

## HEALTHCARE WORKERS' BULLETIN HUDSON VALLEY/CAPITAL REGION

WINTER 2018

### VICTORY!

#### RITE AID WORKERS WIN STRONG CONTRACT BEFORE STORES ARE SOLD TO WALGREENS

After two and a half years of negotiations, Rite Aid pharmacists, pharmacy techs, interns and cashiers have secured a strong contract running through April 2019. The agreement preserves no-cost health insurance on the company plan, annual raises and pensions.

Since Rite Aid is set to sell thousands of its stores to Walgreens, the workers were eager to secure a contract before any of these stores were sold to ensure that these jobs remain good, middle-class ones.

"I was relieved when we finally reached this agreement," said Dahlia Lugo, a Pharmacy Technician at Rite Aid with 29 years of service. "As someone who's dedicated my career to Rite Aid, I was particularly nervous about losing our pension fund, which we need to care for ourselves after we retire."

"I applaud the Rite Aid members of 1199, who stood on the frontlines and endured many setbacks to ensure that pharmacy jobs in our costly city remain good, middle-class ones," said 1199SEIU President George Gresham. "They fought in the tradition of our



union, a tradition that harkens back to the pharmacists in the 1930s who fought for living wages and justice in the groundbreaking organizing effort which formed our union."

## TOGETHER WE RISE IN 2018! GET INVOLVED IN 1199 TODAY!



2018 is a crucial year for 1199 members and our families. Many of our contracts are expiring, and at the same time on a national level we are facing profound attacks on working people, including court cases that threaten our ability to join together in unions. Important elections are coming up that will determine who is elected to Congress and the NYS

Legislature. Those elected will make crucial policy that will have an impact on everything that is important to us.

**2018 is the year that we all must get involved in building the strongest movement of working people and our communities. Become a union activist or delegate, and encourage your co-workers to do the same!**

#### DID YOU KNOW?

**DELEGATES** are 1199's primary representatives in the

workplace and elected by coworkers. A delegate's duties include advocating for the highest quality care for our patients, defending job standards, providing leadership, and embodying the spirit of a proud union member. Delegates **empower, mobilize and educate members**, investigate and solve workplace issues, help ensure members understand why we pay dues and contribute to political action, and build our union by organizing non-union healthcare workers, among many other responsibilities. Becoming a delegate requires a deep commitment, and is a major way to drive improvements in care, jobs and our society. **Learn more today—contact your organizer!**

**POLITICAL CAPTAINS** are union activists who want to engage in 1199's robust political and legislative advocacy. Political captains participate in calls once a month so we can stay informed about the latest updates on key healthcare legislation, budgetary priorities and upcoming meetings and events. To learn about becoming a political captain, speak to your delegate or organizer.

## FORT HUDSON NURSING CENTER MEMBERS RATIFY CONTRACT



It was a special Valentine's Day this year for 225 nursing home workers, 1199 members at Fort Hudson Nursing Center in Fort Edward, N.Y.

On Wednesday, February 14, after months at the negotiating table, petitioning and walk-ins and several exciting public actions including two informational pickets and visits to local elected officials — these dedicated caregivers ratified their contract and celebrated a well-earned victory.

They not only won the best annual wage increases in almost a decade, but also, ratification bonuses. Importantly, by staying together, they were able to hold off increased employee contributions to health insurance, as proposed by the employer and maintain their pension. Both health benefit and pension issues were contract goals determined early on by the members. Furthermore, seniority pay was increased. This an important reward for those who have given so many years to providing quality care to their residents, and it is also an important step toward maintaining continuity of care.

The Fort Hudson bargaining unit includes unit assistants, LPNs, CNAs, dietary, housekeeping and activities aides and maintenance workers.

**"This is the best contract we have won in at least eight years. It improves our quality of life, and also will help recruit and retain staff, which is important to the quality of life and quality care that our residents deserve."**

**Sarah Rushia-Johnson,**  
C.N.A.



## 1199ERS AND ALLIES DISRUPT TRUMP'S FAT CAT BREAKFAST!

When President Trump came to Midtown Manhattan in December to speak to wealthy donors at a breakfast where tickets reportedly cost between \$1,000 and \$50,000 a plate, 1199ers and community allies were out in force to meet him.

More than 1,000 members and allies lined the block in front of Grand Central Station facing the luxury Cipriani Hotel where the breakfast was taking place to let attendees know that with no justice, there will be no peace!

