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Contracts Settled

CMHA-CEI Agreement Unanimously Ratified... Almost

The Union settled three contract economic re-openers with Community Mental Health Agency of Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham Counties (CMHA-CEI) for the Large, Residential, and RN Units that led to a historic 3% raise! CMHA-CEI has struggled year after year to provide a raise that matches inflation due to deficits and changes to the general fund and cause salaries to not increase as rapidly as inflation. This is the largest raise that CMHA-CEI employees have received since 2008. The Union also negotiated the following economics:

- A new Student Debt Relief Scholarship that will offer ten (10) \$1,000 scholarships to employees with degrees associated with CMH bargaining unit positions (All Units).
- An increase in the longevity base from \$24,000 to \$26,000 (Large/RN Unit and Resident Managers)
- An increase in longevity for Resident Technicians from \$857 to \$930.
- Increases in paid time off (PTO) and vacation for employees with 15+ years of seniority (All Units)
- All employees shall be offered a bed bug protection kit for home visits
- An increase in the automobile insurance reimbursement from \$150/yr to \$300/yr.



CMHCEI RESIDENTIAL TEAM:
VANESHA HERNANDEZ, INDIA HUDSON,
NAUDIA FISHER AND MARCUS MCKISSIC

The Union negotiated the following as non-economic items:

- Job postings will now be posted for only seven (7) days rather than fourteen (14) days in order to expedite hiring.
- Employees must now notify management of tardiness or absence prior to the start of their shift rather than one (1) hour into it.
- Large and RN Unit members received improved flexible schedule language
- Management will have the ability to restrict the number of interviews granted to five (5) bargaining unit employees for paraprofessional and clerical positions in which all applicants are equally qualified.

Most notably, CMHA-CEI did NOT ask for any concessions from employees leading to a happy workforce.

The agreement was ratified by the Large Unit in a vote of 227 yes and 1 no; RN Unit in a vote of 16 yes and 0 no; and Residential Unit in a vote of 52 yes and 0 no. The Large Unit bargaining team consisted of **Julie Barron, Paul Brooks, Melissa Doss, and Jennifer Garza**. The Residential Unit bargaining team consisted of **Vanessa Hernandez, India Hudson, and Marcus McKissic**. The RN Unit bargaining team was represented by **Mary Huffman**. All units were assisted by Chief Steward **Naudia Fisher**.

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Contracts Settled

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MGL RNs Reach Agreement

After bargaining for nearly one year, a new contract has been negotiated for the RNs at McLaren Greater Lansing (MGL). The RN bargaining unit is composed of about 460 nurses who work throughout the hospital. Negotiations started in October 2018 and immediately got stalled when HR proposed severe insurance cuts, ending holiday pay and eliminating all bonuses with little or no raises.

MGL is a part of the McLaren Health system. McLaren has imposed major insurance cuts for employees at all its fourteen (14) hospitals. The Local 459 RN bargaining unit had the only contract in the McLaren system that had yet to agree to the new health care or agreed that it will be in effect soon. The RNs realized at some point they were likely to have to accept the inferior insurances but was determined to get a package of raises to help offset these cuts. State and Federal mediators were brought in to assist with bargaining.

The RNs staged an informational picket on June 26th to pressure HR to offer better pay increases. Not long after the hospital proposed to give them a package that achieved this goal.

Under the new agreement, current RNs will move to the McLaren insurances in 2021. New hires start in the plan immediately. If current employees take the plan early, they get bonuses totaling up to \$1,500.



Back row: Julie Murray, Naudia Fisher, Pat Pfund and Jeff Fleming
Front row: Malinda Green, Kristen Silvers, Theresa Wing and Kyra Keusch

The contract creates a new step scale for all the RNs. The new scale guarantees RNs at least a two percent (2%) increase. The roughly one third (1/3) of RNs at the top of the current pay scale will see two step increases over the next year. The step scales will also be increased by one percent (1%) in October 2020 and one percent (1%) in October 2021. Any RN who is not eligible for a step increase will receive a two percent (2%) lump sum bonus.

