



# NUHW NEWS AND VIEWS

THE SEQUOIAS-PORTOLA VALLEY

DECEMBER 2021



## STEWARD SPOTLIGHT ELSA YANETH SARCENO

“Nothing stops me,” says Elsa Yaneth Sarceno. Perseverance is a way of life for the Guatemalan native who began working at The Sequoias – Portola Valley more than 23 years ago.

When she started the job, her lack of English made communication with coworkers and residents of the facility very difficult.

People who step up to be stewards, the better for our power and our strength to advocate for each other,” she said.

One of those residents — a doctor who spoke several languages — encouraged her to try, recommending that she learn one word each day.

“I was scared, but I said, ‘I can,’” remembered the Food Service Lead.

With her two sons helping

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## MORE MONEY IN YOUR POCKET!

When Morrison Living took over The Sequoias – Portola Valley on March 1, they agreed to abide by our collective bargaining agreement.

Among the provisions in that contract was a pay increase for employees once we reach 1- to 5-year employment anniversaries.

On November 5, we filed a grievance with management because even though the three-year contract was ratified on July 1, the workers have not received their raise for reaching those employment anniversaries.

Morrison Living is not refuting that this is a violation of section 7.1 Appendix A of the agreement having to do with wage rate increases and section 7.2 that deals with continuous service.

They are working with us to resolve the issue by the end of the year and give retroactive pay to employees who qualify for these employment anniversary wage increases.

## HOLIDAY CLARIFICATION

Just ahead of the busy holiday season, NUHW members held a labor-management meeting at the end of October where one of the main issues was clarification on holidays. For years under The Sequoias – Portola Valley, workers had chosen and been approved for holidays based on seniority.

But since the transition to Morrison management took place in March, one manager wasn’t allowing workers to take off those holidays they had

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## HOLIDAYS

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previously chosen. We instructed management that they had to respect the past practice.

Worker unity and our complaints led to the company letting go of the manager and assuring members that the holiday selection process will be respected.

In the next meeting we will ask management to introduce language to clarify the holiday practice for the future



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## AROUND THE UNION

- Salinas Valley Memorial workers ratified a new contract with a 16 percent wage increase and a \$500 bonus for all NUHW members.
- In solidarity with striking Kaiser Permanente engineers who have been on strike since September, and outrage over Kaiser’s chronic underfunding of behavioral health care, NUHW Kaiser therapists held a one-day strike across Northern California on Nov. 19.
- Wellpath reimbursed NUHW members at Santa Rita Jail in Alameda County a total of \$44,900 after they paid for a disability benefit not extended to California residents.



## STEWARD SPOTLIGHT

### ELSA YANETH SARCENO

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with her pronunciation, Yaneth learned one English word each day and her vocabulary began to expand.

Today, she’s able to speak English. “I understand more than I’m able to speak, but I speak it and I don’t feel bad anymore,” Yaneth said.

That same can-do attitude is what she’s brought to the table as a steward for more than 10 years.

“I’m interested in learning about my rights and how to fight for them,” she said of the reason she became a steward.

She’s honed those skills with the classes NUHW offers its stewards.

“When you’re prepared, you notice the difference,” she noted.

Those courses have prepared her not only in how to deal with management, but also with outside influencers. Just recently, she met with the Portola Valley mayor to ask him to advocate for the workers.

Yaneth’s experience and knowledge has made her a go-to steward even for other departments.

“It makes me feel good that I’m able to help with what I know and what the union has taught me,” she said. “I feel a lot of responsibility, but I know they come to me because they know I’m going to help them.”

She’s also learned to motivate others to be active union participants. “I tell them it’s good to know your rights and this is something that it’s also going to help you,” Yaneth said.

“Fear is not going to eat you. You must defeat it.”

Yaneth defeated that fear a long time ago, especially when it comes to speaking English.

“I don’t want anyone to translate for me,” she said. “Now I translate for other people.”

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

For a list of upcoming courses, visit:

<https://nuhw.org/education>