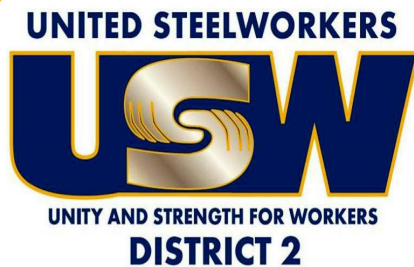




MICHAEL H. BOLTON, DIRECTOR



# NEWS

NOVEMBER 2020 • VOLUME 10, ISSUE 12 PAGE 1

## Looking Forward to Working with the New Administration

### A Message from Michael Bolton



I would like to thank our District 2 Steelworkers political staff and election committee members for a job well done. Their efforts helped us deliver both of our states for the election of Joe Biden as President of the United States and the re-election of Gary Peters to the United States Senate. I remain confident that the new administration will work with us to help rebuild our movement. In fact, during a recent meeting with labor leaders and CEO's of some of the country's top companies, the former Vice President told management that he wants to see strong Unions again and that he will be working with us to make it happen.

With Mitch McConnell still at the helm in the Senate, getting labor reformed through Congress is going to be a heavy lift. As we saw during the Trump administration, a lot of policy goals can be secured through executive orders. Also, the people Biden chooses to serve in his cabinet play a pivotal role in setting the direction of cabinet agencies. There are a number of highly qualified individuals being considered for the U.S. Department of Labor and the National Labor Relations Board who have expressed their willingness to work with us to reverse the anti-Union policies of the Trump Administration - welcoming news for Steelworkers and their families.

You may remember when we kicked off the "Your Union - Your Voice" political effort, we talked about our "Founding Principles" and "Core Issues". As a reminder, the principles were a set of eight values the Steelworkers Organizing Committee (SWOC) used to guide them as they began to form our Union.

1. Unite in one organization, regardless of creed, color or nationality, all workmen and working women eligible for membership.
2. Increase the wages and improve the conditions of employment of our members by legislation, joint agreements or other legitimate means.
3. Endeavor to obtain by joint negotiation or legislative enactment a six-hour day and five-day week.
4. Strive for a minimum wage scale for all members of our organization.
5. Provide for the education of our children by lawfully prohibiting their employment until they have reached 18 years of age.

6. Secure equitable statutory old-age pension, workman's compensation and unemployment insurance laws.
7. Enforce existing just laws and to secure the repeal of those which are unjust.
8. Secure by legislative enactment, laws protecting the limbs, lives and health of our members; (laws) establishing our right to organize; (laws) preventing the employment of privately armed guards during labor disputes and such other legislation as will be beneficial.

Sticking to these principles and dedicating themselves to adhering to them helped our founders build one of the most progressive and successful Unions in North America. Every Steelworker administration that followed first president, Phil Murray, has also followed these principles. I believe this is why the Steelworkers remain one of the most respected labor organizations today.

What do these principles mean to us? They are the goals we should be aiming to achieve each day for our members. The first principle talks about building solidarity with our membership. You may have heard the old saying, "united we bargain, divided we beg". If our members are not united behind our goals of improved working conditions, living wages and benefits that guarantee dignity for working people, then we won't have much success in attaining our goals. Solidarity with our members is the most important job we have as labor activists, especially in our current Right to Work environment.

The principles call on us to work to improve wages, benefits, and working conditions - things we do every day through contract negotiations and enforcing the agreement through grievance and arbitration procedures. Additionally, there is a re-occurring message throughout the principles calling for us to engage in the legislative process to help achieve our goals of dignity for working people. I often have members ask me why our Union participates in politics and lobbies for worker-friendly laws. The answer is simple - we cannot afford not to be involved. For example, unemployment insurance and workman's compensation are two programs workers have come to rely on in times of hardship. They were created through the legislative process and are continually under attack.

If we don't fight to maintain these benefits, who will?