The President snuck in through a side entrance, but he cannot have failed to hear 1199ers demonstrating their unity and power by coming together and shouting chants like: "Taking from the needy! Greedy, greedy, greedy!" and "Enough is enough!"

The well-attended demonstration was widely reported on both conventional and social media outlets, so allies around the country could see what kind of reception the federal government's unjust policies are getting in New York City.



## ADIRONDACK TRI-COUNTY RECEIVES NEW NAME AND 1199 MEMBERS WIN NEW CONTRACT

When Adirondack Tri-County Nursing Home in North Creek was purchased by new owners and became Elderwood at North Creek, 1199 members set out to maintain union recognition and then improve their collective bargaining agreement. They made their voices heard not only by coming out to negotiations in force, but also by walking in to the Board of Directors. By standing together, the members of the 66-member bargaining unit were successful! They negotiated significant annual wage increases, health insurance that is affordable for all members and secured their pension.

Committee members were pleased with the contract. **Josh Smith**, said "It's good to have a voice and be heard! We stayed together during negotiations and now we are building a strong 1199 chapter!" **Charlotte Bessey** said, "Especially with a new owner, we are relieved to have a contract that guarantees our wages and benefits and protects our rights."

**SIGN UP TODAY! MARCH 14 RALLY TO SECURE OUR CARE!**



## HEALTHCARE WORKERS WILL RALLY IN ALBANY ON MARCH 14 TO SECURE OUR CARE

**Washington has launched an all-out assault on the health care of New Yorkers.** Massive healthcare cuts threaten access to care in New York - especially for the elderly and lower-income families. Now, it's up to our elected state legislators in Albany to provide the necessary healthcare funding in the state budget, which is due on April 1, 2018.

**That's why thousands of 1199ers and our allies will be rallying at the state capital on March 14.** We will be standing up for our children to ensure they are able to grow up healthy and strong. We will be standing up for the best possible quality care. And we will be standing up for good jobs and quality care in our communities.

**What we are facing:** The Federal government's lack of action on the Affordable Care Act's cost-sharing reduction payments means an \$870 million cut in funding for New York's Essential Health Plan. New York also must address \$700 million in Federal Medicare cuts.

The \$8 billion in cuts proposed by President Trump over four years would dismantle New York's healthcare system. That means there will be bankrupt hospitals, laid off workers, short-staffing and diminished quality care for patients.

Meanwhile, our hospitals and nursing homes remain in a financially fragile position, because they haven't had a Medicaid rate increase in 10 years. The more uninsured, Medicaid, and Medicare patients a hospital serves, the -more precarious its financial condition.

1199ers are fired up and ready to tell our state legislators that they must include increased healthcare spending in the budget to ensure access to high quality health care for all New Yorkers! Speak with a delegate or organizer for more information today!



### Hudson Valley/Capital Region Bus Pickup Locations

#### Bus 1

**7:00 a.m.** 1199SEIU White Plains Office, 99 Church St, White Plains

**7:30 a.m.** Palisades Mall, Lord & Taylor Parking Lot, West Nyack

**8:30 a.m.** Galleria at Crystal Run, Middletown

**9:00 a.m.** Newburgh Mall, Sears Parking Lot, Route 300S, Newburgh

#### Bus 2

**8:00 a.m.** Vassar Brothers Hospital, Reade Pl, Poughkeepsie

**8:45 a.m.** Exit 21 NYS Thruway, Park and Ride

## 1199er JUANCY RODRIGUEZ SHARES HIS EXPERIENCE ON THE FRONTLINES IN PUERTO RICO



After Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico, 1199ers were eager to help. So when given the opportunity, contingents from Montefiore and Callen-Lorde traveled to the devastated island. Among the seven

from Callen-Lorde who were deployed for two weeks was Juancy Rodriguez, a nurse practitioner.

"For my co-workers and I, there was no hesitation," said Juancy. "We were waiting for the opportunity to help the people of Puerto Rico." But once they were there, the crew faced bureaucracy that prevented them from immediately getting out there. "We quickly realized that in spite of all the supplies and people wanting to help, there was red tape that made it difficult to connect

with the communities.

"There was a lot of richness that was not reaching the people who actually needed it! It was very frustrating, especially since people were in need of immediate, urgent help!"