Another major sticking point was holidays. McLaren has eliminated holiday pay in all its hospitals. If an employee takes a holiday off and wants to get paid, the employee must use her/his PTO. The new contract retains holiday pay for current RNs but moves new hires to the McLaren system. The attendance bonus was also retained for all RNs. The retention bonus was maintained for current RNs.

The RN contract contains minimum staffing guidelines that MGL must follow or pay a \$200 penalty for each short staffing occurrence. Improvements were made in these guidelines. Nearly every unit will also have an opportunity to meet with the joint labor/management staffing council to advocate for the ways staffing needs to be improved.

The RN team concluded that the gains in the agreement outweighed the cuts and recommended the package. The bargaining team members were Chief Steward **Julie Murray, Malinda Green, Charlie Hall, Kyra Keusch, Michelle Prudden, Kristen Silvers** and **Theresa Wing**. Alternates included **Pat Pfund** and **Anna Thomas**. They were assisted by servicing staff **Naudia Fisher** and **Jeffrey Fleming**.

The tentative agreement was ratified 188 to 22.

Rivertown Credit Union gets a quick agreement

The Local 459 members at Rivertown Community Federal Credit Union in Grand Rapids unanimously approved a new three (3) year contract.

(Continued on page 3)

Local 459 • On the Web: www.local459.org



459 Update

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Contracts Settled

(Continued from page 2)

In what was one of the quickest negotiations ever, the bargaining teams met for only twenty (20) minutes, exchanged a couple of e-mails and that was it!

Management and the Union agreed to add three percent (3%) each year to the Step Scale, make no changes to the Medical Insurance, and trade Good Friday for Columbus Day and Veterans Day off. In addition all members will receive a \$500 signing bonus.



The bargaining team was **Angie Hudson, Robin Ross** and **Becky Thompson**. They were assisted by Service Representative **Lance A. Rhines**.

McLaren Greater Lansing P.O.S.T. members ratify new contract

Local 459 represents about 450 Paraprofessional, Office and Skilled Trades employees at McLaren Greater Lansing. These members are the backbone of the hospital and represent classifications such as Nursing Assistants, Environmental Service Workers, Schedulers, Electricians and much more.

In recent contracts, this group has taken concessions because the hospital was in rough financial shape. Not this time! The members made it clear that they were not taking concessions, and they didn't.

A new 3 ¼ year agreement was reached with MGL. This agreement guarantees wage increases for all employees. The following provisions are in the new agreement:

Wages

- All full-time non-probationary employees will receive a \$500 signing bonus upon ratification.
- All part-time non-probationary employees will receive a \$300 signing upon ratification.
- A new Step will be added that will allow for all "topped out" employees to receive an additional step increase in January 2020.

- All employees currently at Step 15 (topped out) will receive a 2% lump sum payment upon ratification.
- An additional 1% will be added to the steps in January of each year.
- All employees who have not received a step increase yet in 2019 will receive one step upon ratification.
- All employees will receive an additional step increase in January 2020. (All 2020 steps will be "front loaded" so that they receive them in January instead of on your anniversary date in 2020, 2021 and 2022).
- All "topped out" employees will receive a 2% lump sum in January 2021 and 2022.

Other provisions

- Employees will not be mandated more than once per pay period
- Managers must approve or deny vacation requests within 2 weeks
- Bereavement increased from 2 to 3 days for grandparent or in-law.
- Training Pay increased from \$.50 to \$.75 per hour
- Employees with at least 300 hours of PTO will be able to cash out up to 80 hours upon ratification
- Employees will be able to cash out 40 hours of PTO in November and May of each year

Most of the contract language remained the same because the team rejected all of management's proposals on concessions.

The members ratified the new agreement by a vote of 146-31.



The Bargaining Team was Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas, Rick Bailey, Whitney Benko, Brenda Densmore, Frank Fuentes, Kathy Lewis** and **Sunni Lira**. They were assisted by Service Representative **Lance A. Rhines**.

