

## Save the Date UFCW Holiday Celebration -- Dec. 17th

The second annual UFCW Michigan Holiday Celebration will be held Thursday, December 17, 2009 at the Local 876 Union Hall in Madison Heights. The family event will feature food, children's activities, and photographs with Santa.

Look for additional information on the Holiday Celebration in the coming weeks. Union Representatives will be selling event admission tickets beginning in December. Stewards interested in selling tickets or in volunteering to assist with the celebration should call the Local 876 office at 1-800-321-6406.



### Featuring Food, Children's Activities & Photos with Santa

The Steward Edition Feature "Labor's Language: Glossary of Union Terms" was completed in May. Beginning in June, it was replaced with the new "Help Spread the Word" spotlight. This space will be devoted to issues deserving stewards time and attention. Local 876 urges stewards to share the information included in the "Help Spread the Word" feature with their coworkers.



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# UFCW876 STEWARD EDITION

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## Company Fighting Workers' Attempt to Gain Respect

# Simple Ways to Support CVS Workers' Unionizing Efforts

Over the past few months, Local 876 staff and Special Project Union Representatives have been meeting with CVS workers interested in improving their working conditions, earning better wages and benefits and gaining a voice at work by joining UFCW 876. CVS management predictably responded to their workers' actions by attempting to thwart workers' efforts at every turn through a variety of anti-union efforts, and at times resorting to illegal activities.

"As soon as CVS learned workers at metro-Detroit area stores were interested in joining Local 876, they implemented a typical anti-union campaign," Roger Robinson, Local 876's president, said. "Workers were forced to watch anti-union videos and management began spreading misinformation about the union. When workers actually filed petitions for union elections, management's actions escalated to include worker interrogation, threats, and manipulation; behavior and tactics in violation of the National Labor Relations Act."

Local 876 is fighting to protect the rights of CVS workers. The union has filed charges against CVS with the government and continues to assist

CVS workers in unionizing.

"Local 876 is committed to helping every CVS worker who wants union representation achieve it," Robinson said. "The way the company is behaving is not right. Workers should be free to choose whether or not they want union representation without interference from their employer."

As Local 876 fights for CVS workers, stewards and members can easily lend their support to the effort in two simple ways, as listed in the box appearing on this page.

"Just a little effort on the part of stewards and members will go a long way," Robinson said. "What we are asking them to do takes very little time. Simply making a phone call with some contact information and making a quick trip through a store at their convenience. We have heard from CVS workers that it really lifts their spirits when someone comes in wearing UFCW apparel and gives them a few words of encouragement."

There are nearly 13,000 CVS workers nationwide who belong to the UFCW. In Michigan, CVS workers at store #8107, on Mack in Grosse Pointe, and store #8153, on Tireman in Detroit, belong to Local 876.

## Get Respect @ CVS

As CVS workers fight to gain the union representation Local 876 members already enjoy, stewards can take two simple actions to help support CVS workers' unionizing efforts.

**#1: Forward the names and contact information of CVS workers to Local 876.**

There is strength in numbers. The more CVS workers who are in contact with Local 876, the greater their chance of reaching their goal of union membership.

**#2: Wear your UFCW apparel and stop in a CVS store.**

Let CVS workers know they have the support of Local 876 members. Simply identifying yourself as a UFCW 876 member through your jacket, shirt or hat, and making friendly trip through a CVS store lets the workers there know you are on their side.

# Helping Members Handle Workplace Change

As the expression goes, "The only thing that stays the same is change."

That may be true, but it doesn't make it any easier for members who are forced to deal with change in the workplace, or union stewards who not only have to adapt to the change, but help members through the transition.

"While change is nothing new, in these unsettling economic times, more and more people are experiencing changes to their world," Roger Robinson, Local 876's president, said. "Since there is no avoiding change, understanding the underlying psychology of change can be a big help to stewards."

According to experts, difficulties arise for individuals when the changes they experience are not initiated by them. A key aspect in understanding resistance to change is the general fear of the unknown experienced by most people. Additionally, it's not that people resist change, they resist *being* changed.

By understanding these factors, stewards can begin to use the various tools in their skill set to help members facing change.

The following is an explanation on how stewards can use four important skills to help members manage workplace change.

## Listening

Often, members simply need someone to talk things out with. Simply letting people vent helps them to sort through what is bothering them about the change. Additionally, careful listening allows the steward to both de-escalate the situation and gather information that may be relevant to resolving issues. While "talking them down" is important, the details stewards gather

through actively listening to members are key to deterring what can be done to help them.

Active listening involves making a conscience effort to hear not only the words another person is saying, but seeking to understand the total message being sent. When engaging in active listening, stewards cannot allow themselves to become distracted by what may be going on around them, or allow themselves to lose focus on what the other person is saying, by starting to form their response to the member before the individual stops speaking.