We are currently involved in a fight to pass a second economic stimulus plan to help workers weather the storm of the covid-19 pandemic. Many are suffering as the virus hobbles communities. The U.S. House passed a bill to grant workers and

— continued on page 2 —

### DISTRICT 2 CONTACT INFORMATION

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Menasha, WI 54952  
(920) 722-7630

**Northern WI & MI Sub-District Office**  
1244A Midway Road  
Menasha, WI 54952  
(920) 722-7630

**Southern WI Sub-District Office**  
1135 South 70th Street, Suite 502  
West Allis, WI 53214  
(414) 475-4560

**Northern MI Sub-District Office**  
503 North Euclid Avenue  
Suite #10 - Euclid Plaza  
Bay City, MI 48706  
(989) 667-0660

**Southern MI Sub-District Office**  
20600 Eureka Road, Suite 300  
Taylor, MI 48180  
(734) 285-0367

### USW District 2 Council Steering Committee

The District 2 Council By-Laws established a District 2 Council Steering Committee comprised of a rank and file structure. It was set up to assist in the following:

- Development of agenda for Council Conference.
- Planning of the District Council Conference Educational Conferences.
- District 2 strategic planning.
- Determining and assessing educational needs within the District.
- Generating and leading activism and other purposes consistent with the mission and directives of District 2 and the USW.

The elected members of the Steering Committee are listed below by manufacturing sector. If you need to contact a Steering Committee Member, please do so by using the email provided below.

Name	LUF#	Sector	Email Address
Ron Fancsal	1299	Steel and Related	rfancsal@yahoo.com
Don Carlson	58	Paper	doncarlson@gza.net
Robert Desmond	13792	Amalgamated	rdesmond@sl.com
Jesse Edwards	2-232	Automotive Related	Jesse_edwards21919@yahoo.com
Kent Holzing	12975	Chemical & Energy Related	kentholzing@gmail.com
Jackie Anklam	9899	Health Care	jackieanklam_uswlocal899@yahoo.com
Michael Orvoosh	12854	Public	m.orvoosh@uswlocal12934.com
Eric Henricks	1327	AI Large	Eric.henricks@gallierca.com
Matthew Gibbons	5965	AI Large	msw5965@gmail.com
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**United Steelworkers District 2 AFL-CIO-CLC**

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Lori Gafekunst, Tammie Durcan, Jay Mallamran, Sue Browne, Thomas Conway, USW President, Laurie Runge, Tyler Ruffner, USW News Media, Union Review, Leah Asmetsch, CNN, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, Beaumont Health

Articles and photos are welcome and should be sent:

Jason Wilcox & Art Kroll, Co-Editors, *District 2 News*  
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d2@usw.org • (920) 722-7630

**December 12, 2020**, is the deadline for submissions for the next issue.

**"GO BUILD OUR UNION!"**

## Did you know?

UNITED STEELWORKERS  
**USW**  
**YOUR UNION  
YOUR VOICE**

#USWVOICES

### OUR CORE ISSUES

**COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**  
**SAFETY AND HEALTH**  
**JOB SECURITY/TRADE**  
**DOMESTIC ECONOMIC ISSUES**  
**HEALTH CARE**  
**RETIREMENT SECURITY**



The coronavirus pandemic has impacted the lives of millions of working people and our families. Go to the AFL-CIO Website or <https://aflcio.org/covid-19/state-resources>

Select your state to find the resources, programs and benefits available in your area to assist you during this crisis.

## A Message from Director Bolton - continued from page 1

businesses much needed relief; however, it is stalled in the Senate as those on the right argue that extended and enhanced benefits are encouraging workers to refuse work so they can remain on the dole. They are also fighting for legislation that would deny workers the right to sue their employer if they contract the coronavirus during the course of their employment.

If we, the U.S. labor movement, do not fight for another round of stimulus for workers, there are not many organizations out there that can. We have the people and the resources to wage a campaign to convince Congress to act. Besides, if we wait for someone else to do the work, the job will not get done.

Folks on the right like to say that Unions have outlived their usefulness. They claim that unions were needed to ensure workers got their fair share; but today there are laws to protect workers and require companies to act more respectfully toward their workforces. Oh, really?

Did you hear the one about workers at an Iowa meat packing plant whose bosses were betting on their lives? It's true.

Tyson Foods is a great American company providing poultry and pork products to Americans across the country. So, at the height of the spring coronavirus spike, when President Trump ordered meat packing plants to remain open to prevent disrupting the food chain, Tyson Waterloo Plant decided to make fun of a bad situation. The plant manager organized a winner take all betting pool for supervisors to gamble on how many workers would contract covid-19. Workers were forced by management to report to work even if they were showing symptoms of the disease. They were told by supervisors that reporting for work was safer than going shopping at the local Walmart. In the end, 1,000 of the plant's 3,000 workers test positive for covid. Of that total, five died.

Facing a swell of criticism over the incident, Tyson announced it has suspended the plant manager. Suspended? That means he'll be back to run another scheme in the future. To their credit, Tyson did not announce who won the pool or how much it paid out. One thing is for sure though, this type of crap would not be tolerated in a Steelworker shop.