Executive Board Action

The Local 459 Executive Board is made up of members elected by the membership. The Board meets at least monthly. It is at these meetings that many of the decisions regarding Local 459 members are presented, discussed, and decided.

Executive Board decisions made during the period of August to November 2019 of possible interest to the membership are outlined below. Decisions which have been discussed elsewhere in this newsletter are not included.

ARBITRATIONS

Arbitration is the final step in the grievance process. The vast majority of grievances are settled prior to reaching arbitration. Both the Union and management present their case before a neutral arbitrator who makes a binding decision based on the merits of the case. Arbitration is an expensive and time consuming procedure. Local 459 has limited funds and cannot afford to arbitrate every grievance. Therefore, all unresolved grievances are presented to the Executive Board for review.

During this period no grievances were brought before the Executive board for review.

BUSINESS

The Executive Board appointed Stewards and Alternates at TIC, MGL POST, LAFUCU, Red Cross Collections and MGL RNs where only one (1) member expressed an interest in the position.

The Executive Board approved sending **Kristen Silvers**, MGL RN and **Calvin Parks**, Touchpoint to the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute.

The Executive Board appointed **Kristen Silvers** to the MGL RN Chief Steward on Leave position. They also appointed **Rick Bailey**, MGL POST as Trustee and **Whitney Benko** as MGL POST Member at Large to the Executive Board.

The Executive Board authorized a request to spend \$8600 to replace Local 459 computers which will no longer be supported after the end of this year due to the phasing out of Windows 7.

The Executive Board approved one delegate to the OPEIU Special Convention scheduled for Thursday, January 23, 2020. Per the Local 459 Constitution President **Taylor** will be that delegate.

The Executive Board approved the financial reports.

APPEAL PROCESS

The Local 459 Constitution allows the membership to modify or overturn any action of the Executive Board but any such decision must be done at a membership meeting in which a quorum is present and which is held or properly requested within one (1) calendar month of the Executive Board action.

A special membership meeting may be called upon a request submitted to the President by not less than three percent (3%) of the members in good standing. Currently, there are 2,981 members so a petition would require approximately eighty-nine (89) signatures. Petitions are available from the Local 459 office.

For reviewing a decision to arbitrate or not to arbitrate a grievance, a special meeting may also be called by three quarters of the members in the bargaining unit in which the grievance arose. For some bargaining units this is less than three percent (3%) of all Local 459 members in good standing.

The regular meetings of the Executive Board are held the second Tuesday of each month. Draft minutes of the meeting are available no later than two (2) weeks following the meeting.

Please see the Constitution for specific details. Copies of the Constitution are available from the Local 459 office and on the Local 459 website.

QUESTIONS?

If there are any questions or concerns about these decisions, please feel free to contact President **Sharon Taylor** by phone at (517)887-8844 or by email at staylor@local459.org.

From the President's Desk



*By
Sharon Taylor, Local 459 President*

Union Solidarity

As you can see from the newsletter the staff at Local 459 has been very busy negotiating contracts. Some of these contracts have taken a day, while others took almost a year. We do our best to get the best contract possible for the most members.

Not only have we been busy negotiating all the contracts outlined in other parts of the newsletter, but we have done it with fewer staff. We have all missed the presence of **Charles Terry**, who passed away at the end of last year. In addition, another of our full-time staff reduced his hours. Despite these cuts we feel like we've been able to keep up our level of servicing with the help of many great Chief Stewards. This is one example of Solidarity.

Solidarity is the unofficial slogan of the labor movement. Sometimes it is used as a platitude with little meaning, but recently I have seen multiple instances of it from Local 459 members.

A member at MGL had a house fire and lost all her belongings and some of her family pets. MGL staff rallied around her. One nurse started a fundraiser, others brought in clothing and other donations. People are still bringing in donations to the Local for her.