Still, the Callen-Lorde workers took action to get connected with community organizations, and were soon caring for a diverse variety of patients in rural settings that were even more underserved than more urban parts of the island. These people faced many life-threatening health challenges, including diabetics who lost all their insulin because of a lack of refrigeration and those with uncontrolled high blood pressure who couldn't obtain the prescriptions they needed.

Juancy was impressed by the resourcefulness of the Puerto Rican people in the face of so many challenges. "People were in good spirits

and hustling to help each other out and rebuild their communities, despite the devastation of fallen trees, the smells of dead animals and the lack of supplies," he said.

Juancy says the island is far from recovered. Now that the news cycle has moved, he hopes that we will remember to give back to Puerto Rico and the other places impacted by this Fall's slew of devastating storms and neglect from the U.S. government.

*Note:* In January, 1199SEIU members joined SEIU members from across the country to urge Congressional representatives in Washington to provide relief for the citizens of Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands, who have been enduring crisis since the catastrophic hurricanes hit. In a major victory, the Congressional budget passed this month includes full Medicaid funding, and disaster relief for these struggling American islands.

## MORE HUDSON VALLEY WORKERS JOINING 1199SEIU

Just in time for the new year, nearly 100 new Professional and Clerical workers from Bon Secours Community Hospital in Port Jervis were welcomed into the 1199SEIU family. They join their service worker colleagues at the hospital who have already negotiated some of the best pay and benefits in New York State.



As well as having a larger say in their working lives, the newest members at Bon Secours voted to become 1199 members to enable them to negotiate for 1199's no cost healthcare benefits, pension, child care, job security and educational benefits. By providing compassionate and professional care to people across New York State, these new members embody the spirit of the 1199.

**"After we voted to become 1199 members, I felt more comfortable and definitely more protected at my workplace. Having the security of knowing I have experienced delegates to stand with me is a great."**

**Tanya Degroat**

## SMALL VICTORIES BUILD A STRONG UNION!

**Orange Regional Medical Center Members Utilize Labor/Management Meetings And Class Action Grievances To Win.**

- After two years of being denied a wage increase, 1199SEIU Specialized Nursing Technicians called for a labor/management meeting with hospital administration. It was not an easy conversation, but members stayed strong — and as of January 21, 2018 they received an increase on their base pay.
- A per diem 1199er in the Patient Access Department who had been working full time for three years, *finally got converted to full time position status.*
- 1199 members in Patient Access were being mandated and not being paid according to the Mandatory Overtime Pay section of their contract. A class action grievance was filed and five members received the mandatory overtime pay that they earned!

## MEMBERS RAISE STANDARDS IN THEIR FIRST CONTRACTS

★ **Wingate Nursing Homes:** For a long time, this employer said, "We will never allow a union here." However, the workers persevered for more than three years. They won a contract with raises in the first year alone that are between three percent and eleven percent. They also won the Greater NY Benefit Funds. **Member actions:** Walk-ins, petitions, leafleting, visiting elected officials, and informational picketing.

★ **The Grand at Pawling:** These workers had the lowest wages and benefits of any nursing home in their region. After becoming 1199 members, they struggled for a contract for almost three years. Things started to look up when they were joined by their 1199 sisters and brothers who work for the same company (The Grand). The members now have a contract with union security, a voice on the job, affordable health benefits and good annual raises. **Member actions:** Not only at the facility in Pawling, but at Grand nursing homes across the state, there were walk-ins, petitions, solidarity leafleting, pickets, and local media attention.

★ **Baptist Nursing Home:** In a stunning victory, after beating back obstacles at every turn, these nursing home workers ratified their first 1199SEIU contract after three years of intense struggle and the incredible power of workers standing together for what is right. The contract includes significant wage increases, bonuses across the board and health benefits with a reduction in employee premiums, guaranteed hours of work, and increased overtime pay. The contract also ensures that regular staff are offered overtime work before temporary agency staff. **Member actions:** Leafleting in facility and in community, petitions, walk-ins, phone trees, house visits, car caravans, media opportunities, Town Hall Forum, meetings with local elected officials and community leaders.



1199SEIU Members at St. Joseph's Medical Center and Nursing Home in Yonkers attended a Health and Wellness Fair sponsored by the 1199 National Benefit Fund. Free blood pressure screenings were offered and health coaches were available to discuss diet and exercise, specifically for healthcare workers who are always on the run, caring for others, and often don't pay attention to their own health and well-being.