

The logo features a green stylized arrow pointing upwards and to the right, with the word "Stepping" in blue and "UP" in large green letters.

Stepping UP

American Federation
of State, County and
Municipal Employees,
AFL-CIO

Issue 6
September-October 2018



THIS ISSUE

AFSCME members declare I AM UNION

Correctional members grieve, take action to go home safely, pages 10-11

Building unity with food and fun, pages 14-15





Top photo: Local 66 members applaud at the AFSCME Council 5 Annual Convention, which featured an election and speeches by Gov. Dayton and AFSCME's endorsed candidate for Governor, Tim Walz.

Below: The new Executive Board is sworn in by Council 5 executive director John P. Westmoreland. Find the complete list of the Executive Board to the right.



AFSCME Council 5 is a union of 43,000 workers who advocate for excellence in services for the public, dignity in the workplace, and opportunity and prosperity for all working families.

Executive Board Members 2018-2020

OFFICERS

President	Patrick Guernsey, Local 552
Vice President	Carmen Brown, Local 977
Secretary	Cherrene Horazuk, Local 3800
Treasurer	Destiny Dusosky, Local 753

EXECUTIVE BOARD

- Jay A. Anderson, Local 66 - County
- Terry Anderson, 588 - District 4
- Grace Baltich, 34 - District 6
- Sharyn Carrington, 2512 - Private/special
- Kevin Clark, 4001 - State
- Shane Clune, 2822 - County
- Jeff Couillard, 306 - District 5
- Tim Danger, 3887 - District 1
- Dennis Frazier, 66 - County
- Alessandra (Ali) Fuhrman, 2822 - District 6
- Duane Gatzke, 2829 - State
- Dan Gorman, 600 - State
- Jennifer Guertin, 2508 - City
- Eric Hesse, 404 - District 3
- Martin Hoerth, 844 - District 6
- DJ Hooker, 2822 - District 6
- Annie Jakacki, 607 - State
- Erica Kantola, 4001 - District 5
- Bryan Kirsch, 221 - District 5
- Anna Koktan, 1988 - District 6
- Jessica Langhorst, 1092 - District 1
- Brian Lindholt, 221 - State
- Rachel Loeffler-Kemp, 3558 - Private/special
- Sarah Maxwell, 9 - District 6
- Rick Neyssen, 599 - District 4
- Svenerik Olsen, 3800 - U of M
- Eric Pascal, 1465 - District 5
- Jeff (Scuffy) Paulson, 868 - State
- Patrick Pearce, 638 - District 3
- Renae Pereira-Webb, 306 - County
- Sabrina Search, 3688 - State
- Brad Sigal, 3800 - District 5
- Willie Snyder, 707 - County
- Darcy Soland-Farmer, 735 - District 2
- Theresa St. Aoro, 2829 - District 5
- Christina St. Germaine, 1092 - District 1
- Delphine Steiner, 735 - State
- Anthony Ware, 2822 - County
- Marla Zappa, 56 - School (K-12)



POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
Stepping Up, 300 Hardman Ave. S.
South St. Paul, MN 55075-2469
Periodical postage paid at South St. Paul and additional
mailing offices.
Publication No. 352180
Subscription price \$1 per copy; \$5 per year



Member International Labor Communications
Association
Design: Lynette Kalsnes
Printing: Seven Corners Printing
Mailing: Do-Good.biz

Patrick Guernsey, President
John P. Westmoreland, Executive Director
Information and story ideas should be submitted to:
Lynette Kalsnes, Editor
Published by AFSCME Minnesota, AFL-CIO
300 Hardman Ave. S.
South St. Paul, MN 55075-2469
Six times yearly:
January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August,
September/October, November/December

Energized cry to fight, unify

AFSCME leaders were blunt about the attacks unions face from rich corporate forces, and equally hopeful about the future at the Council 5 Annual Convention.

They presented a roadmap to build an even stronger union. About 750 delegates and guests from 125 local unions attended. The theme was I AM UNION.

“The attacks on unions are unprecedented,” said AFSCME Council 5 executive director John P. Westmoreland. “Never in history has it been worse. We have to be brave and bold enough to face those challenges, not when they hit us, but before they hit us.

“We did not wait for the (anti-worker Supreme Court) *Janus* decision to come down,” he added. “We doubled-down on AFSCME Strong. We knew we had to continue to push and grow and expand our capacity.”

Council 5 is at record levels for membership and PEOPLE.

AFSCME International president Lee Saunders said that *Janus*, which ignored 41 years of case law and instantly made the entire nation “right to work” for public workers, is just a smokescreen. It was funded by wealthy corporate interests like the Koch Brothers who want to rig the economy so they can get even richer at workers’ expense. He said they’ll stop at nothing “to burn our union to the ground.”

The labor movement’s response, Saunders said, is to raise hell.

“Asserting our rights and speaking truth to power in this way is how we make sure public service gets the respect it deserves,” Saunders said. “We aren’t cowering in retreat, we’re getting ready for battle.”