When UAW was on strike many of our members went and walked the picket line with them on their own time. Others took food and coffee to them on the picket line.

When the MGL POST Chief Steward had to go out on an unexpected leave the other Stewards stepped up to help cover grievance meetings and member questions. They attended the membership meetings to help explain the tentative agreement and answer people's questions and covered meetings

Supporting members who can make some inroads to higher wages is also an example of solidarity. Sometimes management will not be able to give a large group the same amount but will be willing to give one group a little bit more. We should not see this as a negative. It's getting our foot in the door for the next go round. Each step forward for one is in fact a step for all.

Another example of Solidarity was the Touchpoint employees turning down managements "last best offer". These people wanted to give Touchpoint the message that they deserve a living wage.

We are currently taking donations for our holiday basket program and many have brought in food donations for their union brothers and sisters who are struggling. There are members who make cash donations every year to help with this program and have done so again this year.

These examples of solidarity are some of the very best of what a Union is for, and what a Union can be. We care for each other in adversity and in times of plenty. We stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters to fight for better wages and benefits so we can support our families, each other and our communities. We know that our voices are stronger when we raise them together in union.

Local 459 Officers & Staff wish you all Happy Holidays!

Grievances Settled

The members, stewards and staff of Local 459 settle many grievances each quarter. There is insufficient space to publish all of them. Grievances which are unique or affect a large number of members are more likely to be published. If you would like to publicize a grievance you have settled, contact your Service Representative.



Touchpoint at Moross Good Deed Leads to Bad Discipline

Jason Haigh is a Lead worker in the Food and Nutrition Department for Touchpoint. He works at the Ascension Health Moross hospital. A co-worker was entitled to a free meal for working a double shift. **Haigh** was not working the register that day, but there was nobody else around to cash the co-worker out, so he did it. Touchpoint management disciplined him with a final warning (one step from termination).

Haigh contacted Moross Chief Steward **Calvin Parks** who immediately filed a grievance. **Haigh** had a perfect work record. **Parks** argued that a discipline was not appropriate and that **Haigh** should have just been told not to do that in the future.

The grievance was denied through all three (3) steps of the procedure. It was eventually heard at the mediation step. The grievance was granted in full and the discipline was removed.

Touchpoint at Macomb Saving Grace

Christine Goodson is a Food Service Worker for Touchpoint working at Ascension Health on the Macomb

Campus hospital. **Goodson** was terminated for tardiness. Although **Goodson** was late for work several times, many of the times she was less than five (5) minutes late. Her supervisor apparently forgot to read the part in the contract that says there is a five (5) minute grace period.

Goodson contacted Macomb Chief Steward **Blenda Coward** and a grievance was filed. **Coward** requested **Goodson's** work record that showed she should have never been given most of the tardiness points that she received.

Management agreed to bring **Goodson** back to work but would not pay her back wages. The Union agreed to let her return to work and filed a grievance over the back pay only. After going through all three (3) steps of the grievance procedure, and finally to mediation, the Union was able to get **Goodson** a full month's back wages.

Touchpoint at Oakland That's Unfair by George

Debra Blakely is a long-term Environmental Services Worker at Touchpoint working at Ascension Health Oakland Campus hospital. **Blakely** has run into trouble lately because she has a Supervisor who subscribes to the theory of discipline now and ask questions later. We will just call him "**George**."

Blakely was recently given a final warning (one step before termination) for not cleaning an executive's office. **Blakely**, like the rest of the EVS workers at Touchpoint was given several tasks and work areas because they are always short-staffed. Another supervisor assigned her to do patient care, which takes priority. **Blakely** was unable to get to the executive's office due to being overwhelmed.

Blakely contacted Oakland Chief

Steward **Louversa Fair** and a grievance was filed. **Fair** argued that the discipline was unfair and inaccurate. **George** removed the discipline. But that's not the end of the story; **George** turned around and gave **Blakely** another final warning for the same infraction.

