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## Byram new executive director of Labor's Community Services

Eryn Byram is the new executive director of Labor's Community Service Agency (LCSA). She succeeds Vickie Burns, who retired last month.

Byram has worked part-time as LCSA's office manager/outreach specialist since 2012. She interviewed for the director's job, along with three other finalists. A hiring committee comprised of five members of the LCSA Executive Board recommended Byram, and the full 16-person Executive Board concurred.

LCSA is a non-profit organization that operates under the auspices of the Northwest Oregon Labor Council, in partnership with United Way of the Columbia-Willamette. The agency works with an array of community-based and governmental organizations throughout Oregon and Southwest Washington to provide social service programs, dislocated worker assistants, education, information, referral services, and other needs.

Byram, 42, brings real energy to the agency. She knows the ins and outs of the operation, having worked with Burns for the last five years. Two years ago, Byram created Team Labor, a program that brings union mem-



Eryn Byram

bers and labor allies together to volunteer for selected public service projects. The program came about as a result of LCSA's successful Presents from Partners (PFP) toy drive and holiday party. PFP started small, but over the years has grown tremendously. Last December more than 100 union members volunteered to help.

"I would like to see Team Labor grow the way Presents from Partners did," Byram said.

Her goal is to bring an army of union members and community allies together once a year to work on one big project. As

an example, Byram points to last October's one-day home repair event that helped six Heritage Village mobile home park households from being evicted, in partnership with Rebuilding Together Washington County.

Born and raised in Pittsburgh, Byram lost her father in a car accident at age 10. Her family moved to Flagstaff, Arizona when she was 13. By age 19, Byram was happily traveling solo around the country, camping out of the back of her truck, stopping occasionally to work at a national park, restaurant or bar.

She landed in Portland in 2000, where she met her future husband — a valet at the Hilton Portland Executive Towers. He helped her get a job at the hotel's Porto Terra Tuscan Grill. It was a union job, and in 2005 Byram became a member of HERE Local 9.

Byram excelled as a union member. At her first union meeting she stepped up to be a shop steward. She studied the contract, attended all the shop steward training classes, and assisted her co-workers when needed. If a question arose, she always had a copy of the union contract in her apron to refer to.

"It was my calling," she said. Byram got involved with the bargaining committee in July 2008. Negotiations were difficult, and resulted in a boycott.

Byram's enthusiasm and skill set had caught the eye of then-business manager Karly Edwards, who hired Byram to organize the boycott. It was so successful that the Hilton's top brass agreed to all of the union's demands, including wage increases and insurance coverage for housekeepers.

"It was a worker-led campaign, and we boycotted the crap out of them," Byram said. "To this day, they are the highest paid housekeepers in the state."

After the boycott, Byram remained with Local 9, first as an internal organizer, then as a community organizer, and finally as administrative assistant.

She left Local 9 and went to work part-time at LCSA in January 2012. In that job she joined Office and Professional Employees Local 11. Byram had met Burns, the executive director, at a Resource Navigator training for Local 9. LCSA offers the training for free to unions. The course instructs staff on how to help their mem-

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