Their roadmap to a strong, bold union future includes:



Top: AFSCME International president Lee Saunders; Bottom: Council 5 executive director John P. Westmoreland



- Electing a pro-worker Governor and Legislature in 2018. Iowa failed to do so, and the GOP-led government immediately destroyed collective bargaining.
- Working to stop the wealthy from getting even richer at our expense. Their huge tax cuts are putting public services, health care, Medicare, Medicaid, education and Social Security at risk. Economic inequality is now so great nationally that CEOs make 312 times more than the average worker.
- Continuing AFSCME Strong.
- Having nearby locals reach out and

work together on common issues such as unfit bosses and unsafe working conditions.

- Building support through members getting involved in community groups and making their union affiliation known.

“We need to elect a Governor who won’t take every opportunity to wipe us out, wipe out collective bargaining, take away the rights of workers and the citizens of this state,” Westmoreland says.

This year, Council 5 members won a historic pension bill and got state contracts ratified. The GOP-led House waited until the last minutes of the legislative session to pass the pension bill, even though it had received unanimous support from stakeholders and the Senate months before.

“We cannot support people who will not support public workers,” Westmoreland said. “We cannot support people who will not support the citizens of Minnesota.”

AFSCME members say goodbye to retiring council president

Not many unions can boast a wildfire fighter as their president. But that's the case for AFSCME Council 5, which just bid a fond farewell to our retiring president at our Annual Convention.

Judy Wahlberg, Council 5's first female president, retired Sept. 29 after six years in the role. Before that, she served as council vice president, Executive Board member and Local 66 president. She's a Great Scott Township Board supervisor.

"The job I will miss the most is the Council, undoubtedly," Wahlberg says. "I felt I made a difference there, and I enjoyed working with the people. I enjoyed bringing the Council to where we're at and seeing the forward momentum continuing.

"I hope we continue to expand," she adds. "I think we're on the right track."

Wahlberg's known for her strong, steady leadership style and her ability to be proactive in the face of threats like the anti-worker *Friedrichs* and *Janus* cases.

"She never shoots from the hip," says Mary Falk, who served alongside her as Council secretary. "She's thoughtful, steady, strong, calm. She doesn't get riled real easy.

"There's always been some kind of threat on the horizon," Falk adds. "We just have to prepare. One thing about Judy, she doesn't let those things paralyze her. She looks at what the possibilities are."

Wahlberg's first job likely played a role in her unflinching style: She was a wildfire fighter.

"You're up in a helicopter up in the Boundary Waters," she recalls. "You had to pay attention to how much weight you were carrying. They decided the



Above: Judy Wahlberg. Left: Mary Falk hugs Wahlberg.

(helicopter) doors weighed too much and pulled the doors off to put more equipment on board. I really did not like heights at the time.

"I'm sure it made me stronger. It made me more unafraid to try things."

Wahlberg first got active in AFSCME just three months into a new job at St. Louis County. She was supervising crews that did tree thinning and planting. Her local needed a steward, and she got drafted. She later became a child care assistance financial worker. Wahlberg quickly moved up in Local 66 and Council 5 leadership. Victories during her time with the Council include the AFSCME Strong

program, which continues to boost membership numbers and build relationships; pension reform; road and bridge funding after the I-35W bridge collapse; safe staffing in group homes and psychiatric hospitals; and the Five for the Fight dues increase, which prepared us for looming anti-worker challenges.

"It wasn't only one person, it was all of us," Wahlberg says. "We wanted to survive. We wanted to stay strong. We saw what was happening around the country, and we didn't want to go that way."

Wahlberg sees the anti-worker *Janus* ruling as more of an opportunity than a challenge.

"I think *Janus* has brought us together," she says. "It's strengthened the union, it's increasing membership. There are times I think it might have backfired on the anti-union forces behind it."

New president has unions in his blood

Chair officers ran tight team campaign

When you go to rallies to fight cuts in welfare and support the Willmar 8 as a kid, chances are pretty good you're going to grow up to be a fighter.

