rally, the group marched around Darigold's corporate office building to the front entrance, where a delegation of workers requested to meet with representatives of the company to voice their grievances.

Farm workers have been trying to meet with Darigold since 2011, but the company has repeatedly ignored their requests. On the day of the rally, for the first time, representatives of the company, including Senior Vice President Steve Rowe, agreed to sit down with the workers and listen to their concerns.

At the meeting, farm workers insisted that Darigold take immediate action to end the abuse of workers on its suppliers' farms.

"Darigold has a moral obligation to ensure that workers across its supply chain are treated with dignity and respect. The company can no longer turn a blind eye to poor conditions on its suppliers' farms. Our community demands it," Thompson said.

**To learn more about the work of the Farm to Family Coalition, visit [www.Farm2Family.org](http://www.Farm2Family.org).** ●

## TAKE ACTION: Tell your State Senator to Pass Paid Sick Leave - HB 1313



*Teamster Maxine Reigel takes a stand for paid sick leave.*

**Y**ou shouldn't have to choose between your health and your job. It seems straightforward enough, but every day workers in restaurants, child care centers, grocery stores, and offices across our state are faced with that very decision. On January 29, the Washington State House of Representatives passed a bill (HB 1313) that would enable workers the right to earn paid sick leave. This is great news for workers, but now the bill heads to the State Senate, where it faces stern opposition from legislators who want to deprive workers of this basic right.

**TAKE ACTION NOW! Call the Legislative Hotline at 1-800-562-6000 and tell your State Senator in Olympia to pass Paid Sick Leave legislation! Everyone deserves the right to earn paid sick leave!**

# TEAMSTERS SPEAK OUT ON LOBBY DAY

*"We are all members of the Teamsters - that's what makes us strong."*



Teamsters from across the Union met with their legislators on Jan. 28.

**T**eamster 117 members from all corners of Washington State converged on Olympia on January 28 for the first **Local 117 Lobby Day** of the 2014 legislative session.

Members came from as far as Spokane, Walla Walla, the Tri-Cities, Clallam Bay, Aberdeen, Monroe, Vancouver and many other locations to speak with their legislators about critical issues facing Teamster families.

Correctional employees teamed up

with taxi cab operators, warehouse workers, nurses, cooks and county and city employees for dozens of meetings with legislators.

## OUR LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Some of the issues that Local 117 members brought to their representatives included:

- ✓ *Passing a bill (HB 1923) that would allow DOC medical staff the right to participate in the PSERS retirement program;*
- ✓ *Passing a bill (HB 2152) that would give taxi cab operators the choice to opt into the State's Labor & Industries program;*
- ✓ *Preventing prison overcrowding by ensuring that funds are appropriated to open a 256-bed medium security unit at the Washington State*

*Penitentiary in Walla Walla;*

- ✓ *Passing a statewide paid sick leave bill (HB 1313);*
- ✓ *Protecting our state's workers' compensation program.*

"My most important issue is staff safety," said Stevie Fonseca, who works at the Washington Corrections Center for Women (WCCW). "I'm a Teamster and I want to let legislators know that we have a vote. When we show them that our vote matters, they will lend us their ear."

"We are all members of the Teamsters," said Mohinder Gill, a taxi cab operator with the Western Washington Taxi Cab Operators Association. "That's what makes us strong."

**Thank you to Political Action Coordinator Dustin Lambro for all of his hard work in making the day such a great success and to our fabulous lobbyist, Teresita Torres, for the wonderful job she is doing in Olympia.**

**Most of all, thank you to all of the members who took time out of their busy schedules to make their voices heard. You make all Teamsters proud! ●**

## Congratulations, Seahawks! 2014 World Champs



Teamster recycle and yard waste drivers at Republic's Bellevue facility show their Seahawks pride.

### LOCAL 117 EVENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

February 20, 2014 - Teamster Lobby Day in Olympia

March 20, 2014 - General Membership Meeting

March 21, 2014 - DOC Shop Stewards' Seminar

March 22, 2014 - Local 117 Shop Steward Seminar & Appreciation Day

### Make your voice heard!

#### Our Next Lobby Day - Feb. 20

**J**oin us on Thursday, February 20 for our second **Teamster Lobby Day** of the 2014 legislative session! We will be meeting at the **Washington State Labor Council** (906 Columbia St, SW) at 8 AM for a brief training before heading out to meet with legislators.

Major issues include:

- *Increasing the minimum wage;*
- *Passing a statewide paid sick leave bill;*
- *Protecting our workers' comp. system.*

In addition, we will be lobbying on issues important to members at the Department of Corrections and Teamster taxi cab operators.

**RSVP at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org). ●**

Sign up online to receive an electronic copy of Teamster Talk at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org).