



NUHW NEWS AND VIEWS

UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland

NOVEMBER 2021



STEWARD SPOTLIGHT FRAN MERRIWEATHER

Fran Merriweather, a clinical social worker and clinic coordinator with the Neonatal Follow-Up Program, is a strong believer that nothing comes without effort.

That belief, bolstered by the work she did organizing her colleagues to form a union with NUHW in 2017, led her to become a steward. The role, Fran said, has given her a sense of solidarity with the union movement around the world and a stronger conviction that "most employers are not going to give you anything, and nothing comes without fierce work and advocacy."

"Nothing will shift for the better if people aren't involved," said Fran, who has worked at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland for 30 years.

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PROFESSIONALS BARGAINING UPDATE



Management wanted to extend the CHO Professionals contract, which expired August 31, but we rejected that proposal so that we could better advocate for our rights and have the leeway to strike, if necessary.

continued on back

NEXT BARGAINING SESSION

November 18
4 P.M.

BULLY MANAGER GETS FIRED

A manager who had repeatedly been the subject of complaints from workers over his bullying and favoritism has been fired.

The last straw for the administration was the manager's recent calls to police and his illegal detention of a worker whom he suspected was under the influence. When police arrived on the scene, they chastised the manager for detaining the employee, who was not under the influence.

In addition, the manager recently disregarded an EVS employee's request for assistance. Instead of helping the worker — as was his duty — the manager got into a heated argument with him and eventually called the police on the employee and accused him of head-butting him, which was untrue.

The decision brings better working conditions for all employees.

For more information, contact NUHW Organizers Beverly Griffith at (510) 978-7454 or bgriffith@nuhw.org, or Jake Doolittle at (203) 430-6688 or jdoolittle@nuhw.org

BARGAINING UPDATE

continued from front

We recently submitted our economic proposals to management. We're also fighting for clinical ladders for our 263 members who meet the qualifications and have the certifications and the experience to be promoted, but the hospital is not opening up those positions and is not honoring and recognizing members' work.

Management had also made a proposal around layoffs that would have created two tiers of employees and would have denied grant-funded employees of a severance. The bargaining team refused to agree to something that would treat the grant-funded employees as second class workers.

We're awaiting the hospital's response to our proposals, but we have let them know the denial of promotions for our clinicians not only affects employee retention, but it also impacts patient care.

If you have any concerns or questions about bargaining, reach out to your bargaining team representative or steward.

UNION WORK FOR UNION MEMBERS

Our Food Service members recently scored a major victory.

When we caught management performing bargaining unit work while union members were kept from working, we spoke up for our rights. The hospital did not want to remedy this violation of our contract, so we took our grievance to the adjustment board — and we won! The hospital must compensate the impacted workers.

"We fought hard to win our contract, we're not going to let the hospital disregard it and trample on our rights!" said cook Jorge Bonilla.



STEWARD SPOTLIGHT FRAN MERRIWEATHER

continued from front

She understands people are busy with other things, but new stewards are always needed to continue advocating for workers' rights.

"If a union is strong and alive, it needs constant involvement," she said.

It also needs allies, and one way to get them is with the monthly contributions members make to the union's Committee on Political Education (C.O.P.E.), the fund that the union uses to support federal issues and candidates.

"We need political action and we need politicians on our side," Fran said. "We need to endorse and canvass for candidates who speak about and support our issues."

Fran and her colleagues on the bargaining team are once again in the midst of negotiating a new contract. She's heartened by the fact that between 40 and 60 members have been participating in each bargaining session through Zoom.

"That shows the Professionals unit is strong and willing to go toe-to-toe" with the administration as it advocates for safer working conditions, access to medical care and rewarding workers for their experience, Fran said.

One of the main issues Fran and the bargaining team are negotiating with management is for the hospital to honor workers' experience and be fair about opportunities to promote them to the next level. This will help to encourage career development, retention and recruitment, Fran said.

The bargaining team is also fighting to ensure that Children's remains the community hospital it has been for more than 100 years, instead of shifting services towards other areas under the UCSF umbrella. Such a shift could seriously impact residents who for decades have come to depend on the hospital for their health and wellbeing.

"There are kids who are third, fourth generations of families," Fran said. "The hospital is a resource for a community where there are no other resources."



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