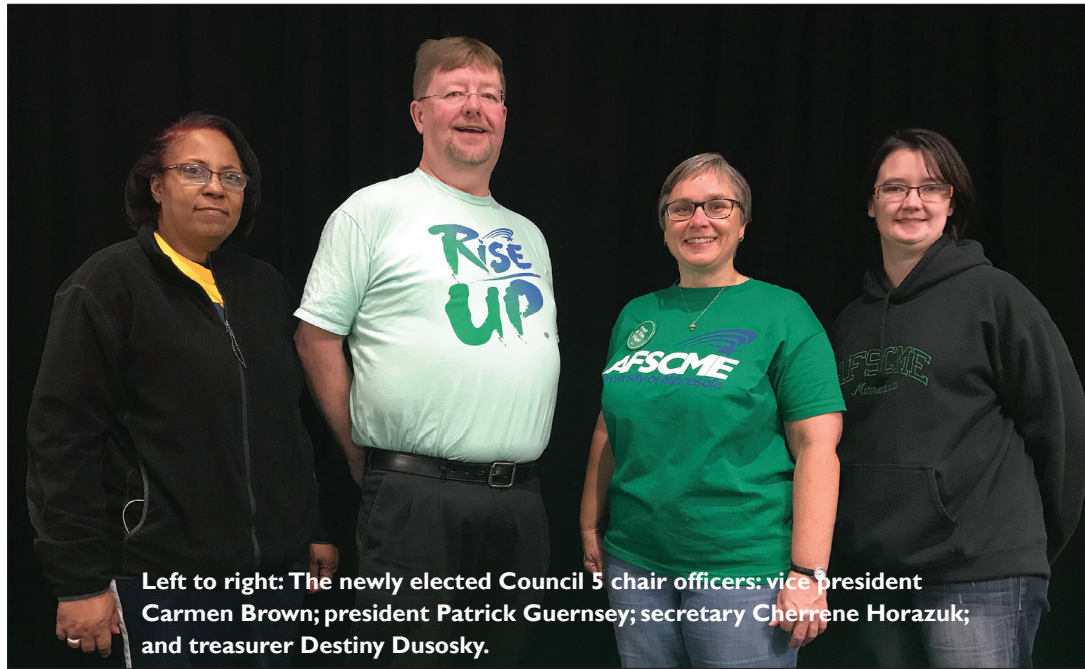
That's the case for Patrick Guernsey, the newly elected president of AFSCME Council 5, who replaces the retiring Judy Wahlberg. Guernsey is president of Local 552, Hennepin County probation, parole and family court services. He's a probation officer.

"We've got to stay organized, and we've got to fight," Guernsey says. "Even the small fights are important. Post-Janus, union membership is optional. I want people to want to be in our union. We have to show them why it matters so we can keep banding together to make life better for workers, our families and our communities."

Guernsey's a fourth-generation union member. His great-grandfather was a charter member of the steam shovel workers union, which became part of the 49ers, where his grandfather was a business agent. His mother was in the U.S. Treasury Workers Union.

"My grandfather was strident in his pro-union stance," Guernsey says. "You couldn't watch Channel 5 at his house because it was non-union. If people came on-site without union cards, he tossed them off-site. He was strong as an ox. I remember him pulling padlocks open with his bare hands. Up at the cabin, if a tree would die, he would push it down with his hands."

With that deep history, it's no surprise that Guernsey joined AFSCME as soon as he could. When he moved into a union job at Hennepin County, "The first thing I wanted to do was sign a union card," he says. "They said you should wait until you're done with probation, and I said, No, I want to sign one now."



Left to right: The newly elected Council 5 chair officers: vice president Carmen Brown; president Patrick Guernsey; secretary Cherrene Horazuk; and treasurer Destiny Dusosky.

After he was promoted to probation officer, he moved to AFSCME Local 552, where he has served as president, vice president and steward. As a longtime PEOPLE member, he's spent hours upon hours screening candidates and knocking on doors; he won a Rick Scott Award for Political Action. He's been on Council 5's Executive Board since its inception.

THE NEW OFFICERS' PLAN:

- Be member-driven and receptive to members' input and direction.
- Make sure our union is inclusive of all locals and members across the state and every voice is heard.
- Encourage a system in which locals flourish, including making Council resources available.
- Fight for better contracts through strategic planning, mobilizing members, building community support and credible strike threats if needed.

Guernsey ran for Board president as part of a tight-knit team with Carmen Brown, president of Local 977 (now Council vice president); Cherrene Horazuk, president of University of Minnesota Local 3800 (secretary); and Destiny Dusosky with

Local 753 (the new treasurer). They toured the state gathering input.

The team's first priority is electing Tim Walz and Peggy Flanagan as Governor and Lieutenant Governor. They'll also focus on organizing workers and fighting for the best wages, benefits and working conditions possible.

"Members want a member-driven, inclusive Council where we're building stronger locals and fighting for better contracts," Horazuk says. Brown says that includes more transparency and communication, involving locals in decision making, and making sure everyone is heard.

Guernsey applauded executive director John P. Westmoreland for meeting with every local in his first year in the role.

"I'm hoping we're able to get out and get more members involved and get more ideas coming into the Executive Board so that we can have more buy-in from membership," Dusosky says.

Guernsey says joining a union but not getting involved is like joining a health club and never going: "If you don't participate, you don't benefit, and the union doesn't benefit."



A bittersweet farewell: Thank you, Governor Dayton

Members jumped up to greet Gov. Mark Dayton with a standing ovation and cheers as he spoke at his final AFSCME Council 5 Convention.

"I really do believe in government," Dayton said. "I believe in its enormous importance in people's lives. I'm proud of what we've been able to accomplish. I'm proud to have stood with you and earned your support."

He said Minnesota's considered one of the best-run states with excellent public services because of people like AFSCME members, who take pride in our high-quality work.

