

Unions and Community Honor Martin Luther King

Monday, January 15, 2001, will be an exciting day for workers at Yale: Not only is it the day we honor the memory of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., but it is also the newest staff holiday at the university. In past years many of you, along with our friends in the community, have attended King Day services sponsored by the unions at Yale. This year an even bigger event will bring together union members, clergy, elected officials, and the community by uniting three traditionally separate King Day services: the Yale unions, Interfaith Cooperative Ministries, and the Greater New Haven Clergy Association.

"Economic Justice in the New Millennium" is the theme of our 2001 Martin Luther King Day celebration. All members of Locals 34 and 35 are invited to gather for coffee, donuts, and bagels at 9:30 AM in the basement of First and Summerfield Methodist Church on the corner of Elm and College streets. Services will be held from 11:00 AM until 1:00 PM at United Church on the Green.

Along with readings by union members and the Greater New Haven community, there will be participation by elected officials and by members of the clergy. Inspirational and uplifting music will be provided by school choirs and other musical groups.

The keynote speaker will be the Reverend James Lawson of Los Angeles, who has worked for the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (under Dr. King), and with peace and social action groups such as the NAACP and Urban League. U.S. Congressman John Lewis (D-Georgia) has paid tribute to Rev. Lawson as an architect of the nonviolent direct action strategy of the evolving civil rights movement in the 1960s. Rev. Lawson has been a working

minister in the United Methodist Church for more than forty years. He works with the Martin Luther King Center for Nonviolence in Los Angeles and serves as National Chair for the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Dr. King called him "the leading nonviolence theorist in the world." For fifty years the Reverend James Lawson has been a tireless activist for peace, justice, and nonviolence. He mentored nonviolent leadership within the labor, antiwar, and human rights movements.

This event at United Church will do more than commemorate the life of Martin Luther King Jr. As we learned at our exciting October 18, 2000, event on the New Haven Green, economic discrimination is still a fact of life. In Greater New Haven, as in the rest of the country, workers' wages have fallen over the past twenty years. Union jobs with higher wages and better benefits are good for communities: Homeownership increases, schools improve, and the entire community becomes more stable. We have a real opportunity to achieve "Economic Justice in the New Millennium" right here where we live. Let's pack United Church on the Green on January 15th. Not only will we honor the memory of a truly great American, but we can help make his legacy real. Our message should be loud and clear: Union jobs are good jobs, and good jobs help bring about justice in our community. And that's something really worth standing up for.

A Peek Inside:

The Clerical Union at NYU
UNH Union Victory
Avery Heights Struggle
Our Members Speak ...
Our Members Ask ...



Martin Luther King: His Life in Brief

The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. got his start as a graduate student and met his end supporting striking workers.

In 1955, he earned his Ph.D. from Boston University. During his studies, he was fascinated by Mohandas Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolent social protest, inspiring him to travel to India in 1959.

In his life, he fused such philosophy with direct action. He was not afraid to commit civil disobedience in order to highlight a deeper injustice. He was arrested during the bus boycotts in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955-56, protesting "back of the bus" segregation. In 1963, he was arrested in Birmingham, Alabama, by Eugene "Bull" Connor, and he wrote the famous "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" while in solitary confinement.

Also in 1963, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Birmingham's segregation laws were unconstitutional, and Dr. King delivered his "I have a dream" speech, leading a massive civil rights march on Washington, DC. In 1964 the U.S. Congress passed the Civil Rights Act and in 1965 they passed the Voting Rights Act. Who says collective action doesn't work?

Dr. King increasingly focused upon economic injustice and the importance of unions. In March, 1968, he went to Memphis to support sanitation workers on strike. Dr. King was assassinated while standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel on April 4, 1968. He was only 39 years old.

Union News in Brief

Support for Avery Heights Workers

Members of Local 34, Local 35, GESO, and Local 217 (the Federation) traveled to Hartford on Saturday, November 18, to support the striking workers at the Avery Heights nursing home. Hundreds of union members from as far away as New Jersey gathered to demand that the Avery Heights management negotiate a good contract with its workers, who are represented by SEIU District 1199. (District 1199 is organizing the workers at Yale-New Haven Hospital.) While leading a truck-top presentation of speakers, 1199 president Jerry Brown announced the National Labor Relations Board ruling against Avery Heights' use of replacement workers.

The Federation applauds the Avery Heights workers for their determination. Call 624-5161 for details about contributing to a collection for Avery Heights workers.

Victory for UNH Food Service

In a stunning victory, food service workers at the University of New Haven (HERE, Local 217) recently settled a fantastic contract with UNH and the Wood Company. Under the new agreement, twice as many workers, from fifteen to thirty, are now eligible for the health insurance plan, and the cost of dependent coverage was reduced \$20 per month. The workers will have twice as many paid holidays, paid sick days, and personal days. In addition, the workers will receive a \$4.05 raise over the next five years, with an increase of \$0.75 almost immediately. (For the majority of the workers who now make about \$7.60, this raise amounts to a 52.4% increase.)

