



United Food and Commercial Workers Local 951
3270 Evergreen Drive NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525

JOHN CAKMAKCI
PRESIDENT

DAVE WAY
SECRETARY/TREASURER

KARIN HOPMAN
RECORDER

1.800.999.0951
www.ufcw951.org
www.facebook.com/UFCW951

Non Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
Grand Rapids, MI
Permit #580

STEWARD UPDATE

VOLUME 11 ISSUE 1 | MARCH/APRIL 2017

FROM THE PRESIDENT: A PREVIEW OF THE NEW STEWARD INCENTIVE PROGRAM

In January, I announced that my plan for 2017 was to take UFCW 951 to the next level. I want us to become a great organization. To achieve this goal, the local began looking at everything we do and asked ourselves, "How can we do better for the membership?"

April steward conferences. It is a work in progress, and changes may need to be made as unforeseen issues arise.

I am excited about this program and the potential it presents for stewards, the local union and individual members.

The revised program gives stewards

the opportunity to earn bigger checks in December by actively working toward, and achieving, our goals for grievance handling, membership sign-

up, workplace problem solving, UFCW 951 Foundation participation, membership education and Active Ballot Club membership. I have always said that I have no problem giving more to stewards who are doing a good job. What I find problematic is giving anything to stewards who are doing very little.

up, work- place problem solving, UFCW 951 Foundation participation, membership education and Active Ballot Club membership. I have always said that I have no problem giving more to stewards who are doing a good job. What I find problematic is giving anything to stewards who are doing very little.

The incentive program is designed to maintain and attract stewards who not only want to get the job done, but want to do it well. Stewards who are "just in it for the money" and have no interest in representing workers will find the steward position is no longer for them.

The upgraded steward group that will be a byproduct of the new incentive program will increase the quality of representation provided to UFCW 951 members.

Complete details of the steward incentive program will be presented in a workshop at the April steward conferences. I look forward to seeing you there!

Complete details of the steward incentive program will be presented in a workshop at the April steward conferences. I look forward to seeing you there!



JOHN CAKMAKCI

"In addition to the new system being fairer and allowing stewards to earn more, the new incentive program will make UFCW 951 a stronger union that provides better representation to the membership."

— John Cakmakci, UFCW 951 President

When we took a hard look at the steward program, we found a system that was no longer working. Automatically giving stewards a dues refund at the end of the year is not an effective way to run a steward program in a right to work environment. We needed to find a better alternative.

I sought input from union representatives, office staff, other local unions and UFCW 951 stewards. I wanted their ideas on how to restructure the steward program to improve the system.

I was surprised to learn that many local unions offer no compensation to stewards. Most simply hold an appreciation day once a year. This was not an idea anyone at UFCW 951 liked. We want to compensate stewards, we just needed a better way to do so.

Over the past few months, I think we have developed an improved program. The details of this steward incentive program will be unveiled at the

HELP SPREAD THE WORD

UPCOMING MEMBERS ONLY DISCOUNTED EVENTS

Bus Trip to FireKeepers Casino on Tuesday, May 9

UFCW 951 is offering members a trip to FireKeepers Casino in Battle Creek. Tickets will include a seat on the bus, as well as \$20 in casino cash and a \$5 food voucher. Tickets are \$20 per person. The deadline to order tickets is Friday, April 21, but the event could sell out prior to this date.



UFCW 951 Day at the Ballpark on Thursday, May 18



The Detroit Tigers will be playing the Baltimore Orioles. Tickets are \$54 and include round-trip bus transportation and an all-you-can-eat pre-game picnic. The deadline to order tickets is Friday, April 28, but the event could sell out prior to this date.

Tickets to events can be purchased online at www.ufcw951.org/events. Paper order forms are available from union representatives and can be printed from the union website. For more information, call 1.800.999.0951.

STEWARD SPOTLIGHT: AFAWNA JOHNSON, PART OF THE FAMILY AT MEIJER #229

Afawna Johnson, from Meijer #229 in Marysville, considers her coworkers to be like family and actively works to give them a powerful voice.

Johnson has been a steward for nearly three years and has learned many lessons throughout her journey.



It's important for people to know that by joining the union, they are choosing to help and support their union brothers and sisters. They are choosing to be a part of something bigger."

— Afawna Johnson from Meijer #229

"I became a steward because I wanted to give my coworkers a voice and to make sure that they are heard," Johnson said.

Johnson not only wanted to make sure her coworkers have a voice, she also wanted them to know that she's always there for them.

"My coworkers are family. It's my job to show them that someone truly cares about them and will stand up for them," Johnson said. "I will always have their backs and fight for them to be treated fairly."

Throughout the transition to the new

right to work environment at Meijer, Johnson has thrived as a steward.

Johnson quickly accepted the new challenges and changes, and adapted her approach as a steward accordingly. The challenge of signing up new members has driven Johnson to make sure new hires truly know what it means to join a union.

"Right to work has given me even more motivation to show my coworkers the advantages of joining the union," she said.

The main advantage of joining the union, according to Johnson, is becoming part of the family.

"It's important for people to know that by joining the union, they are choosing to help and support their union brothers and sisters," Johnson said. "They are choosing to be part of something bigger."