Dayton asked for a moment of silence to honor Correctional Officers Joseph Gomm and Joseph Parise, who died on duty. Dayton thanked those who face danger on the job to keep us safe and serve the public. He said his administration has repeatedly asked for more funding for more COs, only to be



denied again and again by Republicans.

Public service workers "do your work with such dedication and then get denigrated for it by the right-wing politicians who know nothing about government and care about it even less," Dayton said. "They claim it runs badly, and then if they're elected, they prove themselves right. They defund services and destroy them, then run for reelection saying we made government worse; if you elect us, we'll do it again."

Dayton took a different approach. He raised taxes on the wealthiest 2 percent. The GOP and Chamber of Commerce predicted businesses would flee the state.

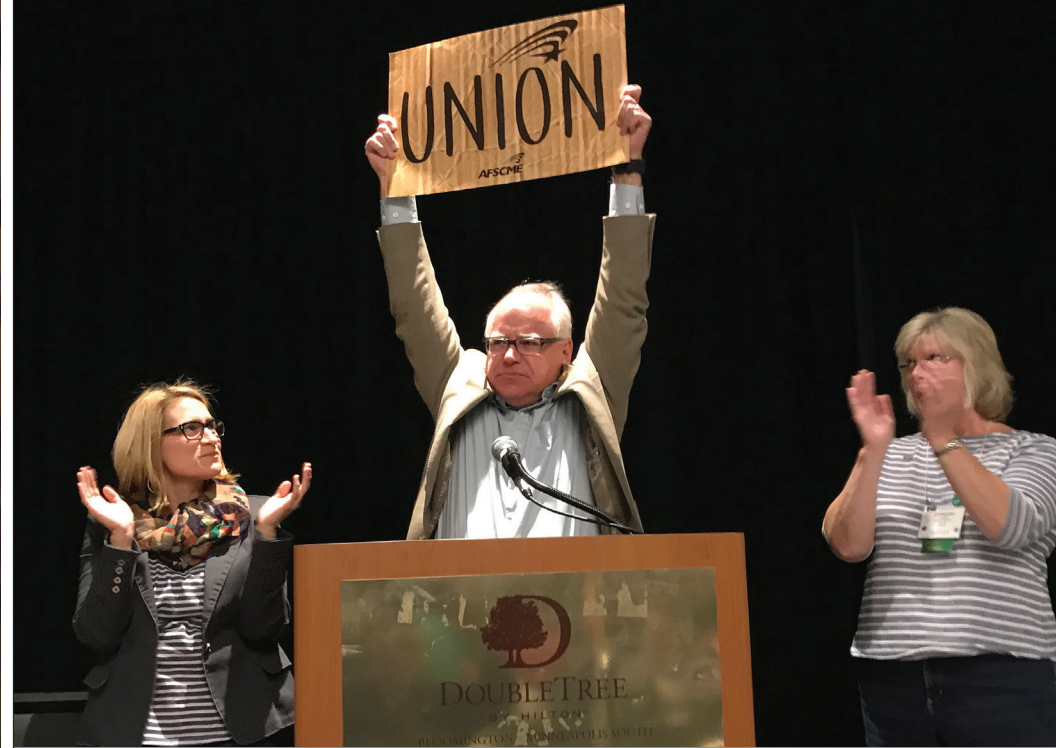
"What happened? Minnesota's economic recovery led the nation and it's continuing," Dayton said.

Dayton turned a \$6 billion deficit inherited from Gov. Tim Pawlenty into eight straight years of projected surpluses.

Minnesota now has 318,000 more jobs than when Dayton took office. Our unemployment rate hit 2.9 percent, the lowest in 15 years.

"I think the Republicans should just say thank you and switch parties," he joked. Instead, Dayton said, voters hear the same old song: cut taxes (for the rich), cut services, cut pensions, and make Minnesota look like Wisconsin.

"That's the worst campaign idea of the millennium," Dayton said. "It sure hasn't worked for Wisconsin. I just hope that someday, they can work their way back to looking like us."



Shoulder to shoulder: AFSCME supports Tim Walz

The Nov. 6 election comes down to a simple choice: Elect Tim Walz, or become another Wisconsin.

As Governor, Tim Walz will follow in the footsteps of Gov. Dayton. Walz shares our union values. He believes everyone – no matter the color of their skin, where they live or how much money they make – deserves the freedom to get a quality education, go to the doctor without going bankrupt, take care of a loved one and earn fair wages and benefits.

U.S. Rep. Walz has a vision for a better Minnesota, a Minnesota with an even higher quality of life and improved working conditions for all. The former teacher, football coach and union member respects and understands public workers. He knows we're all better off when we work together. He calls collective bargaining a human right.

"We turn this thing here," Walz said at the Council 5 Convention. "We show them 'I am labor, we are labor, Minnesota is labor.' We push back, we expand our rights as workers. We expand access to health care. We expand education for all of our citizens. We close the equity gap. We welcome immigrants into our state."



Walz sees Minnesota as a place where we take care of each other, join together across racial differences and treat others as we want to be treated.