The workers achieved this remarkable settlement through several actions, including a rally at the UNH Homecoming football game, which members of the

Federation attended on October 14th. Through the strong leadership of the executive board and with the support of community, religious, and labor leaders both locally and throughout the region, these workers have begun to make UNH a good place for working people.

Calling All Members!

Do you have a question that you'd like to see answered?

Do you have a story you'd like to share?

E-mail questions or stories to:
34@yaleunions.org

Our Members Ask ...

1. What does a union have to do with preventing discrimination?

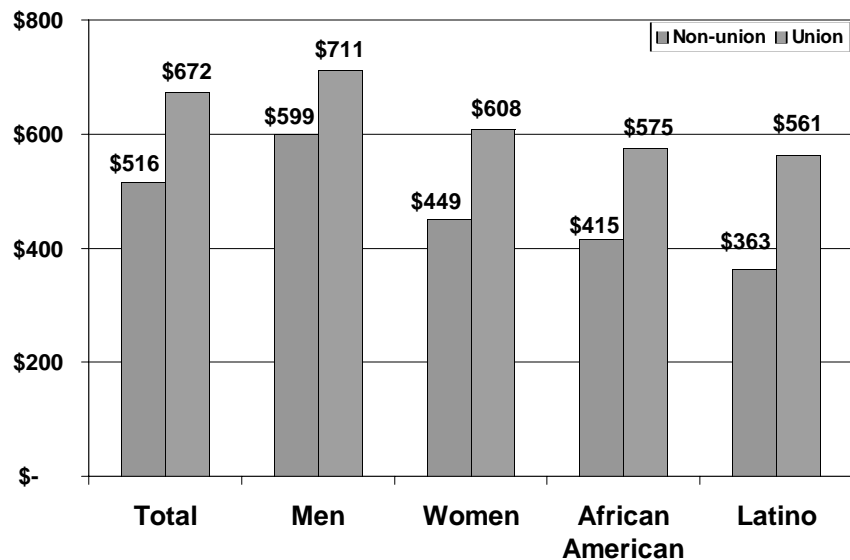
A lot. First and foremost, "fairness" is why unions exist in the first place. It often takes a bit of struggle to convince an employer to treat all its workers fairly.

Everyone benefits from a union. However, workers who are treated unfairly benefit the most when their employer starts being fair. Therefore, unions disproportionately help women and minorities. Consider the nationwide numbers in this graph.

We can see from this graph that everyone benefits from a union. For the average American, weekly wages are 30% higher with a union. This is a substantial union difference! However, the difference is even greater for women: A woman's wages are 35% higher with a union. An African-American's wages are 39% higher with a union. And a Latino's wages are 55% higher with a union.

Our country clearly still has a ways to go before everyone is treated fairly. But today, unions are doing the best job of moving our country in the right direction.

Average Weekly Wages for U.S. Workers, 1999



2. Have our unions helped prevent discrimination here at Yale?

Yes, they have. Local 34 was created because women (and "women's work") was underpaid and disrespected. In 1984, a woman was paid 59¢ for every \$1.00 earned by a man. Local 34's first contract in 1984 eliminated the bottom two steps of the salary structure. Most of the people stuck in those jobs were minorities, so this helped raise the floor for minority workers at Yale.

Until 1988, there were still no women in the top salary grade. The second contract created the full step structure and labor grades in order to eliminate bias and build a more fair wage structure. This moved 500 women into the top salary grade. Today, there are about 900 women in the top salary grade.

In addition, in 1994 the union negotiated Yale's current policy for fair treatment of people with disabilities. Our union contracts also help protect against sexual harassment and other issues of unfair treatment.

NYU Clerical Union Benefits from Graduate Student Organizing

Everyone has heard about the recent NYU graduate teachers' union victory. You may not have heard about NYU's clerical union victory. NYSUT Local 3884 has been trying for 22 years to negotiate union security: The administration had refused to allow the union to collect a "representation fee" from all the people who receive the benefits of the contract. The university insisted that the union survive solely upon the voluntary dues it could collect.

In November, the NLRB certified the union for graduate teachers. Suddenly, the university accepted a representation fee for the clerical union. According to Katherine Cruz, president of Local 3884, the clerical workers were also able to make breakthroughs in job safety and job classifications that allow clerical workers to advance more quickly and be paid fairly for the work they do.

Ms. Cruz credits the support that the

graduate students and the clerical workers gave to each other. Their cooperation created an unprecedented level of union interest on the campus, and revealed NYU's anti-union stance for all to see. The university decided to settle a good contract with the clerical workers rather than risk more worker unrest on campus.