Finally, about the best thing that can be said about the year 2020 is that it will soon come to an end. As we look forward to better days being ushered in by 2021, and a much-needed rollout of the covid-19 vaccine, I also urge you to make 2021 the year you get more involved in your Union. The Steelworkers offer opportunities for members to get involved in programs that match your interests. Like politics? We have a program for you. Do you want to advance women's issues in the workplace and in our Union? Women of Steel is the place for you. Maybe you are a young member interested in learning more about our Union and developing your leadership skills. Next Gen can help you reach those goals. From writing newsletters to education courses that help you become more effective Local Union officers, District 2 has a program for you. So, talk to your Local Union officers today and ask how you can get involved.

There is something for everyone in District 2!

## Important Notices

We apologize for any inconvenience, but the USW District 2 offices are temporarily closed. However, the health and safety of our members and staff is our number one priority.

We are committed to doing our part to prevent the further spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) while still representing our members. If you need assistance, you can still call each office; or, call your Staff Representative.

**USW** **POSTPONED**  
**Collective Bargaining Training**

Due to the pandemic and our priority in the health and safety of our members and staff, we are postponing the tentatively scheduled January training and plan to reschedule in March.

The Union Plus Credit Card program.  
With 3 card choices - designed to meet the needs of union members. All with competitive rates, U.S. based customer service and more. Plus, exclusive hardship grants for eligible cardholders\*.

The Union Plus Credit Card Program is designed to meet the needs of hard-working union members and their families.

To apply by phone, call: 1-800-522-4000

**USW** **NEWS** United Steelworkers District 2  
AFL-CIO-CLC  
MICHAEL H. BOLTON, Director, 1244A Midway Road, Menasha, WI 54952  
(920) 722-7630



**HAVE YOU BEEN TO DISTRICT 2'S  
PAGE ON FACEBOOK?**  
[www.facebook.com/USWDistrict2](http://www.facebook.com/USWDistrict2)



## 2020 District 2 Calendar of Events

### JANUARY

- 8 **WOS Quarterly Meeting**  
*USW Local 12075 Hall, 3510 James Savage Road • Midland, MI*
- 9 **Town Hall Meeting**  
*USW Local 12075 Hall, 3510 James Savage Road • Midland, MI*
- 16 **Town Hall Meeting**  
*USW Local 1299 Hall, 11424 West Jefferson Avenue • River Rouge, MI*
- 17 **WOS Quarterly Meeting**  
*USW Dist. 2 Southern MI Sub-Office, 20600 Eureka Road, Suite 300 • Taylor, MI*
- 17-19 **AFL-CIO Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Civil & Human Rights Conf.**  
*Washington Hilton, 1919 Connecticut Ave Northwest • Washington, DC*
- 21 **Town Hall Meeting**  
*Lucky Dog's Labor Temple, 157 S. Green Bay Road • Neenah, WI*
- 21 **WOS Quarterly Meeting**  
*Kent Ionia Labor Hall, 918 Benjamin Avenue NE • Grand Rapids, MI*
- 21 **WOS Quarterly Meeting**  
*USW Local 2-21 Hall, 1201 Sheridan Road • Escanaba, MI*
- 22 **Town Hall Meeting**  
*Clarion Inn, 3640 East Cork Street • Kalamazoo, MI*
- 22 **WOS Quarterly Meeting**  
*Old Morton Federal Credit Union, 516 Kosciusko • Manistee, MI*
- 22 **WOS Quarterly Meeting**  
*USW Local 2-148 Hall, 1201 Gillingham Road • Neenah, WI*
- 23 **Town Hall Meeting**  
*Four Points by Sheraton - Milwaukeee Airport, 5311 South Howell Avenue • Milwaukee, WI*
- 24 **WOS Quarterly Meeting**  
*Milwaukee Labor Council Building, 633 S. Hawley Road • Milwaukee, WI*
- 24 **WOS Quarterly Meeting**  
*Joann Lester Library, 100 Park Street • Nekoosa, WI*

