

Labor agency appeals to unions for funds to buy holiday meals

Labor's Community Service Agency (LCSA) is appealing to the labor community for financial contributions to sustain its holiday dinner program.

The program helped 170 unemployed union families put Thanksgiving dinner on the table last month. That's more than double what the agency did last year — for both Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners.

"We have blown right through our Holiday Dinner Program budget for

November and December with Thanksgiving alone," said LCSA Director Vickie Burns. "I believe we could easily quadruple our previous record of outreach to unemployed families if we can raise the funds to do so."

Burns said the agency needs to raise \$10,000 over the next few weeks in order to provide holiday dinners for unemployed union families in December.

Burns said LCSA has not seen anything comparable to this level of need

in the 18 years she has been there. "When combined with budget cuts and dwindling financial support for social service programs at every turn, the outcomes of economic hardship resemble those not seen since the Great Depression," she said.

To donate to the Holiday Dinner Program, send checks to: Labor's Community Service Agency, 1125 SE Madison, Suite 103, Portland, OR 97214.

...Laborers Union warns City of fiscal emergency

(From Page 1)

City's habit of hiring nonunion contractors and temporary and seasonal employees.

Next, maintenance worker Farrell Richartz from the street cleaning department described the work he and fellow union members do — cleaning up leaves, preventing flooding, and acting as first responders during snow and ice events. Cuts to those services, Richartz said, would constitute an emergency.

Last up for the union was Father Bob Krueger of St. Francis Catholic parish, who spoke against the continued use of prisoner labor in the parks.

Of the five elected officials, three responded.

City Commissioner Nick Fish — who heads the Parks Bureau — thanked members for the work they did over the previous few days cleaning up Chapman

and Lownsdale parks. [Mayor Adams ordered police to forcibly remove the Occupy Portland encampment Nov. 13. Occupy supporters had begun cleanup, but after the eviction, fences were installed around the entire two-block area, guarded by police 24-hours-a-day, which prevented occupiers from fulfilling their promise to clean up.]

"This is not the right forum to have a discussion about inmate labor," Fish said, addressing Krueger. "We as a Council would not permit any inmate labor to displace an existing bargaining unit job."

Rather, Fish said, inmates supplement the City's work force, and get a job skill and time off their sentence for doing so. Fish added that he wants to find ways to transition them into gainful employment with the City of Portland.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz wanted to add that the number of "con-

tract" employees in an unspecified bureau of Fish's had declined from over 100 to under 40 over the last two years. Fritz linked that to the City's commitment to family-wage jobs.

Adams kept his response succinct: "Thanks for your work every day, and be careful out there."

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