Eventually, the grievance went to mediation where it was discovered that this was the second write-up for the same incident. The Union argued double jeopardy on top of everything else. The grievance was granted and the discipline was removed.



MGL POST 4 on the 4th

Mistoria Page works as a Laboratory Technical Assistant on the Greenlawn campus at McLaren Greater Lansing (MGL). **Page** signed up to work extra hours for the July fourth (4th) holiday. **Page** did not receive a call to work and later found out that a per diem employee had worked the hours instead.

Page contacted Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas**. The Supervisor agreed that **Page** should have been called to work. **Page** was paid for the four (4) hours as if she had worked.

MGL POST Save Your PTO for When You're Not Working

Joelle Cohoon is a Registrar in the MGL Patient Access department. She
(Continued on page 7)

requested not to use her paid time off for a holiday shift because she had already reached her budgeted hours for that pay period. **Cohon** contacted her Supervisor to ask why her PTO was used when she had emailed them not to use it. The Supervisor stated that it didn't matter and she still would have to take her paid time off for that holiday shift.

Cohon contacted Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas** for help. **Davis-Thomas** contacted the supervisor to ask for them to submit a correction. The Supervisor stated she would speak to HR. **Davis-Thomas** contacted the Manager of Human Resources herself and pointed out that according to contract **Cohon** was not required to use PTO for the holiday since her budgeted hours had been met. HR agreed and **Cohon's** paid time off hours were returned to her bank.

MGL RN Posting Delay causes Late Application

Jacqueline Galloway contacted Chief Steward **Julie Murray** when she applied for a job and it was given to someone with less seniority. The MGL RN contract requires MGL to post job openings on the specific unit while allowing it to concurrently post on their hospital job posting page. Normally a Manager will post openings in a prominent place on the unit so everyone working there can see it. This time the Manager was delayed in posting it and it caused **Galloway** to put in a late application so she was denied the job.

Murray filed a grievance. In the grievance meeting HR offered to add hours to **Galloway's** current position which would bring her up to the hours she was seeking in the posted job. She agreed to the settlement and is now working the additional hours.

MGL RN Mandation Refusal Should Not Mean Loss of PTO

A class action grievance was filed by the RN Chief Steward **Julie Murray** when she became aware management was taking PTO from RN's banks if they were unable to fulfill a mandated shift. HR and management argued that they should take PTO as they considered it a call in. **Murray** countered that it was being used to threaten nurses that they would have 12 hours of PTO taken from their bank if they don't come in on the mandated shift. She also appealed to the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) who was not aware this was the practice and agreed it should not be done. Before it was finalized **Murray** wanted to make sure if someone took an LCDO without pay (which is allowed by contract) they would still meet budgeted hours and not get docked from their PTO bank. After much discussion, HR agreed and moving forward RNs will not have to risk their PTO time if they are not able to fulfill a mandated extra shift.

As the grievance settlement was being completed, **John Reule** contacted **Murray** because he had a mandated shift in October that he was unable to fulfill and had PTO deducted from his bank. She contacted the Manager of scheduling who agreed to return the PTO.

MGL RN Home Unit Mandation Only

Zania Fawaz is a float nurse at MGL. She was told by the night Supervisor they were mandating her to 6 North. A nurse can only be mandated to her home floor. For floats that would be the floor they work the most hours on. **Fawaz** knew this could not be right as she had only worked on 6 North one time and the last time she was mandated it was to 6 South. She

questioned the Supervisor. She was told that 6 North was where the need was and that was where she was being mandated. Chief Steward **Julie Murray** contacted the Manager of scheduling. It was determined this mandation was done in error. The Manager agreed to remove the mandation and her refusal from her record. She is also following up with staff in the nursing office to make sure they are mandating to the correct units to hopefully avoid this problem from happening in the future.

MGL POST Master Schedule Change DOES Require Notice

MGL POST Chief Steward **Lois Davis-Thomas** received multiple phone calls from employees that work as Perioperative Orderlies in the Surgery Department at the Pennsylvania Campus stating that they did not receive proper notice for a master schedule change. **Davis-Thomas** contacted the Supervisor of the department.