Contrast that vision with his opponent, Jeff Johnson, who wants to "go all Scott Walker on Minnesota." Johnson voices contempt for public workers. He said former Gov. Pawlenty, who cut public services and public schools, didn't go far enough. He wants to rig the system against workers so the rich get richer.

The choice was clear for AFSCME's Executive Board, who endorsed Walz and state Rep. Peggy Flanagan for Governor and Lieutenant Governor.

"We are going to continue to work with

you shoulder to shoulder," Flanagan said. We are going to continue to ensure Minnesota is a land where people feel hopeful and they feel included, like they have a stake in this."

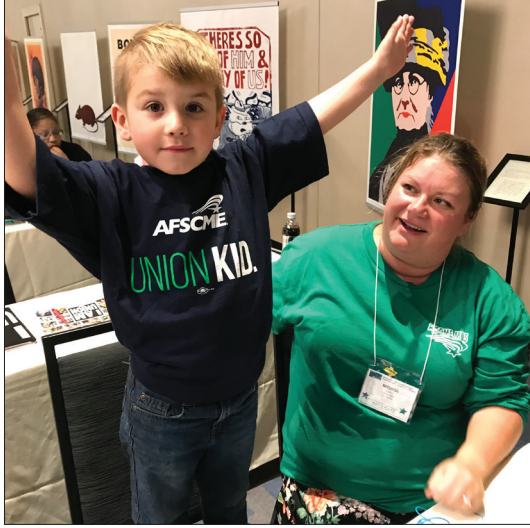
Walz says he knows an AFSCME endorsement isn't a pat on the back; it's a kick in the butt to get out and fight for working people.

"This country was founded on the backs of workers just like you," he said. "We know we stand on the shoulders of giants who didn't come home after organizing. The things you are advocating for in many cases truly are life and death."

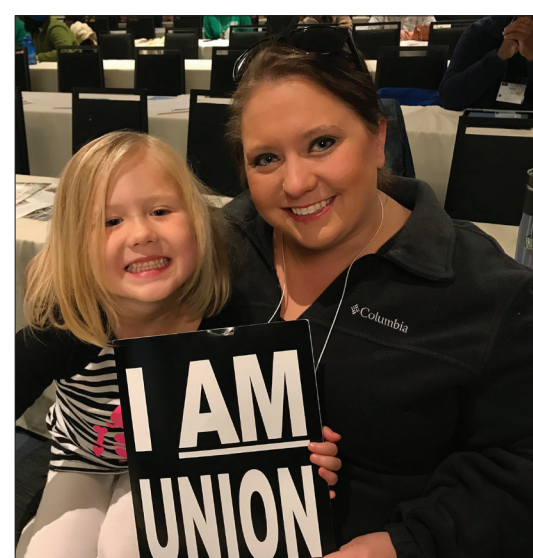
Walz called out lawmakers who are "cowardly enough" to stand with the Trump administration and not speak out when decency, basic human rights and the middle class are being assaulted.

"There are people out there across this state and this country watching the chaos that unfurls every day, and they're fearful for the future," Walz said. "But that's not you, and that's not Minnesota. We don't fear the future – we create the future."

I AM UNION



Clockwise from top left: Members greet Tim Walz; Melissa Degidio, Local 404; Laurie Cooper, Local 753; the Corrections Honor Guard leads a march; Andrea Lazo-Rice and Jean Diederich of Local 34; Kenneth Garnier, Local 34; and Erica Kantola, Local 753 learn how to use the TEAM app; and Erica Kantola of Local 753



Local 4001, with her son; Renae Pereira-Webb, Local 306; AFSCME International president Lee Saunders shakes hands with Eric Hesse, Local 306; a moment of silence for our fallen correctional brothers, Joseph Gomm and Joseph Parise; Courtney Zuber of Local 3688 and her daughter; Local 34, reads from the Member Bill of Rights; the Corrections Honor Guard brings in the American flag; Hannah Topp-Schepers and Molly and Grace Jones of Local 4001 cheer.

Correctional officers, workers mourn

Two of our correctional brothers died on duty this summer, and the state and nation mourned with us.

In July, Corrections Officer Joseph Gomm was murdered by an inmate at MCF-Stillwater. Gomm was Minnesota's first CO to be killed in the line of duty.

In September, Parise died after helping stop an inmate's attack on a fellow CO at MCF-Oak Park Heights. The Navy veteran and Corrections Honor Guard member leaves behind a pregnant wife and a 2-year-old.

Thousands of correctional and peace officers attended the AFSCME members' funerals; and hundreds of residents lined the processions to the burial, waving American flags and holding their hands over their hearts.

"The mood is pretty somber," says Jeff Vars, the president of AFSCME Local 915 at OPH. "It's a tough go. We support each other. It's a close group."

The grieving isn't over. But it has cemented a determination to make sure that Gomm and Parise did not die in vain.

Their deaths are part of a string of assaults by inmates on our AFSCME brothers and sisters in dark blue. That number has skyrocketed since January.