When asked about clerical workers' reaction to the contract, Ms. Cruz was pleased to report that the members felt great.

Our Members Speak ...

Sarah Saiano

My name is Sarah Saiano, and I've been a research assistant in Yale's department of psychiatry for 11 years. For three of those years I worked as a casual. I've got three grown children.

I've just begun my own college career in social services at the School of Human Services at Springfield College, where I attend classes two weekends a month.

All of this was put a risk when my supervisor told me that his grant money could no longer support me, so I got laid off. At any other job this would have been a nightmare, but the local 34 contract guarantees me a 90-day notice, and then a full year in the pool [the interim employment pool, or IEP]. Thankfully, I lined up a new job in a new clinic within the initial 90 days. My work—and more importantly my paychecks—never skipped a beat.

Even though I've always had an interest in social issues, working at Yale has crystallized my thinking. Working in psychiatry I learned about how the mental health system works—or doesn't work. I learned a lot about how Yale works when I watched them lay off workers and cut the number of patient beds when they transferred YPI [Yale Psychiatric Institute] from the university to the hospital. I learned a lot about politics when I saw the board of aldermen pass the Living Wage

Initiative that was supported by the union.



There are so many reasons why I'm involved in the union. I started by joining the committee, and then the Local 34 executive board. Sometimes I'm amazed when I think back at what has happened since I started here at Yale. It's been a time of enormous growth for me.

Virginia Harris

I started working at Yale as a casual employee for the Chemistry Department on June 31, 1999. On August 16, I got a permanent position as an administrative assistant for several senior faculty in Chemistry. My job requires me to do many things, from simply making photocopies and answering the phone to editing manuscripts for publication and drafting correspondence for faculty. I have made travel arrangements for visiting scholars and helped write



grant proposals for our lab groups. I have even initiated an orientation program for post-doctoral fellows in Chemistry, so that they may quickly become familiar with Yale's many offices and procedures.

I enjoy taking on these varied responsibilities, but I wish that my pay reflected the amount of work I do and the care I take to do my job well. I want to do my best for my faculty. I really put my heart into my job, but yet I struggle to earn enough money to meet my family's basic needs. I have to work a second job to support my three daughters, Sierra (14), Holly (13), and Emily (7). I am a single mother, so working another job is a sacrifice, and I wouldn't have to do it if I were paid what I am worth.

I have learned a lot from my involvement in Local 34. The big rally on October 18 taught me about the historical significance of unions at Yale, and I was convinced of our enormous potential to achieve great gains in our next contract. I decided to join the committee because I want to

support the efforts to negotiate a contract that will adequately compensate me for my devotion to my work. Despite the constantly competing demands on my time, I will make it a priority to participate in our program for a better contract. I enjoy unifying workers around their common experiences. The key is communication.

WORKING TOGETHER

Local 34 and Local 35
425 College Street
New Haven, CT 06511

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Email: 34@yaleunions.org
35@yaleunions.org

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We're on the Web!

www.yaleunions.org

Union Calendar

The contract fight has started. It is important for all members to attend all meetings, because negotiations start this year!

Local 35 Membership Meeting Schedule for 2001

January 31	7:30 pm	Church
February 28	7:30 pm	KGL
March 28	TBA	Med School
April 25	7:30pm	Church
May 30	TBA	KGL
June 27	TBA	Church
September 26	TBA	Church
October 31	TBA	Church
November 28	TBA	Church

"TBA" = time to be announced.

Meetings at the "Church" are held at First and Summerfield Methodist Church on the corner of Elm and College streets. Meetings at "KGL" are at Kline Geology Lab at 210 Whitney Avenue.

Scholarship Available

The Yale University Women's Organization (YUWO) offers scholarship awards for continuing education for women whose formal education has been interrupted or delayed. Applicants are judged upon merit and need. The award may be used for course tuition and related expenses.

The number and amount of the awards vary. Last year, 12 women received awards totalling \$12,000. Current Yale staff members and their spouses will be given first consideration.

To receive an application, send a self-addressed stamped business size envelope to:

Connie Marsden
32 Hunting Ridge Farms
Branford, CT 06405

Call with questions: (203) 481-1795

Job Posting:

Office Assistant II

Labor Grade B, 37.5 hours per week

General Description

Under the limited supervision of the Office Manager, provides skilled and independent support to specific office tasks. Manages community database. Maintains union files. Manages computerized filing/grievance/arbitration records. Sorts and distributes electronic and tangible mail. Sorts, copies, and distributes faxes. Classifies and files incoming and outgoing union correspondence. Composes and keyboards memos and letters for self and others. Provides support and back-up to dues and membership functions. Specific job assignments vary according to the needs of the office.

Please call Diana Boice at 624-5161 for further application details.