

# Weekly Word

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April 21, 2005

## 1000 "Thank You's"

A thousand "Thank you's" are not enough to show my appreciation for everyone's support during the loss of my mother earlier this month. The cards, emails, flowers and donations, and offers of help were overwhelming and appreciated during this difficult time. The folks from the membership, County and DHS administration, the labor community and friends past and present who made it to calling hours and the funeral helped me feel surrounded by support. Although this was an unexpected death, I am also grateful that she died happy with no illness or suffering, appearing, as I and many of you who knew her, as peaceful as she always looked.

## Emergency Sick Leave Bank

There have been many examples over the past twenty five years I have been working at DSS where the issue of members who have encountered an unexpected, prolonged illness (personally or for a family member) have inadequate sick leave available and face financial hardship. During our previous set of negotiations the Union tried to bargain a mechanism where members could donate time to the member facing this hardship, but we were unable to reach agreement for a variety of reasons.

The issue is before us again in the case of Lori Bruno, senior child care worker at the Children's Center, whose daughter is suffering from a rare form of cancer. This has required Lori's presence with her daughter and has exhausted her sick leave bank. While her co-workers have done a phenomenal job at raising money to ease this burden, the loss of income has been devastating.

The Federation and Monroe County reached an agreement on a voluntary donation to Lori's sick leave bank. Any member who wants to donate vacation time only that will be credited to Lori simply has to write to me how many days they want to donate. We will notify Monroe County how many days to deduct from your vacation bank to credit to Lori's sick bank. The accounting is on a day for a day basis independent of pay rate.

This agreement is in effect for up to six months. We will notify Monroe County to re-credit banks as the

need arises, deducting from the banks in the order in which the requests are received by the union.

This is a trial mechanism that I hope has great success for future opportunities. The donation is for Lori only. Future donations will be on a specific individual basis, as well. A subcommittee of the Executive Board has been appointed to examine this and other "member relief" types of situations.

I plan on donating at least two days vacation and I encourage you to join me, especially those of you who are losing vacation days due to exceeding 40 days in your bank. Do you really want to give it back to the County? If we all just give a little, we won't notice it, but Lori sure will. Plus, if this scheme is successful, we can make it work for friends who run into this same situation in the future.

## FSW Office Closed April 22

The office will be closed on Friday April 22 since we will be moving next door in the same building. Phones and internet will be unavailable during this move. Our hope is that we will have phones available on Monday, April 25.

This move is part of a plan to make the FSW offices more convenient and accessible to members for general business and meetings. One thing we are doing is developing a larger conference room for meetings. This conference room will be large enough to handle all regular meetings comfortably and most membership meetings with the exception of contract votes. Now we will have a permanent place to hold meetings without having to rent space or transport snack items.

Another use for the space will be for training and informational meetings expecting no more than 50-60 people.

## General Membership Meeting

May 18

FSW Conference Room

167 Flanders St

5:30pm

**General business meeting with negotiations update, future mobilization plans, update on Public Relations activities, and election of delegates to CWA Convention**