

# ***ANSWERS***

***TO COMMONLY ASKED***



# ***QUESTIONS***

As we work to form our union as Teamsters at Abbott Ambulance, we will have many questions. Here are some questions and answers:

## **What is a Union?**

A union is a group of workers who come together to improve their work lives by collectively negotiating with their employer over pay, benefits and working conditions. With the Teamsters, the workers are the union.

Working with our local union, we decide what's important in our contract, we vote to approve that contract, we elect our own officers, and we vote on actions taken by our local. The union is not a "third party," it is a democratic body made up of workers just like us. We are the union!

## **What is Collective Bargaining?**

Collective bargaining is a process for workers to come together with their union to identify important improvements and then meet with their employer to negotiate over those proposed improvements. All union members have an opportunity to be part of the process. Without a union, we have no mechanism to engage in collective bargaining, and no way to give ourselves a voice in the conditions of our employment.

The first part of collective bargaining is that we decide as a group what our priorities are in a contract. Teamster representatives negotiate with management officials over wages, benefits, hours, job protections and working conditions. The settlement reached is spelled out in a binding contract. After an agreement is reached between the union and management, it goes to the members, who vote to either accept or reject the contract.

It is the job of union officials and members to enforce the contract on behalf of all workers covered by the contract. If the company violates the contract after it has been agreed upon, it is in the wrong and can be held accountable through a grievance procedure.

Having a union means increased respect, a fair grievance procedure that enables workers to effectively address workplace problems and issues, and a voice over pay, benefits and working conditions.

**For more information about forming our union, call Sean O'Neill at (202) 437-5228.**