### FEBRUARY

- 4 **Town Hall Meeting**  
*Eau Claire Labor Temple, 2233 Birch Street • Eau Claire, WI*
- 6 **Town Hall Meeting**  
*Fraternal Order of Eagles, 1104 S. Oak Avenue, Marshfield, WI*
- 11 **Town Hall Meeting**  
*Holiday Inn, 4079 US-10 • Ludington, MI*
- 13 **Town Hall Meeting**  
*McRae Park Hall, 1301 N 2nd Ave, Alpena, MI*
- 18 **Town Hall Meeting**  
*USW Local 4950 Hall, 1206 Baldwin Avenue • Negaunee, MI*
- 25 **LM Review Session**  
*Milwaukee Labor Council Building, 633 S. Hawley Road • Milwaukee, WI*
- 26 **LM Review Session**  
*Lucky Dog's Labor Temple, 157 S. Green Bay Road • Neenah, WI*
- 27 **LM Review Session**  
*Kronenwetter Village Hall, 1582 Kronenwetter Drive • Kronenwetter, WI*
- 28 **LM Review Session**  
*USW Local 2-21 Hall, 1201 Sheridan Road • Escanaba, MI*

### MARCH

- 2 **LM Review Session**  
*USW Local 12075 Hall, 3510 James Savage Road • Midland, MI*
- 3 **LM Review Session**  
*Bungalow Inn, 1100 28th Street • Manistee, MI*
- 4 **LM Review Session**  
*Clarion Inn, 3640 East Cork Street • Kalamazoo, MI*
- 5 **LM Review Session**  
*USW District 2 Southern MI Sub-Office, 20600 Eureka Road, Suite 300 • Taylor, MI*
- 10-12 **USW District 2 Collective Bargaining Training**  
*Four Points by Sheraton - Milwaukeee Airport, 5311 South Howell Avenue • Milwaukee, WI*
- 23-27 **CANCELLED & POSTPONED until April 2022**  
**District 2 Council Conference**  
*Red Lion Hotel Paper Valley • 333 West College Avenue, Appleton, WI*

### MAY

- 3-8 **CANCELLED & POSTPONED until May 2021**  
**District 2 WOS Leadership Development Course (Levels I & II)**  
*Zehnder's Splash Village Hotel & Waterpark, 1365 South Main Street • Frankenmuth, MI*

### OCTOBER

- 27 **Presidents Meetings (Michigan) 9:00 am (Eastern time)**  
*Presidents Meetings will be Virtual on-line.*
- 27 **Presidents Meetings (Wisconsin) 1:00 pm (Central time)**  
*Presidents Meetings will be Virtual on-line.*

### NOVEMBER

- 3 **Election Day - United States**
- 17-18 **USW Virtual Education Conference**  
*2020 Virtual Education Conference: Smarter is Stronger*

# POSTPONED

## USW

### Collective Bargaining Training

Due to the pandemic and our priority in the health and safety of our members and staff, we are postponing the tentatively scheduled January training and plan to reschedule in March.

The schedule is designed to assist in planning this year's events. However, there is a possibility dates and/or locations could change due to unforeseen circumstances. Changes and corrections will be made ASAP and updated on the USW District 2 website.



## Local 2-469's Women of Steel Caring for Their Community - Submitted by Laurie Runge

Every other month, LU 2-469's WOS members cook and serve breakfast at the local Pillars shelter located in Appleton, WI. They also collect items and assemble Blessing Bags for area shelters.

The committee also held a food drive to benefit St. Joe's Food Pantry and donated over 150 food items.



The members continued to give back to the community by partnering with Aubrey's Blankets to make fleece tie blankets for veterans. The event was covered by local television news stations (pictured on right).

In addition to serving breakfast, distributing Blessing Bags, running a food drive and making blankets, they also held a pet drive to benefit Saving Paws and collected food, cleaning supplies, on top of raising \$330 to build dog houses (built by WOS member Cindy Buman).



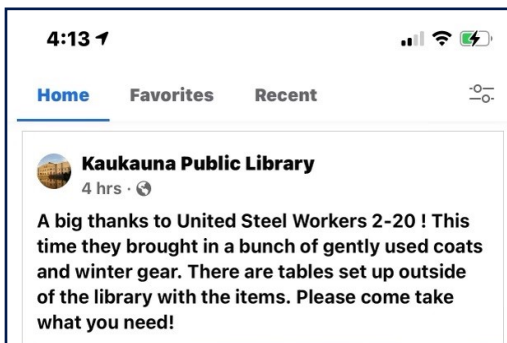
## USW Local 2-20's Next Generation Committee - "Coats For Kids" Drive - Submitted by Tyler Rutten



Tyler Rutten and daughter, Zoey, with Librarian, Ashley Theim-Menning

LU 2-20's Next Generation Committee held a coat drive September 28 through October 31.

Below is a Big Thank You copied from the Kaukauna Public Library's social media announcement encouraging those in need to stop by and pick up a coat!