The Supervisor stated that she did give proper notice for the master schedule change. After speaking to the employees and much investigation into the matter **Davis-Thomas** discovered that proper notice was not given, and a grievance meeting was requested. During the grievance meeting with the manager of HR, **Davis-Thomas** pointed out that according to Article 21.2 (Master Schedule Change) of the POST contract the notification was not done properly. The employees did not receive both the copy of the new schedule nor the current schedule, therefore proper notice was not given.

The grievance was settled when HR and the Supervisor reviewed the contract language and realized that the employees indeed did not receive proper notice and corrected it by having the employees return to the previous master schedule.

St. Vincent's Economic Reopener

Often times Local 459 negotiates contracts with wage or economic reopeners because some employers don't know what their economic picture looks like years in advance. This is the case at St. Vincent's Catholic Charities.

Recently, after contentious negotiations, the Union and Management agreed to a new wage scale that allows for significant raises for employees. Starting wages were raised by fifty-cents (\$.50) per hour. This represents about a five-percent (5%) increase for the vast majority of employees. We also reclassified positions to put them at a higher classification. In addition, we added 2.8% raise to the step scale. Employees who reach the top of the scale will also be given raises the same as the non-union employees receive.

The bargaining team was also able to add three (3) new paid time off (PTO) days for employees.

There was new language added for inclement weather as well. If an employee comes into work on a day that the agency closes, they will receive time and one-half for their shift.

The negotiations were not easy, and management fought the Union hard, but in the end we succeeded in getting much needed increases.

The agreement was ratified by a vote of 17-4 by the members, who, by the way are still 100% Union!

The bargaining team was **Brandon Tilson**, Chief Steward, **Emanuel Dukes**, **Denise Fase** and **Jessica Medrano**. They were assisted by Service Representative **Lance A. Rhines**.



Brandon Tilson, Denise Fase and Emanuel Dukes.
Not pictured: **Jessica Medrano**

Hospice of Lansing agrees to mid-term wage increases

Local 459 fights for higher wages for all of its members. Hospice of Lansing (HOL) is no exception. The HOL employees have been paid under the market due to the organization's economic difficulties.

CEO **John Person** has given fair raises in bargaining, but the Union has always insisted on a living wage of \$15.00 per hour for the Home Health Aides / Resident Aides. The step scale on the other hand started at \$12.00 per hour. In addition, the Union has argued that the Registered Nurses are also below market which has impacted recruitment and retention of employees.

Person has always said that if things get better for HOL financially, then he will share that success with the employees. He kept his word.

Recently, HOL has been doing much better financially. Even though the contract is not open, the Union and Management sat down to talk about wage increases.

Paraprofessional Steward **Shelly Clare** and RN Steward **Cindy Dole**, along with **Lance Rhines**, Local 459 Service Representative met with CEO **Person** and a deal was struck. **Person** proposed to increase the Step Scale for the Home Health Aides / Resident Aides by about \$3.00 per hour, making the starting rate \$15.00. He also proposed to increase the RN Step Scale by between \$3.00 and \$5.00 per hour. The Union enthusiastically agreed. Thanks John!

Member Benefits

Through OPEIU affiliation, all Local 459 members and their families are automatically eligible for more great benefits, including:

AFL-CIO UNION PLUS

- ★ Save at home and on the road, as well as on credit and mortgages.

TOWING / SERVICE CALLS

Up to two towing/service calls per year, per household, valued at up to \$100 each to all family members living in the same household of the member, provided through Nation Safe Drivers (NSD).

Includes:

- ✓ Free Hook Up and Towing up to 15 Miles
- ✓ 24-hour Emergency Roadside Assistance
- ✓ 24-hour Emergency Battery Service
- ✓ 24-hour Emergency Lockout Service
- ✓ 24-hour Emergency Delivery of Supplies
- ✓ 24-hour Emergency Tire Service

FREE IDENTITY PROTECTION

- ★ Now all OPEIU members will have a proactive, comprehensive defense against identity theft, all at no cost to you.



