



Women's News

The Teamster Women's Newsletter

James P. Hoffa, General President • C. Thomas Keegel, General Secretary-Treasurer • Sue Mauren, Women's Conference Director

Building the Ranks

Teamster Women Enlist as Member Organizers

Teamsters at the 2009 Teamsters Women's Conference eagerly filled a meeting room, ready to get in on the excitement. Knowing that organizing is the future of their union, these women came to help build that future.

"This is my union," said Charlotte Click, a member of Local 519 in Knoxville, Tennessee. "I'm a member of it; I pay dues; and I want to know all that I can and help all that I can help. Like the army, I want to be all that I can be."

Attending the Member Organizer Boot Camp workshop was nothing like military boot camp training. It did not include a physical endurance challenge, but it did pump up the participants, as they learned how to communicate with other workers and found out about further opportunities for getting involved.

"I have to support the Teamsters, not to mention support the women in any way I can," said Sidney Plummer, a member of Local 299 in Detroit. "It gives you a good feeling when you see everyone with their energy up. I want to be an organizer because times are hard and what do workers have to lose? They have a lot to gain."

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Raising the Stakes

1,000 Attend Teamsters Women's Conference

Nearly 1,000 Teamster women recently descended on Las Vegas for the 2009 Teamsters Women's Conference, a popular and successful three-day event that provides an opportunity for Teamster women to hear from exceptional speakers, attend educational workshops and build relationships with fellow Teamsters from throughout North America.

The audience received a warm welcome from General President Jim Hoffa, who spoke about the importance of Teamster women "raising the stakes."

"The theme of this conference is 'Raising the Stakes' and that means being involved and being active. It's about your involvement as a Teamster

to make this union better and make America better," Hoffa said.

General Secretary-Treasurer Tom Keegel, who is celebrating his 50th year as a Teamster, thanked the sisters for their participation in their union.

"I always enjoy coming to the Women's Conference," Keegel said. "You are energetic, excited and ready to get things done!"

The Best Resource

The Teamster women also welcomed a special guest, U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis. The daughter of a Teamster shop steward, Solis spoke passionately about the fight for workers' rights.

"I want the Department of Labor to be for the women in this room, for

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A Message from Women's Conference Director Sue Mauren

Member Activism is Critical

This was my first year serving as Director of the Women's Conference, and I was thrilled with the excitement and enthusiasm of all the Teamsters, a record 1,000, who participated in this annual event. It was a great turnout and we certainly learned and accomplished a lot.



But when the conference is over for the year and everyone goes home, the work is not done.

It's just beginning.

These are tough economic times and it's more important now than ever for workers to have union representation. As Teamsters, we enjoy good wages, benefits, job security and a say on the job. It is up to us to work year-round to spread the benefits of Teamster membership to nonunion workers.

Our union organized 43,000 new Teamsters in 2008 and we are keeping the momentum going with our volunteer member organizer program, which you will read about in this issue of the newsletter.

I encourage every Teamster to get involved in taking on a greater leadership role within your union. Help organize other workers so they can have the quality of life that Teamster members have, and that all workers deserve.



Raising the Stakes

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everyone," Solis said. "I want to really open it up so people understand that the Department of Labor is on your side and we want to invest in the best resource I know—and that's workers and that's women."

While the conference attendees looked to Solis as a role model in her position of leadership, they also have a new leader in the union—a new Director of the Women's Conference. Following the retirement of Cheryl Johnson this summer after 40 years of service to the Teamsters, Sue Mauren, President of Joint Council 32 and Secretary-Treasurer of Local 320, was named the new Director of the Women's Conference.

"Teamster Women Raising the Stakes' means that all of us who are leaders in this union must fight for working families," Mauren said. "It means each and every one of you in this room needs to capture the energy and enthusiasm from this conference and bring it back home to raise the stakes in your local unions, communities and the political arena."

Moving Forward

How are Teamster women raising the stakes?

"Raising the Stakes' means to me that we're challenging women; we're always looking to improve our lives, our families' and our coworkers' lives, as well," said Socorro De La Torre, a social worker and shop steward with Local 542 in San Diego. "It's moving that extra step forward."

"Teamster women are forever strong, vocal, and are always out there ready to help organize and fight for workers' rights," said Kathy Peak, a graphic artist and member of Local 89 in Louisville, Kentucky.

"Raising the Stakes' to me, means more involvement with women in their union organizing," said Jean Alexander, a member of Local 117 in Tukwila, Washington. "The sky is the limit."

