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NUHW PULSE

FOUNTAIN VALLEY REGIONAL HOSPITAL



WHY L.A. TEACHERS ARE ON STRIKE

Unlike many labor actions, the Los Angeles teachers' strike is not really about wages or benefits. At its core, this is a struggle to defend public education against the privatizing drive of a small but powerful group of billionaires.

The plan of these billionaires is simple: break up the school district into 32 competing "networks" to replace the public schools with privately run charter schools.

These billionaires want to "improve education" by running it like a private business. In other words, they think they can make enormous profits on education.

So who are these billionaires, and what's their "experience" in education? Not a single one is from the education community.

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NURSING ASSISTANTS: FIGHTING FOR FAIRNESS

Last year dozens of nursing assistants spoke out against the fact that management was requiring them to provide a certificate proving that they were "certified." However, management would not pay them the same rate as certified nursing assistants. Under our union contract, certified nursing assistants earn more than nursing assistants.

Our union filed a grievance and asked that the 50 nursing assistants be "converted" to certified nursing assistants; management refused. At the time they were refusing, management was so desperate for certified nursing assistants that they

offered "sign-on bonuses" to new hires!

Michelle Riggins, shop steward and nursing assistant said, "We couldn't believe it. There were dozens of us with our certification, and instead of converting us, they gave hiring bonuses to people off the street. We felt undervalued and disrespected."



Michelle Riggins

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FOUNTAIN VALLEY MANAGEMENT LAYS OFF WAREHOUSE WORKERS

Less than eight months ago, after massive amounts of overtime and complaints of understaffing, management finally posted three open vacancies in the warehouse. Three people from another department transferred into these open positions, and finally there was enough staff to do the work.

That was short-lived. In the past few weeks, management decided to lay off three warehouse workers, giving no reason whatsoever, reducing the department from five people to two.

Justin Evans, warehouse worker and shop steward, said, "Just recently he hospital implemented a 'no cardboard policy' due to concerns with infection control, basically insects living in the cardboard boxes. Our department has been responsible for breaking down every box due to this new policy. When we met with management about the impact of the layoffs, we told them that we just won't have the time to do the

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TEACHERS' STRIKE

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In fact, a key funder of this campaign is the Walton Family, best known as the founders of Walmart. Having built the family fortune by paying notoriously low wages in Arkansa, the Waltons are now the richest family in the entire world, and they've spent the last two decades bankrolling the privatization of public education and spending millions of dollars to elect pro-privatization school board members.

Aside from fighting to protect the existence of public education, the teachers are fighting to provide an environment in which students can thrive.

Class size is notoriously high, with more than 40 students in high school classes; in most schools there are no librarians and no school nurses. All schools are understaffed, with not enough counselors to help struggling students who face mental health issues, poverty, abuse and learning disabilities.

The 35,000 striking teachers are continuing to teach us all an important lesson: if you care about something, you must be willing to stand up and fight for it. If you don't, who will?

NURSING ASSISTANTS

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On February 20, our union will take this case to arbitration where an independent arbitrator will hear both sides and determine the final decision. This process is part of our union contract's grievance procedure.

Mailnh Nguyen, float pool CNA and shop steward, said, "Management's failure to treat employees with respect is demoralizing. Luckily we can speak out and fight back.

Management should do the right thing, but since they won't, we will."

If you are a nursing assistant, talk with your shop steward for more information.



Mailnh Nguyen

WAREHOUSE WORKERS

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cardboard breakdown anymore. Apparently, saving a few dollars in employee costs has become more important than infection control."

Under our union contract there is a step-by-step process of what occurs in the event of a layoff. As a result of this process, the layoff was reduced to two people, and those two employees were

placed into open positions and maintained their same rate of pay.

Going forward, if you are not getting a quick response from the warehouse, or there are cardboard boxes laying around your department, now you'll know that whatever needs your department has were less important than Tenet saving a few bucks.



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