## COATS FOR KIDS

Local 20 Next Generation Committee is collecting new or gently used jackets for children of all ages



### Drop Box Locations:

- 10 PM Lunch Room
- Maintenance Lunch Room
- MOB Break Room

Jackets will be locally distributed through Kaukauna Library

**USW District 2 Rapid Response** - Submitted by Sue Browne, Rapid Response Coordinator



November 11, 2020

## The Need for Action from the Senate is Critical.

[Contact your Senators TODAY!](#)

*"We're paying with our lives. We're paying with our health . . . Cleveland Clinic Akron General is inundated with COVID patients right now, we don't see any kind of lull in the positive cases. They keep coming. We don't see any outside help." - Tim O'Daniel, president of USW Local 1014L, who just days ago lost a colleague to COVID-19.*

As COVID-19 continues to ravage our communities, we are counting on the Senate to pass the next much-needed stimulus bill, the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act. The HEROES Act ([H.R.6800](#)) passed the House on May 15 and includes several of the provisions that we have been fighting for, like a temporary OSHA emergency standard and help paying for COBRA coverage for those out of work. The HEROES Act also:

- Provides needed assistance to state, local, tribal, and territorial governments to ensure necessary public services continue;
- Expands paid sick days, family and medical leave, and unemployment compensation;
- Establishes a fund to award grants for employers to provide pandemic premium pay for essential workers;
- Provides COBRA subsidies to laid off workers;
- Provides funding and establishes requirements for COVID-19 testing and contact tracing;
- Eliminates cost-sharing for COVID-19 treatments;
- Extends and expands the moratorium on certain evictions and foreclosures; and
- Requires employers to develop and implement infectious disease exposure control plans.

"They're holding the whole country hostage," observed Brad Greve, president of USW Local 105, which represents workers at Arconic's Davenport Works in Iowa. The company laid off more than 100 of his members in July and they are continuing to struggle.

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### We Need Quick Action!

**The Coronavirus Pandemic is showing no signs of stopping and our members' jobs, and in some cases lives, are on the line.**

Click [HERE](#) or call 877-607-0785  
to tell your Senator to pass the HEROES act today.

---

Our union has seen the impacts of COVID-19 on our industries and our members. We need meaningful legislation to protect the health and safety of workers who continue to go to work every day to provide us with our essential services, and to provide stability for those whose jobs have not yet returned. We need Congress to pass the HEROES Act! [Please take action today!](#)

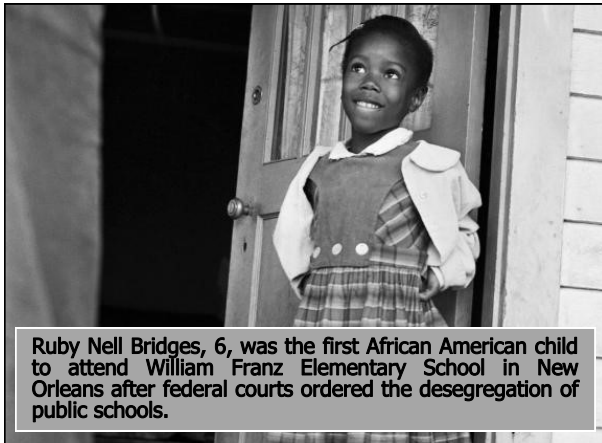
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USW Rapid Response • (412) 562-2291 • <http://www.uswrr.org> • [www.facebook.com/USWRapidResponse](http://www.facebook.com/USWRapidResponse)

**"GO BUILD OUR UNION!"**



**This Month in History • Ruby Bridges Walked to School • November 14, 1960 - By Leah Asmelash, CNN**



Ruby Nell Bridges, 6, was the first African American child to attend William Franz Elementary School in New Orleans after federal courts ordered the desegregation of public schools.

## 60 years ago, 6-year-old Ruby Bridges walked to school and showed how even first graders can be trailblazers

(CNN)Sixty years ago, Ruby Bridges walked to school escorted by four federal marshals as a White mob hurled insults at her.

Bridges, just 6 years old on November 14, 1960, was set to begin first grade at William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans. As the first Black student to attend the school, Bridges carried integration on her small shoulders.

Her first day at William Frantz came four years after Black parents in New Orleans filed a lawsuit against the Orleans Parish School Board for not desegregating the school system in the wake of the Brown v. Board of Education decision, which determined in 1954 that state laws

establishing segregation in public schools were unconstitutional.