Leading Labor

Labor Secretary Hilda Solis Inspires Teamster Women

Before heading to the stage to address 1,000 Teamster women at the 2009 Teamsters Women's Conference, U.S. Labor Secretary Hilda Solis met privately with a smaller audience of about 30 workers and their families. Solis was caring and compassionate as she asked the primarily Hispanic workers, in Spanish, about their working conditions and the loss of their jobs. The 30 Republic Services workers were recently fired while organizing with the Teamsters.

In a rally held the day before, Teamsters from throughout North America who were attending the conference converged on the Las Vegas City Hall. Holding signs that read "Justice," "Dignity" and "Respect," the Teamsters joined a coalition of labor, community and faith organizations that were making their voices heard in support of these workers' rights.

After meeting privately with the Republic workers, Solis went on stage, wearing a Teamster pin on the lapel of her blue suit.

"I'm wearing my Teamster pin here because I feel like this is my family," Solis said. "In many ways I feel very close to this

union. It was my father's membership in the Teamsters that allowed my family and my six brothers and sisters to have health care benefits and a good life."

In her address, Solis spoke about the importance of passing the Employee Free Choice Act, legislation that would make it easier for workers, like those at Republic Services, to form a union in their workplace.

Stirred by Solis

"To hear Hilda Solis speak was very motivating, especially as a Latina woman. It's motivating to know that she could reach the rank of labor secretary," said Gabriela Molina, a shop steward at UPS and member of Local 63 in Covina, California.

"I think it's the greatest thing to have a woman as the labor secretary. We need to see more women in high positions like that," said Teresa Lane, a member of Local 986 and chief steward at MillerCoors, who also happened to grow up in La Puente, the same California town as Solis. "Hilda Solis is very



articulate and I was very moved by the things she had to say."

Solis' appearance at the conference inspired many Teamster women to go for their own goals, including Edith Dunlap, a First Student bus driver and member of Atlanta-based Local 728.

"It's awesome to see a woman as U.S. secretary of labor," Dunlap said. "It makes me think, 'Hey, you're not too old; race isn't an issue. You can accomplish anything if you want to.'"

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Getting Involved

The Teamsters Union has set a goal of recruiting and training 1,000 new member organizers by the end of 2009. The union needs volunteers from every part of the country in every possible job classification.

In recent months, weekend boot camp trainings have been held at Joint Councils and locals. Members have given their time to attend the training sessions, which generally include an active component, such as a leafleting, a rally or house calling on a current organizing campaign.

"I wanted to take it upon myself to at least get that first step of education, and the training was really good. We took various organizing situations and came up with ideas on how to handle them.

There were a lot of interesting points of view that people came up with and shared," said Carrie Bateman, a member of Local 886 in Oklahoma City and a driver at UPS.

"I got a lot of good pointers on how to approach people and have an open communication line with other workers so they will feel comfortable coming to me to talk about the union," said Mary Gavin, a chief steward with Local 495 who works at Hertz and who wants to help organize within her industry. "The most important place to be is in a union job. To me, it's like having a warm blanket on a cold winter day."

For more information on how to sign up to become a member organizer, contact your local union, Joint Council or the Organizing Department at 202-624-8718 and go to www.teamster.org.

A Message from General President James P. Hoffa

GOOD FOR THE UNION, GOOD FOR THE MIDDLE CLASS



Historically, the labor movement and the Teamsters have been instrumental in building the American middle class.

Now you can be part of that history as a member organizer.

Studies show that millions of American workers who are not in unions would belong to one if they had the opportunity to do so. With a mighty army of Teamster member

organizers working toward helping them join a union, along with the best organizing department in the labor movement today, we can preserve and grow the middle class.

The concept of volunteer member organizers is nothing new to the Teamsters. This member organizer program, however, has raised the bar and set ambitious goals for organizing even more workers. The 43,000 workers who became Teamsters in 2008 were organized, in large part, thanks to the efforts of volunteer member organizers. As more workers organize, they give back to others what they have gained as Teamsters.

In addition to training these member organizers, the Teamsters Union is also working with our allies to push for the Employee Free Choice Act. To preserve and grow America's middle class—the backbone of the American economy—workers need to have the opportunity to decide for themselves, without employer interference, whether to form a union. The Employee Free Choice Act would give them that opportunity.

In 2009, the Teamsters continue this proud tradition and continue the fight to raise standards for America's working families.

DRIVE is a political committee that furthers labor-related goals, including making contributions to support candidates for local, state and federal offices. Individuals may refuse to join or contribute without fear of reprisal.

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