

Weekly Word



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April 10, 2007

Field Worker Safety

Someone has described the recent attacks on caseworkers in the field as “open season.” It sure has seemed that way since the end of November through the middle of last month. Because of all of these incidents, I arranged the March 23rd membership meeting with DHS and Monroe County leaders so that we could get all concerned parties in one room to discuss the issues workers face in the field.

The report from that meeting should be arriving in your email (or in print if not on email) very soon. Peg Capuano took notes during the meeting and Kelly Reed’s secretary is preparing the report. After Peg and Kelly review the report, it will be distributed to all staff, hopefully within the next week.

I want to thank Kelly and Deputy County Executive James Smith for clearing their schedules to meet with the membership. They, and Maggie Brooks, have been concerned with worker safety and, I believe, have taken the messages from the meeting to heart. A commitment was made at the meeting to explore all viable options/procedures to help workers feel safer in the field. One thing that is already happening is that the department is working on a contract with Verizon for new phones. I don’t have all of the details but from an email from Kelly I know this is in the works.

Another commitment that is coming to pass is the resurrection of the DHS Safety committee. We are working out details for an early May launch date. The first step will be to solicit volunteers for the committee and then select a representative group of reasonable size that can commit to working on this valuable task.

I want to thank everyone for their patience during this process and encourage you to stay informed about what is happening. Management and the Union need your input in order to work out appropriate safety measures.

Field Worker Safety Training

After almost three years of effort, Field Worker Safety training finally started earlier this month. This course is being presented by our friends in the Probation Department and is available to all staff that go into the field for their jobs.

One thing that I need to know is how you rate the effectiveness of this training. Please send me an email to share your thoughts on its usefulness and what you believe

would be helpful to make the training more relevant so we are sure you are getting what you need.

Retiree Chapter

In January, our group of retirees became formally chartered with the CWA Retired Members Council. John Rabish, former caseworker and former Union president, agreed to be acting-president of the chapter until elections can be run. At our January 18th membership meeting, members of FSW voted to fund the activities of the retiree chapter.

The chapter has been meeting about every two months since June of 2006, averaging 20-30 participants at each meeting. At the next meeting, tentatively scheduled for May 14th at 4pm, the chapter will work to elect official board members. Until the elections, John will be chairing the meetings and will be participating in FSW executive board meetings.

Alyssa’s Angels

Many of you will remember donating your vacation/comp time on behalf of Lorie Bruno, senior child care worker at the Children’s Center, while her daughter was battling a serious illness. Many of you will also remember that Alyssa succumbed to her illness shortly after her sixth birthday last August. Her parents, Chris and Lorie, have been working with Children’s Center staff, FSW, Markethold Productions, and other interested parties to begin a foundation in her honor to do good work for other children.

The first fundraiser for this foundation takes place on May 20th at La Trattoria D’Abruzzo, 1770 East Ridge Road from 12-4pm. Thanks to FSW Social Action chair Michelle Alaimo for contacting them and pushing Alyssa’s Angels, the owners are providing all of the food at no charge. Tickets will soon be available for this pasta dinner at a cost of \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.

One project of this foundation is to help pay for toys and other items of need for visitation rooms at DHS, SPCC and the Children’s Center.

Save the Date...

Sunday August 12: Second Annual Federation of Social Workers Golf Tournament...proceeds benefit the Ed Grabowski Scholarship fund, Christopher’s Challenge, and Alyssa’s Angels.