HELPING MEMBERS USE THEIR SENIORITY RIGHTS TO CLAIM HOURS WITH IMPROVED MEIJER CONTRACT LANGUAGE

Stewards are needed to help alleviate the confusion surrounding the implementation of the new Meijer retail contract, which removes a prior limitation on part-time workers' ability to claim hours from less senior coworkers. By requiring all part-time employees to be scheduled for at least 12 hours per week, the old contract prohibited many part-time employees from working their weekly maximum of at least 30 hours per week.

The new contract removes this 12-hour guarantee, allowing senior workers to claim some or all of the hours of less senior workers up to, and in some cases beyond, their weekly maximum.

While this change was a bargaining goal for many part-time workers, bad information is preventing them from

claiming all of the hours they are entitled to work.

By educating their coworkers and managers on the facts regarding the new contract language, stewards can help clear up the confusion.

FACT: Low senior workers can have their schedule taken down to zero hours. Management can't prevent a senior worker from claiming the hours of a less senior worker because it would mean the less senior worker has no hours for the week.

FACT: A senior worker has the right to choose which shift(s) he/she wants to claim. Some managers are claiming the senior employee must take the shift(s) from the least senior worker on the schedule. That is incorrect.

Workers can claim any shift(s) they want from any less senior employee.

FACT: The language allows part-time employees to work more than their 30-hour maximum. Under the new contract, part-time employees can end up working more than 30 hours if the shift they claim to get to 30 hours puts them over this amount. For example, a worker scheduled for 27 hours claims a five hour shift from a less senior worker, giving him 32 hours for the week.

The new contract not only puts more money in senior employees' pockets, it also gives workers the ability to claim more hours, if needed, to qualify for and maintain their health benefits, which is extremely important to many part-time employees.

UFCW 951 MEMBERS CAN EARN AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE FOR FREE THROUGH NEW MEMBERS ONLY PROGRAM

UFCW has partnered with Eastern Gateway Community College (EGCC) to bring free college to UFCW 951 members and their families. Through this partnership, members and their spouses, children and grandchildren will have access to free online college courses at a regionally-accredited community college. Stewards are encouraged to promote this exciting new benefit of UFCW 951 membership, which is estimated to save members \$8,000 per student who completes the program. Below are answers to some common questions members may have regarding the new free college benefit.

Q: IS THE PROGRAM ACTUALLY FREE?

A: Yes! All students are required to apply for a federal Pell Grant and apply any scholarships, veterans benefits and employer-sponsored tuition assistance to their account. Any remaining balance will be covered by a union "last-dollar" scholarship. Students simply need access to a computer and the internet. Additionally, any fees associated with career-related licensing requirements are the responsibility of the student, since these fees are not paid to the college.

Q: WHO CAN APPLY?

A: The UFCW free college benefit is

open to UFCW 951 members and their children, spouses, grandchildren and dependents.

Q: WHAT TYPE OF DEGREE CAN MEMBERS EARN FOR FREE?

A: Currently, UFCW 951 members can earn a free associate degree in business management, criminal justice, early childhood education or an associate of arts. Additional free programs will be added in the future.

Q: IS THE COLLEGE LEGITIMATE?

A: Absolutely. EGCC is a public, nonprofit school located in Steubenville, Ohio. The college is part of the University System of Ohio and regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. As such, credits earned at this school can be transferred to other institutions around the country. Students participating in this program will have access to staff at the college who are committed to helping them determine the right course of study, tutoring them when they have questions and helping them transfer to another college to earn a bachelor's degree.

Q: HOW DO MEMBERS BEGIN THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

A: Start the application process on the UFCW 951 website at www.ufcw951.org.

ufcw951.org/discounts/FreeCollege, where union membership will be verified. This link will then direct members to the EGCC website to start their official application.

Members who have questions regarding application deadlines, semester start and end dates or admission requirements should be directed to the EGCC enrollment specialists at **888.590.9909**. The union office is only able to answer general questions about the program.

Q: WHAT REQUIREMENTS DO APPLICANTS NEED TO MEET?

A: Students must have a high school diploma or GED equivalent to apply.

Q: WHAT HAPPENS IF MEMBERS ENROLLED IN THE PROGRAM DECIDE TO OPT OUT OF THE UNION?

A: Each semester, UFCW 951 will verify the student's eligibility for the program. As long as the member the student registered under remains a UFCW 951 member in good standing, or left the union in good standing, the student will be allowed to continue taking free classes. Should the member opt out of the union, the student won't be removed from the college. However, their last-dollar scholarships will be revoked, and the program will no longer be free for them.

LISTINGS NEEDED FOR NEW MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS SERVICE CLASSIFIEDS PROGRAM

UFCW 951 has kicked off a new program to help members find affordable services, such as home repair, lawn care, tailoring, pet sitting, etc., offered by other members just like them. As a steward, it's your role to help connect members with the discounted programs and services offered by the union that best fit their needs.

Do you know members who make extra money providing a skill or service? If so, encourage them list their service on the UFCW 951 website at www.ufcw951.org/membershelpingmembers. Once enough listings have been submitted, the website will become available for members to search and contact service providers.