## Investigating

When conducting an investigation, it's always best to start with the Five Ws -- What happened? When did it happen? Where did it happen? Who was there? Why did it happen? Having a piece of paper in hand prompting the asking of these questions, and on which answers can be documented, is a useful investigative aid for even the most experienced stewards.

After the member has provided the steward with information regarding the circumstances, the steward is then prepared to go to management to continue the investigation and obtain the boss's version of the situation. During this discussion with management, the steward should confirm the facts (dates, people, locations, etc.) and have management explain events from their point of view.

In addition to asking questions, stewards should request documentation that provides data to verify the claims of both the member and management.

## Evaluating

After conducting a thorough investi-

gation, the steward's next step is to look at the information collected through the lens of their contract. Going through the following questions can help clarify the situation:

1. Do any sections of the contract apply? Look at the entire contract.
2. Is there a contractual violation the union could cite in a grievance?
3. Do union records show a similar situation from the past that can help in the current situation?
4. Is past practice involved?
5. Have standards for fair treatment been violated?
6. Should additional jobs, materials working conditions be considered?
7. Are there notes the members involved should be instructed to keep regarding the situation?
8. Should other workers or members of management be interviewed?

In general, it makes sense to check with other stewards and a union representative to determine the best way to proceed -- multiple sets of eyes are better than one.

## Informing

After deciding how to proceed and determining a course of action, good communication is essential. While members might not always agree with their steward's conclusion, members always appreciate a timely response and being kept up to date.

"Always critical, communication is especially important during times of change," Robinson said. "Keeping members informed eases their fear of the unknown, which escalates during times of change, and gives members confidence that no matter what is happening around them, they can depend upon their union."

# 876 Scholarship Applications Available

As it has for the past three years, Local 876 will award five \$2,000 scholarships to members and their dependent children next spring, as the Local 876 Scholarship Program enters its fourth year.

"Local 876 is committed to giving back to the membership. Through our Scholarship Program, the local gives back, in a very big way to five members each year," Roger Robinson, Local 876's president, said. "Talking about the local's scholarship program and urging members who are eligible, or have an eligible dependent, to apply for a scholarship is a great way for stewards to show members one of the many ways their union works for them."

Stewards are often asked 'what has the union done for me?' The scholarship program is another benefit stewards can add to their list of responses.

"We should all be proud Local 876 is helping students and their families, especially during these tough economic times," Robinson said. "But I think it would be especially gratifying for a steward to know he or she was the one who encouraged a scholarship winner to complete the application."

The Local 876 Scholarship Program, was intentionally designed with very broad eligibility requirements. Therefore, most any member or dependent pursuing a post high school education has a very real chance of receiving a scholarship.

"Many scholarships limit their applicants to graduating seniors, or full-time undergraduate students under age 25," Robinson said. "We wanted to make the local's scholarship as inclusive as possible, which is why it is open to members and their dependents of any age attending or accepted to a college, university or trade school, on a full-time or part-time basis, including

graduate school."

In addition, the guidelines established for the Scholarship Selection Committee do not include rigid scholastic or achievement standards which applicants must meet.

"The way the individual scores of the Scholarship Selection Committee members are weighted, an average student with a thoughtful essay has just as good a chance of a receiving a scholarship as an "A" student with a mediocre essay," Robinson said. "Stewards really need to drive this point home with members. They only students who don't stand a chance of winning a Local 876 scholarship are the ones who don't apply."

2010 Local 876 Scholarship applications are now available from the Local 876 office and on-line at [www.ufcw876.org](http://www.ufcw876.org). Stewards can request a quantity of applications to distribute at their workplace from the Local 876 office at 1-800-321-6406.

Additional information stewards can use to answer members' questions regarding the scholarship appears in the box accompanying this article. Stewards and members can also call the Local 876 with any other questions regarding the scholarship or application process.

## Five \$2,000 Scholarships to be Awarded

### General Requirements

- Member or his/her Dependent Child.\*
- Full-time or Part-time Student.
- Undergraduate or Graduate Student.
- Accepted or Attending an Accredited College, University, Community College, or Recognized Trade School.

\* Member must have one year in good standing with Local 876 as of Jan. 1, 2010.

### Application Procedure

- Call Local 876 at 1-800-321-6406 for an application, or download one at [www.ufcw876.org](http://www.ufcw876.org).
- Applications must be received by March 31, 2010.
- Scholarship recipients will be selected by the Scholarship Selection Committee composed of labor leaders, educators, civic leaders, and/or public officials.
- Only the five winners of the of \$2,000 will be notified by April 30, 2010.

## December Retirement Planning Workshop

**Tuesdays, December 2 & 9  
6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**

**UFCW Local 876 Union Hall**

**876 Horace Brown Drive, Madison Heights, MI**

The Local 876 Retirement Services Center will be conducting a two-evening workshop covering a variety of retirement issues from learning how the UFCW pension works and completing pension paperwork, to reviewing 401(k), K and IRA rollover options and a question and answer session with retirement experts.

**To register, or for more information, call 1-800-321-6406 ext. 8645**