IT PAYS TO BELONG!

STRIKE / LOCKOUT BENEFIT

More than 99 percent of all collective bargaining agreements are settled without a strike and/or lockout. However, in the event Local 459 becomes engaged in a strike and/or lockout, OPEIU will provide each striking or locked out member with \$320 per week, starting with the eighth day of the strike/lockout for members in good standing.

INSURANCE

- ★ \$2000 Life Insurance Benefit
- ★ \$2000 Accidental Death and Dismemberment benefit

OPEIU STUDENT DEBT REDUCTION PROGRAM

- ★ Qualifying applicants may apply for a student debt reduction scholarship.

OPEIU SCHOLARSHIPS

- ★ Full-time scholarships valued at \$6,500 each
- ★ Additional full-time scholarships valued at \$3,250 each
- ★ Part-time scholarships valued at \$2,650 each
- ★ Romeo Corbeil/Giles Beauregard Memorial Summer Camp

Steward Spotlight

Julie Murray

Julie Murray has served as the MGL RN Chief Steward from December, 2012 until the day she retired on December 13, 2019. She was the primary representative for the 460 RNs members.

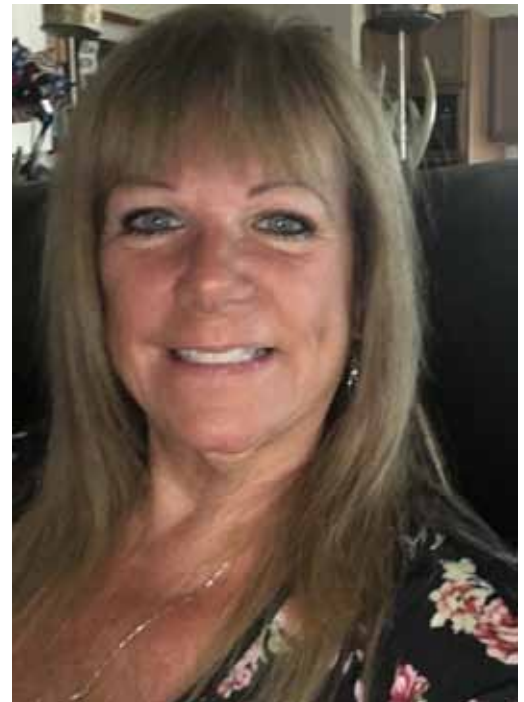
She stepped into the role during a turbulent time for the RN bargaining unit. A small group of nurses backed by the Michigan Nurses Association (MNA) tried to convince the RNs to leave Local 459 when the RNs voted down a tentative agreement filled with concessions. This effort was soundly defeated in an election conducted by the federal government. A new RN negotiating team chose to use a Local 459 representative at the bargaining table and achieved a tentative agreement with larger raises and without many of the employer proposed concessions. The new tentative agreement was ratified nearly unanimously.

While the negotiations ended well, hard feelings remained. **Murray** made it a priority to unify the bargaining unit once again. She recognized that only by banding together could the RNs advocate for their patients and themselves. She did this by taking time get to know each and every RN. **Murray** also emphasized communication with the nurses. She gathered the vast majority of RN's home email addresses and regularly sent updates to them. She

also established the Local 459 Nurses Facebook page. Over time she also became active in other social media venues. In addition, she is known to respond to RN's questions and concerns any time day or night.

Murray served on three bargaining teams. These negotiations were quite contentious and were often stalled by the numerous concessions proposed by HR. The communication infrastructure she established helped the RNs stay unified during bargaining that sometime stretched out for multiple years. That solidarity helped the nurses achieved better contracts.

She has also been active with the OPEIU International Nurses Council (ONC) since shortly after she became Chief Steward. She was repeatedly elected to serve as Vice-Chair of the Council. As



improve the lives of all patients and RNs, she spent many hours with the ONC advocating to change the laws to mandate safe staffing for all hospitals.