The year Bridges walked into the school, Judge. J. Skelly Wright had ordered the desegregation of New Orleans public schools. The Orleans Parish School Board, however, had convinced the judge to require Black students to apply for transfer to all-White schools, thus limiting desegregation, according to the Equal Justice Initiative.

"For me, being 6 years old, I really wasn't aware of what was going on," Bridges, now 66, told NPR in 2010. "I mean the only thing that I was ever told by my parents that I was going to attend a new school and that I should behave."

Once Bridges entered the school and arrived at her classroom, all the other students had withdrawn. The rest of the school year, it was just her and the teacher, she said. And crowds continued to show up, at one point bringing a small baby's coffin with a Black doll inside.

"I used to have nightmares about the box," Bridges said. "Those are the days that I distinctly remember being really, really frightened."



US Deputy Marshals escort 6-year-old Ruby Bridges from William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans.

But Bridges stayed at the school despite retaliation against her family. Grocery stores refused to sell to her mother, Lucille. And her father, Abon, lost his job, according to the National Park Service. The toll was so hard on their marriage that by the time Bridges graduated from sixth grade, they had separated, she told NPR.

Eventually, though, Bridges made it to second grade. And when she did, the school's incoming first grade class had eight Black students, the EJI said.

CNN reached out to Bridges for comment but did not receive a response.

Bridges continues to be an inspiration for many. In 2011, she was invited to the Oval Office, where the painting commemorating her walk by Norman Rockwell -- criticized when it first appeared on a magazine cover in 1964 -- was on display.

"I think it's fair to say that if it wasn't for you guys, I wouldn't be here today," then President Barack Obama told Bridges during her visit, according to the White House archives.

Lucille, who Ruby says pushed her to attend the school, died this week at age 86. In an Instagram post, Ruby called her mother a "champion for change," adding that her actions altered the course of many lives.



Ruby Bridges speaks onstage at Glamour's 2017 Women of The Year Awards at Kings Theatre in November 2017 in New York.

**This Month in Labor History • 1881, 1910, 1933 & 1996 - By Union Review, [todayinlaborhistory.tumblr.com](http://todayinlaborhistory.tumblr.com)**

On November 15, 1881: The Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada was founded in Pittsburgh. FOTLU was the predecessor organization to what became the American Federation of Labor in 1886.

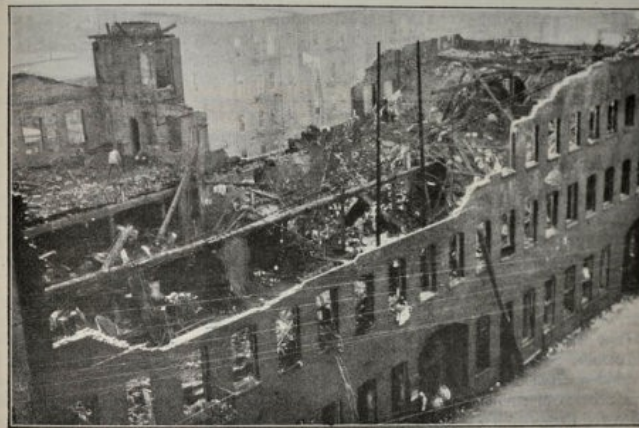


Its goal was to “organize a systematic agitation to propagate trades union principles...to elevate trades unionism, and to obtain for the working classes, that respect for their rights, and that reward for their services, to which they are justly entitled.”



On November 26, 1910: Four months before the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, a sweatshop in Newark, New Jersey, catches fire, killing more than two dozen women and girls.

The fire made national news and more than 100,000 people flocked to the scene the next day. A coroner’s jury a month later deemed the fire the result of human error: “They died from misadventure and accident.”



THE FACTORY AFTER THE FIRE. ALL THE EMPLOYEES ON THE LOWER FLOORS ESCAPED, BUT OF THE HUNDRED AND SIXTEEN GIRLS ON THE FOURTH FLOOR TWENTY-FIVE LOST THEIR LIVES AND MANY MORE WERE INJURED



On November 10, 1933: Workers at the Austin, Minnesota, Hormel plant begin a sit-down strike when owner Jay Hormel refuses to negotiate with their union, the Independent Union of All Workers. Unable to open his blockaded plant, Hormel accepted binding arbitration and the workers received a ten percent wage increase a month later.

On November 4, 1996: A 28-month long strike by rubber workers against Bridgestone-Firestone over the company’s demands for huge wage and benefit concessions and elimination of union protections ends with the rehiring of all former strikers, a wage increase, and all but one of the workers’ demands.