For years now, our prisons have been understaffed. Stillwater has blocks with four officers monitoring 280 inmates; Moose Lake can have just two in the yard with 400 inmates.

"We have been going to the Legislature every year for a decade now, every single week the Legislature is in session, asking for more correctional officers," AFSCME Council 5 Correctional Policy Committee president John Hillyard said at a press conference, with the entire leadership of the CPC standing by his side. "We are not asking for more correctional officers and staffing any more – we are demanding it."

"We don't expect any legislative game-playing or politics," Council 5 associate



director Tim Henderson said. "We are not going to rest until we make sure prisons are safe and secure for our members and the public."

The danger caused by short-staffing increased when the Department of Corrections decided to start a stepdown program for inmates in segregation, even though correctional officers in AFSCME warned there wasn't enough staff. Since the policy change, there already have been four attempted murder charges at OPH.

"You don't go to work to die," Henderson said. "I can confidently say there is a correctional officer shortage in every one of our facilities."

OUR DEMANDS

- The Legislature act to boost staffing to keep workers, institutions and communities safe.
- The DOC make security the priority in every facility. Programming is important, but security must be the bedrock.



- Changes to the segregation policy so inmates who attack workers face the highest penalty possible.
- A renewed focus on retention and recruitment.
- Respect and equality in the workplace, so workers are heard by all levels of management and included in the decision-making process.

and organize to come home safely



Correctional officers honor Stillwater CO Joseph Gomm, who was killed by an inmate in July; and Oak Park Heights CO Joseph Parise, who died after helping stop an inmate attack on a fellow officer. Bottom left: OPH COs comfort the officer who Parise helped save. Local 915 already has raised more than \$15,000 for Parise's family. (Funeral photos courtesy of David Pierini Photography and DOC).

and other public services.

- The DOC is moving on our demands to make sure inmates who commit staff assaults face stiff segregation time.
- Shutting down Industry with heavy tools at Stillwater.
- Securing more staffing at Stillwater to allow Light Industry to reopen, with enough staffing to patrol in pairs.
- Creating a union liaison role following the two deaths to allow designated COs to be released from work to directly aid and support the families. (A special thank you to COs Shawn Yurick, Tom Chronakos and Scott Roemer.)
- Creating a victim's advocacy process with the DOC to ensure correctional officers and workers who have been assaulted by inmates have full access to outreach, family support and follow-through.
- Creating an immediate response team of local leaders from across the prison system and the AFSCME correctional liaison to act during correctional crises. The same day Gomm and Parise died, the team responded to Stillwater and OPH to assess needs, offer support and coordinate resources for workers.

"Our mission as correctional officers is very simple and very clear. It's to make our facilities safe places for staff to come and work, for offenders to earn a chance at rehabilitation and do their time, and to protect the public," Hillyard said. "After a day of keeping our coworkers, our institutions and our communities safe, we want to return home safely to our families, too."

- Tools, equipment and training to do the job safely, including more cameras so there are no blind spots.

PROGRESS SO FAR:

- AFSCME local leaders are working with the Commissioner to determine the actual number of needed correctional officers and staff. That number goes into the Governor's base budget, which will be sent to the new Legislature and Governor. It's important to elect lawmakers who will fund Corrections

YOU CAN HELP

Buy an End of Watch sweatshirt or T-shirt. With each purchase, \$10 goes to Joe Parise's family. **The order deadline is Oct. 28.** www.agpestores.com/grafficttraffic/groups.php. Or donate to: <https://www.gofundme.com/officer-joe-parise>.



Building a stronger union

There's no secret to good organizing: It entails meeting with people, having conversations, and putting in time and effort.

The Organizing Advisory Committees at Hennepin Healthcare (HCMC) and Hennepin County did such a good job this past year, they won the Jerry Wurf Organizing Award at the Annual Convention.

The Committees include HCMC Locals 2474 and 977; and Hennepin County Locals 34, 552, 1719, 2822, 2864 and 2938 (legal unit).

Local leaders, activists, members and staff worked collaboratively to find ways to grow together. They developed new relationships, and locals learned how to better support each other. Members talked to non-union members and reached outside their comfort zones to talk to workers they didn't know.



The Organizing Advisory Committees at Hennepin Healthcare and Hennepin County win the Jerry Wurf Organizing Award.

“Organizing non-union workers takes a lot of good, hard work and conversations one-on-one,” says Local 2474 president Sara Franck. “It doesn’t fall into your lap.”

“You have to build relationships with people all over the hospital,” says Carmen Brown, Local 977 president and Council 5 VP.