Murray created the McLaren Nurses Honor Guard. The nurses perform a ceremony at funerals or memorial services of nurses who have passed away. The Honor Guard dresses in the traditional white uniform with cap and cape and they officially release them of their nursing duties. In the last year, she has helped start Honor Guards in nearly every state in the country.

Comments by members.

I have worked as a steward with Julie since she became chief steward for the McLaren nurses. Julie has been a pleasure to work with during this time. She has always made herself available to answer questions and give suggestions when needed. Her passion to help make the nursing profession better has been very inspiring. Julie will be sorely missed but I have a feeling she will not give up her passion to make nursing better. Enjoy your retirement!

Your dedicated work at Local 459 not only improved the working conditions of McLaren nurses, but also touched the lives of RNs around the entire country!

Thank you for your integrity and dedication throughout the years. You have made a huge impact in many lives including mine! Your shoes will not be filled easily but may all of your years ahead be filled with all the happiness you deserve!!

I've always admired Julie's dedication to our bargaining unit. She's been a strong chief steward, standing up for the needs of our bargaining unit and has performed her duties with pride.

proud as **Murray** was of the staffing language in the Local 459 contract, she recognized that many other nurses don't have the same protections. In an effort to

While **Murray** will be sorely missed by the RNs, we congratulate her on her well-deserved retirement!

Steward Spotlight

Pam Harry Child and Family Charities

Pam Harry retires after 28 years of service. Not only has Pam been a loyal employee at Child & Family Charities (CFC), she has been a strong Union steward for the entire length of that time. **Pam** weathered the different storms in the labor movement that included rising inflation, major changes in job duties, layoffs, and even strikes! Throughout this time, **Pam** defended CFC employees, advocated for change, and was a constant presence on the negotiations teams, CFC management may not have always had much to offer financially, but **Pam** always did her best to squeeze out every possible penny. One of the most important jobs of a

steward is to keep an eye on management and **Pam** has one of the best eagle eyes around. She does her best to make sure that management is accountable to their employees and to the Union contract. That attention to detail is one of the primary reasons why the Union has had the ability to remain strong at CFC.

Pam's retirement is a major loss for the Union, but an exciting change for **Pam**. She plans on spending more time with her grandchildren, traveling, and NOT taking any work-related phone calls! We would like to think that **Pam** will very quickly get bored with retirement life and return to CFC, but we're willing to bet that **Pam** will find a way to



stay as busy as always. **Pam**, we sincerely appreciate all your work on behalf of the Union and your coworkers. We hope that retirement is everything that you hoped for and more!

Robert Potts Retires

Long Time Board Member Robert Potts Retires

Long time Local 459 Activist and Executive Board Member **Robert Potts** from the MGL POST unit retired effective November 12, 2019. **Potts** was well known around Local 459 as someone who could be counted to show up to any meeting or action that he was asked to attend. You could always count on him to support his fellow members and to fight for what was right. He will be greatly missed by all as he settles into his well-deserved retirement! We will miss you **Robert!**



Blast from the Past...

30 years ago at Local 459....

... the nurses at American Red Cross were on strike rejecting multi-tiered wages for employees doing the same work.

...Local 459 elected new officers

...Local 459 moved its offices from South Washington to West Lenawee in downtown Lansing

**Office and Professional Employees
International Union, Local 459**

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Holiday Baskets

Local 459 is accepting names of members who may be in need of extra support around the upcoming Christmas holiday. Names of Union members in need must be submitted by a steward on a Recommendation for Holiday Basket form. The forms have been sent to stewards and are available from the Local 459 office. Names will be accepted through December 17th for Christmas holiday baskets.

Members are encouraged to donate non-perishable food items to the basket program. Donations can be dropped off at the Local 459 office or we can arrange for a pick up.



Contact Ronda Ackerson at (517) 887-8844 or rackerson@local459.org for more information about the program.