A coordinated global campaign put pressure on the company by publicizing its pollution record, its workplace safety and health violations, and its lack of civic responsibility.







## MESSAGE FROM PITTSBURGH



*Thomas M. Conway, International President*

Posted: November 19, 2020 • page 1 of 2

### Shared Sacrifice

Chad Longpre Shepersky repeatedly took COVID-19 tests—and waited on pins and needles for results each time—during a coronavirus outbreak at Guardian Angels Health & Rehabilitation Center in Hibbing, Minn.

Longpre Shepersky, a certified nursing assistant (CNA), never contracted the virus. But he watched in agony as dozens of his patients and co-workers fell ill and fought for their lives.

As a weary nation enters the holiday season, Americans have an opportunity to help health care workers like Longpre Shepersky and start bringing the raging pandemic under control.

Consistently wearing face masks, practicing social distancing and taking other safety precautions will slow COVID-19's spread and provide much-needed relief to the front-line workers battling burnout as well as the virus.

"Everyone should do their part," insisted Longpre Shepersky, financial secretary and steward for United Steelworkers (USW) Local 9349, which represents workers at Guardian Angels. "Just the other day, I witnessed people in Walmart not wearing masks or following 6-foot distancing. Too many people aren't doing what they can to fight the virus."

As infection rates soar to their highest levels nationwide, the 10-month-old pandemic continues to take a disproportionately deadly toll on frail, vulnerable nursing home residents and the people who care for them.

So many residents and workers at Guardian Angels contracted the virus that the Minnesota National Guard last month sent a five-person team to help keep the 90-bed facility operating. Even then, as he worried about his own safety and mourned the deaths of several patients, Longpre Shepersky logged grueling amounts of overtime to fill in for ill colleagues.

"It got to the point where you dreaded going to work because you didn't know what the day was going to bring," recalled Longpre Shepersky, a CNA for 21 years who considers his co-workers and patients a second family. "But there was no one else there to do it. I just pulled up my Big Boy pants and went in to work and got through the day."

Many nursing home workers endured staffing shortages at their facilities long before the pandemic. Because of low Medicaid payments for patient care, among other reasons, facilities paid low wages, skimmed on staff or battled chronic turnover.

When COVID-19 struck, turnover and staff sicknesses compounded the chronic understaffing.

Now, nursing home workers struggle to stay physically and psychologically healthy while putting in extra shifts to ensure residents receive the highest quality care around the clock. Besides longer hours, many also took on additional responsibilities, such as serving as surrogate family members to residents cut off from visitors during facility lockdowns.

These everyday heroes feel stretched to the breaking point. Many nursing home workers and other health care professionals report unprecedented levels of burnout and other mental health concerns as they worry not only about their own safety but the fate of their patients and the possibility of bringing the virus home to their own family members.



Chad Longpre Shepersky

"I try to go in with a positive mindset," explained Shirley Richardson, unit president for USW Local 7898, which represents workers at the 220-bed Veterans' Victory House in Walterboro, S.C. "The main object is being safe. I try to stay focused. I don't let little things get to me."

"It's going to get better," she reminds co-workers who've endured about two dozen cases of COVID-19, including the deaths of several patients and a nurse, at their facility.

"This can't go on forever. We just have to work through it."

The pandemic highlighted the essential work that nursing home staff members perform—and the necessity of treating them as essential workers from now on.

That will require fixing the nation's health care system—even if that means allocating additional tax dollars—so that nursing homes receive adequate payment for their services. Then the facilities can hire and retain adequate numbers of workers—and provide hazard pay and paid sick leave to ensure staffing remains at high levels during emergencies.

"It's just the staffing that's been the worst part of this year," explained Chris Sova, unit president for USW Local 15301-1, which represents nurses at Bay County Medical Care Facility in Essexville, Mich.

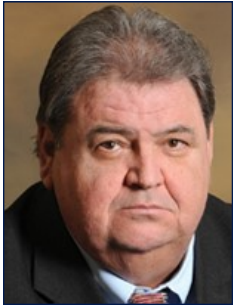
"I feel like a zombie almost. I honestly don't know how we do it anymore," marveled Sova, a



Getty Images

— continued on page 9 —





## MESSAGE FROM PITTSBURGH



*Thomas M. Conway, International President*

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### Shared Sacrifice

third-generation nursing home worker, who described his routine some weeks as “wake up. Go to work. Come home. Wake up. Go to work.”

It infuriates Sova to know that while he and his co-workers put their lives on the line every day, some Americans refuse to take simple steps to slow the virus’ spread.

