

Painters #10 turns up pressure on nonunion Edwards Painting

"If you go to that union meeting, you're fired." That's what several painters say their manager told them when he learned of a meeting to discuss



unionizing Edwards Painting.

Edwards Painting is a nonunion painting contractor based in Oregon City with about 20 employees. It does a fair amount of commercial work for general contractor Walsh Construction. But workers say they earn up to \$6 an hour less than their union counterparts in Painters Local 10, and have no benefits. When some workers started wearing union T-shirts, things got tense with manager Grant Edwards, son of company owner Gene Edwards.

Sean Carter, 33, says he was fired the Friday before Labor Day after coming out in favor of the union effort. But

Sean Carter, joined by his 11-year-old daughter Kylee and two co-workers, stands outside a \$125-a-plate fundraiser with a banner reading "Shame on Walsh Construction."

when he went in to collect his final check, he was joined by several pro-union co-workers. They confronted the company, and the termination was rescinded. Still, his experience led other workers to get cold feet about having their names on a union petition.

Painters Local 10 filed an unfair labor practice charge with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). Under U.S. labor law, workers have the right to unionize if they choose, and it's illegal for an employer to threaten or retaliate against workers for supporting a union.

On Oct. 10, Carter and two pro-union co-workers took the dispute public, showing up outside the Portland Art Museum with a "Shame on Walsh Construction" banner. The museum was the site of a \$125-a-plate fundraiser for Lifeworks Northwest, a non-profit organization that works to prevent child abuse and treat addiction. To construct a new treatment center in Northeast Portland, Lifeworks hired Walsh, and Walsh picked Edwards Painting as a subcontractor.

Painters Local 10 wants to see Edwards Painting unionize — both to bring up standards for workers there, and to prevent existing members from losing work to lower-wage competition. Local 10 offers a rigorous four-year apprenticeship training program, turning out journeyman painters. Under

the union contract, journeyman painters earn \$19.81 an hour and have employer-paid full-family health coverage and a defined-benefit pension. But it's hard to maintain those standards when lower-wage nonunion contractors have up to 40 percent market share in commercial painting.

POSITION AVAILABLE Compliance Investigator

Requirements

Working knowledge of the construction industry, knowledge of prevailing wage law is a plus. Excellent writing skills, computer skills in Word, Excel, Internet research, verbal and personal communication skills in English and Spanish are required. Will need to be able to travel throughout Oregon and SW Washington to meet with contractors, contractor associations, labor organizations and government agencies. Competitive hourly rate starting at \$24 per hour, plus pension and health & welfare. Full time position. Company car is provided.

Submit resume with cover letter by Oct. 28 to:

rdelance@fcffair.org

or

Fair Contracting Foundation

P.O. Box 9158

Portland, OR 97207

Contact Person: Rick DeLance: 503-244-3644

Congressional gym stays open during shutdown

By JUDD LEGUM

Head Start programs have been shuttered, small businesses can't get loans and hundreds of thousands of federal government employees are furloughed. But the exclusive gyms available only to members of Congress have remained open throughout the shutdown.

A House aide confirmed to ThinkProgress that the House members' gym is open. The House gym features a swimming pool, basketball courts, paddleball courts, a sauna, a steam room and flat screen TVs. While towel service is unavailable, taxpayers remain on the hook for cleaning and maintenance, which has been performed daily throughout the shutdown.

There are also costs associated with the power required to heat the pools and keep the lights on.

According to the aide, the decision to keep the gym open — even while other critical government services were shelved — came directly from Speaker Boehner's office. Meanwhile, the staff gym available to Congressional staff has been closed.

It appears that the members gym in the Senate remains open on similar terms. On Oct. 7, Sen. Lindsay Graham (R-SC) complained to a reporter from the Omaha World-Herald that the members gym was getting "rank."

The daily operating cost of the House and Senate gyms remains

shrouded in secrecy. The Architect of the Capitol, which oversees both gyms, has previously refused to provide information about the gyms for "security reasons." A call to the Architect of the Capitol for this story was not immediately returned.

Dozens of House members — including many members of the Tea Party who pushed the government into shutdown over demands to defund Obamacare — live in their offices to save money and use the House gym to shower.

(Editor's Note: This article was created by the Center for American Progress Action, www.americanprogressaction.org.)

Take better hearing for a test drive.

75 DAY TRIAL* Ever wonder if hearing aids could help you enjoy more of your favorite sounds? Now you have a chance to find out with a 75-day trial.**

SONUS hearing care professionals

Call to schedule your complimentary hearing screening* and learn more about hearing loss and the solutions we offer.

King City

15405 SW 116th Ave, Ste 200
(503) 684-1583

Lake Oswego

3975 Mercantile Dr, Ste 215
(503) 697-3600

Portland

9155 SW Barnes Rd, Ste 401
(503) 297-1600

portland.sonus.com

FOR ALL UNION MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES, START YOUR 75-DAY TRIAL TODAY AND ENJOY THIS SPECIAL OFFER:

20% OFF
ANY HEARING SOLUTION*
— PLUS 3 YEARS OF —
COMPLIMENTARY BATTERIES

*Hearing screenings are always free. This is not a medical exam. **Hearing aids must be returned within 75-day period to qualify for refund. *Good only at participating Sonus locations. Limit one coupon per customer. It cannot be combined with other offers and does not apply to previous sales. May not be valid with all insurance benefits. Cash value 1/20 cent. 6652RCPA

Why Labor and United Way?

United Way of the Columbia-Willamette has supported your local labor agency since 1974. Operating funds, distributed from the overall United Way campaign, allow Labor's Community Service Agency to build additional financial support for programs providing temporary financial assistance, community education, dislocated worker services, and so much more.

With United Way Campaign investment choices, you can direct your donation to any 501(c)3 non-profit, including Labor's Community Service Agency. Best of all, "Cornerstone Partners" fund United Way overhead to guarantee that 100% of your donation will be delivered where you direct it.

This year, show your appreciation for United Way of the Columbia-Willamette. Support labor by supporting United Way.

For more information on how to participate in the United Way Labor Campaign, call Labor's Community Service Agency, 503-231-4962.