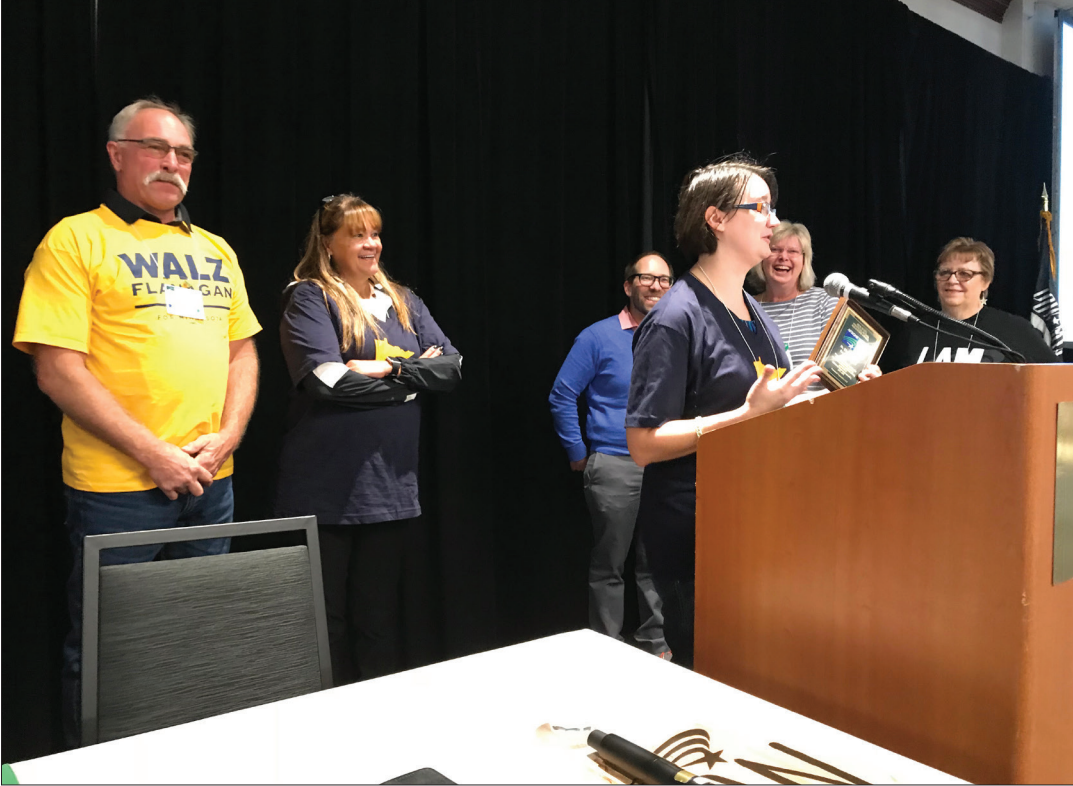
But the hard work is worth it. HCMC added workers in multiple job titles including nuclear medicine techs, polysomnographic techs, childbirth educators, opticians and in grant administration. Hennepin County added workers in titles including specialists in community health or property management.

“It makes us stronger with the employer to have more people,” Franck says. “Union folks have better increases and better benefits. If you’re non-union, you’re at will. They can do whatever they want with you; if they don’t want to give you a raise this year, they don’t have to.”

Person by person, relationship by relationship, these organizers are helping build our union.

Hanging tough to form a new union, win a great contract

Workers at the City of Hopkins accomplished an amazing feat: They went from an association to a union in just three weeks. Then they won a great first contract. That’s why AFSCME Local 3690 won the Mike Buesing Local Union Development Award. As accounting technician Mary Lein said, Hopkins workers are building a culture where every voice matters, where everyone feels valued, and they know they’re part of something bigger and better. Learn more in the January/February 2018 Stepping Up.



That's why Destiny Dusosky (new Council treasurer), Rick Frauendienst, Denise Bickford, Mike West, Tia McDougle and Zack Frank have won the AFSCME Council 5 Rick Scott Political Organizing Award.

They've taken time from their jobs as maintenance, corrections and MnDOT workers to talk one-on-one with members about their political values and to urge them to vote.

Through their work in the St. Cloud region, AFSCME can connect with union members and allies on doorsteps and at worksites like never before. The member organizers ran their own

campaigns and their own schedules, figuring out how to talk to as many people in the area as possible.

The region feels different now because of this group's work. They've been able to get past people's anger and warring ideologies to have real conversations about things that affect all of our families.

They are changing the world, one region at a time.

Growing relationships, shifting political culture

Changing the political culture of an area is no easy task. But that's what a group of AFSCME member organizers has done in St. Cloud.

Strong communication is key

Giving a speech in front of thousands can be a bit intimidating.

Imagine digging deep and finding the courage to share your union values; to speak out against immigration policies that separate families; and to share your experience as a first-generation immigrant at the Families Belong Together march.

That's what Local 34's Yunuén Ávila did this year, and that's why she won the Eliot Seide Communication Award for projecting a bold, proud image of who we are and what we fight for.

Fellow union members note her enthusiasm and energy, her excitement in attending her first AFSCME International Convention as a delegate and her willingness to participate wherever she's needed. She's active in Local 34's education, engagement and outreach committee.

Ávila took part in the Midwest School for Women Workers this year to learn how to renew our labor movement. She's willing to stand up and speak for her union.