Across the country, some people fail to wear masks even as infection rates in their own communities skyrocket and strain the capacity of local hospitals.

So far, at least 249,000 Americans died of COVID-19, more than 65,000 of them in nursing homes. Universal mask wearing, according to one new study, could prevent 130,000 more U.S. deaths in coming months.

“People wear seatbelts, but they have a big thing about facemasks?” Sova fumed.

Longpre Shepersky faces the upcoming holidays with trepidation, realizing that the family gatherings and parties Americans long for so earnestly this year also present additional opportunities for spreading the virus.

The residents at Guardian Angels wear masks whenever they leave their rooms, and because of the risk of another outbreak, they also could face limits on visitors this holiday season.

If they can make sacrifices to help contain the virus, other Americans can as well.

“Everyone definitely has to take this seriously,” Longpre Shepersky said.

#### Union Plus • November 24, 2020



### Union Plus Holiday Giveback campaign to Award \$1,000 to 100 Extraordinary Union Members During Holiday Campaign

*Contest caps off record year for Union Plus as hardship grants and scholarship awards top more than \$2 million to union members.*

Union Plus’s biggest year of giving is getting bigger. To make the holiday season brighter for union members — many of whom are on the front lines battling the coronavirus pandemic as first responders, health care workers, food workers and others — Union Plus will be giving away a total of \$100,000 in \$1,000 “thank you” awards to 100 deserving union members.

Union Plus is a non-profit founded by the AFL-CIO to provide additional benefits, savings and discounts to union members, as well as offer scholarships and exclusive grants during difficult times such as layoffs, furloughs and natural disasters. Since 2009, Union Plus has awarded over \$14 million in grants and scholarships to union members.

“It has been a tremendously difficult year, for everyone in our country and in particular, those in our union family,” reflects Mitch Stevens, Union Plus president. “Our Holiday Giveback campaign’ not only shares financial resources with extraordinary union members but also shines a light on their contribution to our communities. Union members are the backbone of our economy and many have made extraordinary sacrifices and contributions during this pandemic.”

Entry to the Union Plus Holiday Giveback, is easy. Nominations can be made by visiting [unionplus.org/holidaygiveback](http://unionplus.org/holidaygiveback) or by simply posting a video to Instagram telling us what makes their nominee extraordinary, using the hashtags #UnionPlusGiveAGrand and #Contest.

Members can nominate themselves or a friend or colleague. Nominations will be accepted until December 4, and winners will be announced by throughout December.

The end-of-year contest is an extension of the year of giving back to eligible union members by Union Plus.

Since the start of the pandemic, more than 1,500 union members have applied for direct assistance from the Union Plus Hardship Assistance program.

Union Plus is proud to have surpassed its previous records by distributing more than \$2,000,000 in direct assistance to members to date this year. The “Holiday Giveback Campaign” aims to inspire members to recognize themselves and others for their extraordinary work in 2020.

## Symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Know the symptoms of COVID-19, which can include the following:



Symptoms can range from mild to severe illness, and appear 2-14 days after you are exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

Seek medical care immediately if someone has emergency warning signs of COVID-19.

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

This list is not all possible symptoms. Please call your healthcare provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.









[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

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## The differences between **FLU AND COVID-19**

	COVID-19	Flu
 <b>Symptoms</b>	Typically develop 5 days after infection, but can be as early as 2 days or as late as 14 days	Develop 1 to 4 days after infection
 <b>Transmission</b>	Spreads easier than the flu; contagious about 2 days prior to symptoms; at least 10 days after symptoms	Contagious about 1 day prior to symptoms; up to 1 week after symptoms
 <b>Children</b>	School-aged children at a higher risk for Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome (MIS-C), a rare but severe complication	Young children are at a higher risk of severe illness and complications
 <b>Complications</b>	Blood clots in the veins and arteries of the lungs, heart, legs or brain; MIS-C	Most people will recover in a few days to less than two weeks, but some can develop serious complications (such as pneumonia)
 <b>Treatment</b>	While no drugs or other therapeutics are approved by the FDA, investigational treatments are available	Prescription antiviral drugs are FDA-approved to treat the flu
 <b>Vaccine</b>	No vaccine available, although several clinical trials are taking place	Multiple approved vaccines are approved annually; the flu vaccine is the best way to protect yourself against the virus

**Beaumont**

[beaumont.org/flu](https://beaumont.org/flu)

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**"GO BUILD OUR UNION!"**