



AFSCME Local 1842 is helping those in danger of becoming homeless this frigid winter. They donated hats and gloves to Ramsey County House Calls. (Front row, left to right) Stephan Suon, Ericka Minus and Emily Thoreson (both from Ramsey County House Calls), Lisa Martin and Sareen Earm. (Back row, left to right) Joe Yannarelli, Richard Kedrowski and Dan Hesse.

Doubling Down in 2018

It's been a volatile year that took us on a rollercoaster ride of emotions. But the victories AFSCME members achieved keep us hopeful. If enough of us come together, we will turn the tide so all working people can earn a good living and live a good life.

In 2018, we will not back down. We will lead with a pro-worker agenda that puts our shared values first.

We believe in a Minnesota where all working people have the freedom to form strong unions and speak up for ourselves and our communities.

We support the common good by doing work that we're proud of, that uplifts humanity and gives us a

sense of purpose.

Our unions are a source of unity and stability as the wealthy and powerful try to rig the system and pit working people against each other.

We join together like a family. We draw strength from our diversity and our rich history – and we feel connected and hopeful about our future.

We believe in real freedom and opportunity. That means having the right for democracy and a voice on the job, affordable health care, time off to care for those we love and the promise of retirement security after a lifetime of hard work.

We want to live calm and secure and have time for friends and

family. All of us, standing proudly together, can create a just future that works for everyone.

Join us for a better life. Happy New Year!

Judy Wahlberg, President

John Westmoreland, Executive Director, AFSCME Council 5

Supreme Court Sets Date for *Janus*

The U.S. Supreme Court will hear the anti-worker *Janus v. AFSCME* case at 9 a.m. (Central Standard Time) **Monday, Feb. 26.**

Janus seeks to make the entire public sector “right-to-work” in one fell swoop. It’s the culmination of decades of attacks on working people by corporations, the wealthy and the politicians who do their bidding to rig the economy in their favor. The forces behind this case are the same ones that have pushed to limit voting rights, undermine civil rights and attack immigrants.

Their goal with *Janus* is no secret. They want to use the Supreme Court to take away the freedom of working people to join together in strong unions, because unions give workers power in numbers to speak up for themselves, their families and their communities. Unions help hardworking people build a good life with economic stability. Corporate special interests know that unions are the best vehicle that working people have to level the economic playing field for all Americans.

A possible ruling is expected between April and June. Learn more at <https://tinyurl.com/ycf46c7f>.

Carter, Frey Take Office

The winning AFSCME-endorsed candidates for mayor of Saint Paul and Minneapolis took their oaths of office Tuesday.

Melvin Carter made history as Saint Paul's first African American mayor. Watch his speech at <https://www.facebook.com/afscmemn5/>.

Jacob Frey is the new Minneapolis mayor.

Find free inaugural events for Carter at <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/mayors-office/inauguration-events> and for Frey at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/mayor/index.htm>.

Protect Our Pensions

AFSCME Council 5 recommends Jacqueline Terry to fill a vacancy on the Minnesota State Retirement System Board. MSRS provides retirement benefits to state and Metropolitan Council workers plus many non-faculty employees at the University of Minnesota. Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters in early February.

The deadline to vote is **March 1**. Learn more at <http://afscmemn.org/story/protect-our-pensions>.

Prescription Drug Update

The new pharmacy benefit manager for state workers, CVS/caremark, is sending out updated letters to replace an earlier version with inaccurate information, Minnesota Management and Budget says.

The letters inform AFSCME members and their dependents about changes to their medication coverage starting **Jan. 1**. If you got this letter, call CVS for more information about whether specific medications are covered, coverage options, co-pay costs or to ask other questions. CVS will send out a welcome kit with membership cards for use beginning **Jan. 1**.

Dial CVS customer service for SEGIP members at 844-345-3234.

Holiday Giving Hits Record

Unions from across the Duluth region, including AFSCME Locals 66, 1092 and 3558, chipped in time and money to make the holidays special for labor families in need.

The AFL-CIO Community Services Program provided gifts for about 95 children and 40 families at a special holiday event at Wellstone Hall; about 20 union volunteers helped. The program gave out 75 meal baskets on both Christmas and Thanksgiving, purchased at union grocery stores.

"This was our record in terms of meal baskets and the families we helped support," says Community Services director Rachel Loeffler-Kemp, an AFSCME Local 3558 Executive Board member.

"When you're involved in your union, you get to know each other," she says. "This was another way for people to show support for each other. We have a lot of unity.

It helps people to know they're not alone. Their union is paying attention and willing to help when needed."

Giveaway Winner Announced

When workers join together in strong unions, amazing things happen. That was just as true in 2017. Many locals had a banner year, and they shared their biggest accomplishments on Council 5's Facebook page.

Local 34's Christina Eichorn was randomly chosen from the entrants to win a packed AFSCME swag bag. Check out all the stories and photos members shared at <https://tinyurl.com/y9t8oqfo>.

Scholarship Deadlines Near

The \$5,000 Gerald W. McEntee Scholarship honors a candidate who best exemplifies the former AFSCME president's commitment to strengthening our union. <https://tinyurl.com/y9n7c43d>.

The Union Plus Scholarship program awards scholarships from \$500 to \$4,000 to union members and their dependents. Learn more at <https://www.unionplus.org/benefits/money/union-plus-scholarships>.

The deadline for both is **Jan. 31**.

Get in on the Action

Action Update comes out twice a month for locals and activists. Download a copy at www.afscmemn.org. Share news by emailing Lynette.Kalsnes@afscmemn.org.

Mark Your Calendars

Event	Date	Place/details
Enrollment Open for AFSCME Free College	Classes start Jan. 16	https://freecollege.afscme.org/