The fearlessness and fire of young people like Ávila will keep renewing and strengthening our union.



AFSCME Family Picnic





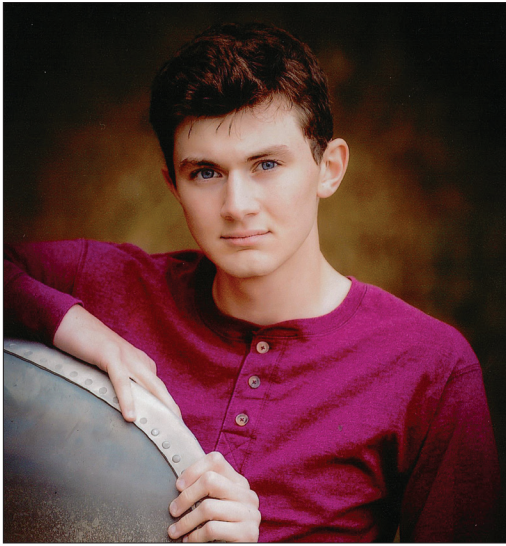
Clockwise from top left: Alayna Kirsch (daughter of Local 221's Bryan Kirsch) and Theresa St. Aoro chat as St. Aoro cuddles a friend's pet duck; Katie Ávila, niece of Local 34 member Yunuén Ávila, gets her face painted; Missy Richert of Local 2181 chats as her baby looks on; Mike Lindholt of Local 221 and nephew, Brian; Jacqueline Terry of Local 22 brought along her daughter and grandchildren for family fun at the AFSCME Family Picnic.

Student Sees Freedom in Unions

Dylan Evans, the son of Local 34 members James Evans and Julia Johnson, won the AFSCME Clarence

J. Moss Scholarship. We are happy to share his powerful essay here:

Years ago, I sat in on some meetings of this labor union, as a Boy Scout for the American Labor Merit Badge.



I remember that everyone in that room was telling me about what an important topic that American labor is and how great it is that youth are getting involved. Now that I am older, I know what they meant.

Labor unions stand up for fair wages. I have seen the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, or AFSCME, firsthand give back to the community at Bridging, and I had the honor of having joined them for this particular occasion. I know that they have helped to raise wages, shorten hours and provide supplemental benefits. In a way, it has put a roof over my head as both of my parents are part of this labor union. The union has been there to defend them as employees and to help provide a fair wage. Now, it moves for the protection of their retirement. That wage has not only helped to give me a home, but a home where I could go to a blue ribbon school, Saint Anthony Village High School, where I am a part of the National Honor Society.

The freedoms that labor unions advocate for are more than our

rights, they are our civil liberties. It is what we do to help other people at all times, and to be prepared for whatever life throws at us. It is why we must be active citizens in the process and be aware of the way that labor affects our lives. When we look at the news, we see people who are defending those personal liberties. For instance, in Arizona, we see students learning about labor in a very powerful way as their teachers strike.

In the future, I plan to become a part of a labor union: This fall, I am starting at North Hennepin Community College, where I will go for my associate degree. Then, I will transfer to St. Cloud State University for my bachelor's degree so I can go into environmental studies. I want to be a conservation officer or a water treatment specialist.

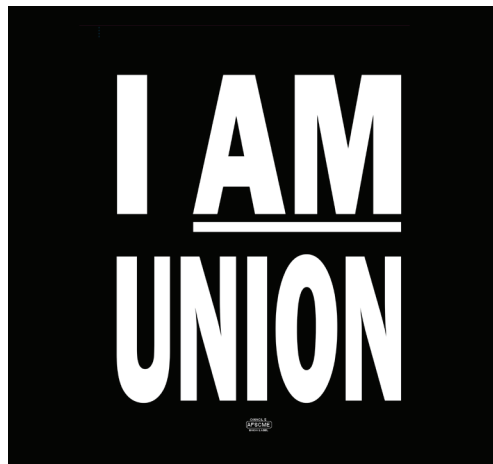
In these occupations, I will be defending our natural resources, as AFSCME defends the resource of laboring workers within the public sector. The main reason behind both of our missions is to ensure that this world we live in is simply a better place to live tomorrow for those who come after us. It is a mission for justice and democracy and for the American dream. This is what I believe that the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. meant when he said that "the labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress."

Richard Patterson Scholarship winner: Lilia Honsvall, daughter of Local 3998's Susan Honsvall. Robert Norberg Scholarship winners: Kyle Aure and Sara Clark, Local 4001.

Welcome to the new Stepping Up!

We've moved to a magazine format to bring you more stories, more photos and more news celebrating your hard work and your victories in building a stronger union together.

The new Stepping Up is using different fonts to make it easier to read, and we hope the design is more exciting, too. Please let us know what you think at communications@afscmemn.org.



Want an I AM UNION sign?

If you'd like to print this great logo to proudly hang in your office or home, you can find the PDF here: <http://afscmemn.org/iAMunion>.